

MUSLIM PAKISTANI AND INDIAN STUDENTS IN THEIR NEW YORK SCHOOL
SYSTEM EXPERIENCE

by

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ABSTRACT

Alfonse Javed. MUSLIM PAKISTANI AND INDIAN STUDENTS IN THEIR NEW YORK SCHOOL SYSTEM EXPERIENCE. (Under the direction of Dr. Clarence Holland) School of Education, April, 2011.

This hermeneutical phenomenological research study, using two rounds of semi-structured open ended interviews and focus group data, described the lived experience of Muslim Pakistani and Indian students in their New York school system experience. The purpose of this study was to collect and examine the stories and explore the lived experience of Muslim young adults from Pakistan and India in the American school system and document the positive and negative experiences they had while in the American school system. The study looked for the common denominators, which helped and encouraged the Muslim students to continue their education, regardless of the accusations and their affiliation to a religion that has been held responsible for the 9/11 tragedy. In order to uncover what motivated these students to continue their education in the American school system and what brought peace and comfort in their lives, regardless of the reports that Muslims in America have been receiving discriminatory treatment in the aftermath of 9/11, the data was collected by interviewing seven participants. The data revealed that the group had a strong desire to live and to be educated in the United States; and their belief that, unlike other countries, America provides a safe haven to every citizen, was the consistent theme in every participant's life. The participants also shared their experiences regarding how Muslim and non-Muslim students can live in harmony

and study in peace in the American school system. However, the data also indicated obstacles that female Muslim students face while in school. Strategies suggested by the data include emphasis on increasing the positive experiences of the school, such as open discussion between Muslim and non-Muslim students, increased collaboration between the school and the Muslim community in the area, Muslim and non-Muslim parents' panel group discussion, equal rights and equal treatment for all the students, faculty supervision of religious clubs on campus, better communication between the school and the Muslim community, preference in hiring minority staff for social studies, workshops on religious tolerance by community members of all religions, and avoiding having any political or religious organization conduct such workshops on campus.

DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to Dr. Jill Jones, Associate Professor of Graduate Education for the School of Education at Liberty University. She left this world victoriously on August 8th 2010. In her own words, “I have three passions in life: 1) God, 2) My family, and 3) education.”

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Following the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001, the religion of Islam and their followers have been taken very seriously by the West. For example, more people have shown interest in learning and understanding Islam since the aftermath of 9/11. Furthermore, many research studies have been conducted to explore and investigate the religion of Islam in America (e.g. Council on American Islamic Relation, 2001, 2002, 2003; Ali, Liu, & Humedian, 2004). A portion of the literature focused on the political, cultural, and religious aspects of Islam, and other portions focused on the everyday life of Muslims. Ali, Liu, and Humedian (2004) reported that “despite the growing number of Muslims in the United States, many Americans remain ignorant or largely suspicious of this group of people” (p. 635). Consequently, there is little research on the personal experiences of Muslim students in the United States of America following 9/11, that is, how this tragedy affected their personal experiences in the American school system. The limited literature available on Muslim Americans identifies them as the victims of prejudice, discrimination, and physical assaults. For instance, South Asian Muslims, particularly Pakistanis and Indians, have reported constant discrimination on the basis of their religious affiliation and appearance (Bloomberg & Gatling, 2003; Maira, 2004).

According to the New York City Commission on Human Rights (2003) report on “Discrimination against Muslims, Arabs, and South Asians in New York City Since

9/11,” 79% of the respondents felt that the events of 9/11 affected their lives regardless of whether they believed they had experienced discrimination. The report adds, “Many spoke of being scared, stared at, intimidated, fearful, alienated, depressed, uncomfortable, cautious, hurt, uneasy, ridiculed, shamed, misunderstood, sad, blamed, insecure, scrutinized, and emotionally stressed” (Bloomberg & Gatling, 2003, p.14).

The United States of America entered into the 21st century with a greater amount of challenges than its government had anticipated. Americans were forced to discover new resources in order to stay ahead in the race against other industrial nations. Prosperity in America attracted millions of immigrants to come to the United States. The First Amendment of the United States Constitution defends the right to freedom of religion and freedom of expression. Fortitude and freedom, essential traits in the foundation of society, have inspired millions of people across the world to find refuge on American soil. Additionally, maintaining these essential traits is critical. Emma Lazarus writes an inspirational poem concerning America and its famous landmark, the Statue of Liberty, “Here at our sea-washed, sunset gates shall stand a mighty woman with a torch, whose flame is the imprisoned lightning, and her name Mother of Exiles” (Statue of Liberty National Monument, 2010, p. 1). Lazarus’s poem reflects the true picture of America’s open arms towards those who have no hope or home elsewhere and for those who have been persecuted in their native countries for differences in political and religious stances.

Secondary to the importance of freedom of speech and religion is the quality of the education system, which has also attracted millions of people to the United States.

After finishing their education, some international students decide to stay in the United States, while others choose to return home. Nevertheless, America is the pioneer of human rights, particularly in the area of education rights.

Muslim Pakistani and Indian students in the American school system are part of the South Asian community, where they or their parents immigrated to the United States to experience the same freedom, and quality of life and education as Americans. It is imperative to look at the relationship between American and Islamic society in the historical context, particularly foreign policy in the United States, because it helps individuals to understand the difference between the American perception of Muslims and the Muslim perception about America before and after the September 11th terrorist attacks. On the subject of American perception, one author states:

A nation's interests derive from its identity. But without an enemy to define itself against, America's identity has disintegrated. This breakdown intensified with the rise of multiculturalism and the ebbing of assimilation. Lacking a national identity, America has been pursuing commercial or ethnic interests as its foreign policy. Instead of putting American resources toward these subnational uses, the United States should scale back its involvement in the world until a threat reinvigorates our national purpose. (Huntington, 2004, para. 1)

General Background of Study

In the first half of the 20th century, the geopolitical life of the present world witnessed the collapse of the Russian Empire, the German Empire, the Ottoman Empire, the Austro-Hungarian Empire, and the British Empire. World War II, spanning from

1939 to 1945, brought the Soviet Union, the United Kingdom, and the United States of America together against a common enemy, the Axis alliance (Taylor, 1998). Three major partners in the Axis alliance were Germany, Italy, and Japan, receiving a brutal defeat by the Allied forces. On May 7, 1945, Nazi Germany surrendered, followed by the Japanese formal surrender on September 2, 1945. Also, in the same year, the alliance ended between the United States, the United Kingdom, and the Soviet Union. According to Spalding (2006), "World War I had been America's initiation into world leadership". However, Adams (1994) calls World War II a "Good war", adding, "It was a great war. For Americans, it was the best war ever" (p. 2). It wasn't until after World War II that the United States became the strongest player in the world's politics. Before the war, America was one of the many global powers, but afterwards, America emerged as a leading nation, because its economy had not only survived through the war but also had significantly thrived on war effort. According to Westad (2005), "The world wanted Americanism through its products and through its ideas" (p. 19).

One of the key elements in American's global leadership was the Truman Doctrine and the Marshall Plan. The Truman Doctrine and the Marshall Plan appeared to be a genuine response to those "who needed to be set free from age-old forms of social and ideological oppression" (Westad, 2005, p. 20). Furthermore, Jones (1989) considers the Truman Doctrine the central reason for the Soviet Union's perception of the United States of America as the chief political, economical, and military opponent in the post war world. The Truman Doctrine led to a rivalry between communist and noncommunist

nations. Jones (1989) calls it “a new kind of war” (p. 3). Following the topic of the creation of the Truman Doctrine, Spalding (2006) states,

Truman rooted his policies in common-sense assumptions regarding man, the state, freedom, and tyranny-and therefore about the United States and the Soviet Union. He believed that what he sometimes called the “war of nerves” was dominated by tyranny’s ideological assault on human freedom, and that the nature of the East-West conflict transcended both partisanship and domestic political opinions. His ideas and policies from a multifaceted definition of peace, composed of freedom, justice and order. (p. 4)

The United States became the leading force for noncommunist nations as a capitalist country, and the USSR remained the leading force of communism. The United States’ attempt to provide freedom, peace, justice, and economical prosperity to developing countries with an agenda to resist communist pressure can be counted as a contention between two superpowers. Eventually, such disputation led to the Cold War. According to Cowley (2005), the Cold War began after World War II when the USSR refused to withdraw their forces from northern Iran, while heading to invade Turkey. Ultimately, the Cold War was to determine the true superpower, which is defined as “a country that has the capacity to project dominating power and influence anywhere in the world, and sometimes, in more than one region of the globe at a time, and so may plausibly attain the status of global hegemon” (Miller, 2006, para. 4). The Cold War forced the United States of America to become engaged in the internal affairs of the international community. According to Westad (2005), in 1954, the United States’

interference and assistance in Iran helped to overthrow the Mossadeq government and formed a strong, close alliance with Iran.

Unfortunately, the United States' alliance with Iran was the beginning of a new cultural and religious conflict in the Middle East. The Iranian government was taken over by an extreme Shi'a (a sect of Islam that believes they are the descendants of the prophet Muhammad) leader, Khomeini. American foreign policy failed to maintain any relations with Iran. Furthermore, the neighboring Muslim countries, Afghanistan and Pakistan, took notice of the Islamic revolution in Iran. Afghanistan and Pakistan decided to assimilate the Islamic culture into their countries as well. Afghanistan was invaded by Russian forces, which became an immediate threat to the sovereignty of Pakistan.

In the late 1970s and early 1980s, the United States, the United Kingdom, Saudi Arabia, and many other Muslim countries gave funds to Pakistan to create a militia force to fight the Soviet Union. Afghani Muslims, who consider Pakistan to be their brothers, failed to notice the personal interests of the Pakistani government behind their collaboration. The president of Pakistan, General Zia, a dictator but an extremely religious man, took the opportunity to propagate their sectarian religious doctrine into the Pakistani Pashtun community. The Pakistani Secret Services ISI recruited and trained a group of Pashtun Muslims to fight against Soviet forces. These recruits are recalled in history as Mujahedeen. The word Mujahedeen or *Mujahidin* comes from Jihad, which is an act of fighting for the cause of Allah or Islam. Naturally, those who fight Jihad are Mujahidin.

In the 1980s, Madrasses in Afghanistan and Pakistan were allegedly boosted by an

increase in financial support from the United States, European governments, Saudi Arabia, and other Persian Gulf states, all of whom reportedly viewed these schools as recruiting grounds for anti-Soviet Mujahidin fighters (Blanchard, 2006). The intentions of the West to support their efforts were to defeat the communist superpower where Saudi Arabia, Pakistan, and other Muslim countries promoted their religious

The Cold War ended with the withdrawal of the Soviet Union from Afghanistan; the United States of America and its allies left Pakistan and Afghanistan in political, social, religious, and economical chaos. Also, the absence of structured government and resources, devastated infrastructure, deficiency of leadership, and no accountability in Afghanistan paved the path for drug and weapons trade, as well as various religious movements. Once the United States and its Allies abandoned Afghanistan after the Cold War, neutral Pakistan had nothing to offer but refuge and promotion of Sunni teachings in line with nationalistic beliefs. Mujahidin, who fought bravely and aggressively in the Cold War, were replaced by a new generation of Muslim students. These students in Afghanistan, under the leadership of Mullah Abdul Omer, an ordinary Muslim priest in Kandahar, blamed America for their miseries. In the eyes of some extreme Muslims, the unjust act of America pulling out of Afghanistan without further humanitarian support was grounds for jihad against America. Regardless of the official alliance of the Pakistani government with the United States, Pakistan supported the Afghan struggle to form a free country under the dominated ethnic group of the Pashtun. This tyrannical group named themselves the Taliban, which derives from the Arabic word *talib*, meaning “student” (Fox, 2010).

The United States' failure to understand the Muslim mentality and the religion of Islam prompted poor choices in terms of American foreign policy toward Muslim countries. Furthermore, the United States' presence in Saudi Arabia gave extreme Muslims reason to spread new propaganda, which states infidels had stepped into their holy land. Specifically, the Qur'an calls Christians infidels and considers Christianity to be a Western religion. For example, Qur'an 5:72 says, "They are surely infidel, who say 'God is the Christ, the Messiah, the Son of Me [God].'" It also provides justification to "fight and slay" (Qur'an 9:33, 2:191) infidels because "Allah is an enemy to unbelievers" (Qur'an 2:98). Montgomery (2003) writes, "Osama bin Laden wanted more than anything to get the United States military out of the sacred sands of his native Saudi Arabia" (para. 1). Therefore, Al-Qaida was formed to force the United States to leave their holy land, which included other Islamic countries.

Montgomery (2003) furthers the argument by stating, "When bin Laden first called for holy war against 'Jews and crusaders,' the American troop presence near holy ground topped his list of grievances" (para. 1). Also, bin Laden proclaimed that the Qur'an teaches "do not take these Jews and Christian as your friends" (Qur'an 5:51). In 1996, a group of Muslims killed 19 United States' servicemen at the Khobar Towers housing complex in Dhahran, eastern Saudi Arabia, in order to prove their hatred towards the Western presence in Islamic countries. Thus, the network of Al-Qaida became a strong, well-funded, and well-organized International Islamic organization, which justified every action of the network in the Qur'an to pull Muslims out of the Western operation.

Diwani (2005), a professor of Comparative Literature at Alexandria University in Egypt, points out nine reasons why extreme Muslims hate the United States: (1) the Israeli–Palestinian issue, (2) the war on Afghanistan, (3) the Gulf war, (4) military presence in Saudi Arabia, (5) interference in interior affairs of Islamic countries, (6) the very special strategic interests of the United States and the human rights of the others, (7) inconsistency in the American foreign policy, (8) the United States Democracy in the Middle-East, and (9) demonization of Muslims. This same author considers the horrifying action of terrorism on American soil to be a result of “the deep sense of outrage and frustration felt widely throughout the Arab and Muslim world over the U.S foreign policy in the Middle East” (Diwani, 2005, p. 8).

However, Sardar and Davies (2002) indicates that “a majority of non-US respondents-58%-felt that Washington’s policies were a ‘major cause’ in fueling resentment and anger against the United States. In contrast, only 18% of US respondents blamed their government’s policies” (p. 9). Additionally, Sardar and Davies (2002) reported that 90% of Americans believed “their country’s power and wealth as the chief reason why they are disliked, while the non-American overwhelmingly thought that the US bears responsibility for the gap between the world’s rich and poor” (p. 10).

The tragedy that took place in New York City on September 11th killing 2,976 people, including 236 foreigners, initiated an ongoing war on terror. A report by Zelikow, Jenkins, and May (2004), *The 9/11 Commission Report Executive Summary*, describes this day as a “day of unprecedented shock and suffering in the history of the United States. The nation was unprepared” (p. 1). In comparison, the number of casualties

surpassed Pearl Harbor's casualties. Also, the report sums up the activity as an international crime carried on by 19 young Arabs "at the behest of Islamist extremists headquartered in distant Afghanistan" (Zelikow et al., 2004, p. 2).

On September 11, 2001, immeasurable pain was inflicted upon Americans by Osama bin Laden, the head of al Qaeda. The terrorists hijacked four Boeing 757 and 767 airplanes, successfully crashing three of the planes into public buildings. Two crashed into the towers of the World Trade Center in New York City, collapsing both within 90 minutes. Another plane flew into the Pentagon near Washington, D.C., causing extensive damage. The fourth plane crashed in a field in Pennsylvania. Afterwards, the expedition to find Osama bin Laden, first in the Tora Bora Mountains of Afghanistan and later in the plains of Waziristan, Pakistan, has added many more casualties. Ultimately, this tragedy has changed the perception of American citizens toward Islam and the Muslim people.

The war on terrorism has become the war on religion, culture, ideology, worldview, and patriotism. The United States and other Western nations have constricted homeland security and increased military operations in Muslim countries; the extreme Muslims have declared international war on Christians and moderate Muslims. By definition, moderate Muslims are those who do not support the Jihad as a military action to promote Islam. The persecution of these groups in Islamic countries has proved their governments weak and unstable. As a result, many members of the persecuted groups from Muslim countries immigrated to the United States. In Islam, immigration has negative and positive connotations. To moderate Muslims and those who interpret the Qur'an differently, *Hijra* is imminent under persecution. Secondly, the Islamic term *Al-*

Hijra means to migrate or immigrate, and can be understood by looking at the Islamic calendar, which starts with the date of the Prophet Muhammad's immigration from Mecca to Medina.

In Islam, Muslims are obligated to follow Muhammad's words and actions. The Qur'an says, "Indeed in the Messenger of Allah [Muhammad] you have a good example to follow for him who hopes in the (the meeting with) Allah and the Last Day and remembers Allah much" (33:21). Consequently, many citizens of these predominately Muslim countries (including both Muslims and non-Muslims) have fled from their homeland into the West. Some of them immigrated to America, known as "the land of the free" and "Mother of Exiles" (Statue of Liberty National Monument, 2010, p. 1). Many of these immigrants settled in New York City. Out of the total population of immigrants, some have access to legal paper work (green card or refugee documents), meanwhile others are residing in the United States illegally. According to Zelikow et al. (2004), more than 500 million people annually cross United States' borders at legal entry points, and another 500,000 or more enter illegally.

The United States Constitution has always purposed to protect the freedom of American citizens, regardless of their religious or political beliefs. Prior to 9/11, America was unaware of the presence of Muslim fundamentalism. People from many Muslim nations were immigrating to the United States of America for better opportunities, to gain academic knowledge, or to gain financial stability. However,, some Muslims were coming with an agenda to destroy the United States from the inside by using its legal system. According to a scholar Gideon, "*Hijra* and military conquest are two

components of Islamic expansion” (Solomon & Al Maqdisi, 2009, p. xi). They were coming to wage Jihad. Furthermore, Solomon et al. (2009) explains the doctrine of immigration in Islam: “But from the Qur’anic prospective it [Jihad] could be anything from sacrifice of one’s comfort by immigration, to spending or supporting with one’s finances” (p. 13).

The Statement of Problem

The post 9/11 world has come to know many new things about Islam. Concurrently, negative connotations focusing on Islam and terrorism have become popular in the media. However, the media has recently been divided into two extremes: those who portray Islam as an evil religion and those who portray Islam as a peaceful religion. Despite their conflicting points of view, both sides agree on one notion: Islam is a dominating power. The Gallup survey reveals that only 17% of Americans hold a positive perception of Muslims, while 23% have negative perceptions, and 48% were neutral (Ghazali, 2008, para. 11). After December 2009, the percentages increased, because two weeks before Christmas Day, a bombing was attempted aboard Northwest Airlines' Detroit-bound flight 253. The subsequent Gallup survey reported 39% of Americans “being very or somewhat worried that they or someone in their family will become a victim of terrorism” (Mendes, 2009, para. 1). According to Mendes (2009), in January 2004, Americans were less afraid, but “the number of Americans who are very or somewhat worried about being a victim of terrorism has fluctuated between 34% and 47% in the years since 9/11” (Mendes, 2009, para. 2).

This negativity has affected American society, including the American school

system, with South Asian Muslim students becoming prime targets of negativity.

Pakistani land has been used for military training camps by terrorist groups since the time period formal Soviet Union is used, first as a positive force and then as the prime suspect, for any terrorist activity in the world. Furthermore, the use of Pakistani land and resources in the 9/11 attacks, the London train explosion, and the association of suicide bombers at a Russian airport on January, 24, 2011, makes every citizen of Pakistan responsible in the eyes of the Western world. Slimbill (2010) states on his internet blog, “General opinion in the West is that Pakistan is funding and supporting the terrorists on its north western border. This is a half-truth in itself and due to this belief, all Pakistanis are being branded as pro-terrorist” (para. 1). In agreement in Slimbill (2010), Mauro (2010) writes that there are 150 terrorist camps in Pakistan. He adds, “According to Bob Woodward’s book, President Obama has a contingency plan to bomb all of these camps if the United States is attacked again” (Mauro, 2010, para. 1).

Indian Muslims’ strong ties with Pakistan and their appearance make them vulnerable to the same treatment experienced by Pakistani Muslims students. As previously mentioned, there is a gap in the literature on the personal experiences of Muslim students from Pakistan and India in the American school system. The little information that is known about Muslim students from Pakistan and India in the American school system is subject to the negative experiences of the students, which could be partially informative for school teachers and administrators. Specifically, this information may help reveal what is going on inside American schools, in terms of Muslim students being bullied based on their religion, but the information does not

suggest any concrete steps in the area of prevention.

Therefore, the dilemma of segregation on the basis of religious affiliation within the school system continues building walls between Muslim students and their non-Muslim peers and the school staff. For instance, previous research on this subject does not reflect the positive side of the experiences Muslim students have in the American school system. It is apparent that positive variables exist in order for many of the Muslim Pakistani and Indian students to successfully progress through their secondary education and into college since the tragedy of 9/11. The question of their academic motivation, despite poor treatment, is what has inspired the researcher to conduct this study.

Purpose of the Study

This qualitative study investigated the challenges of Muslim young adults from Pakistan and India in the American school system in the aftermath of 9/11. This research was intended to become the voice of these young adults based on their everyday challenges (Creswell, 2007). It contributes to the educational process of teachers and administrators by explaining how to deal with cross-cultural differences, discrimination, and the mindset of those who suffer from discrimination. It also helps school counselors evaluate the psychological and emotional stress of these students. Furthermore, the purpose of this study was to collect and examine the stories and explore the life experience of Muslim Pakistani and Indian students in the American school system since 9/11 and document the positive and negative experiences they experienced in the American school system.

The study looked for common denominators, which helped and encouraged

Muslim students to continue their education regardless of the accusations and their affiliation to a religion that is held responsible for the 9/11 tragedy, and much of the ongoing terrorism in the world, particularly in the West. There is a question of what motivated these students to continue their education in the American school system. Also, there is uncertainty about what brought peace and comfort into their lives. Finding knowledge about Muslim students' everyday experiences has revealed how they were able to remove barriers between themselves and the rest of the school, which will help teachers and school administrators to find ways to help Muslim students in the American school system. Additionally, further information will help school counselors to be able to work with both Muslim and non-Muslim students that will bring unity to the school environment.

The Professional Significance of the Study

Education and religion are proposed to be interconnected. For example, Glaeser and Sacerdote (2008) claim that the church attendance rises with education. They add, "...the relationship between education and religion attendance fluctuates highly across countries. In many developed countries, such as England and France, there is the same positive relationship between education and religion as in the U. S." (p. 2). Furthermore, this study indicates that those people who are more educated will be less driven by religious emotions: "Less educated people are more likely to believe in miracles, heaven, devils, and that adversity is a punishment for sin (even holding denomination constant). Religious beliefs and education appear to be substitutes" (Glaeser et al., 2008, p. 6).

In accordance with the connection of education and religion, Georgedes (2006)

writes,

Religion, education and government were very closely connected in the Middle Ages, as indeed in nearly every age except the modern world, beginning perhaps as early as the Reformation, but with continuing secularization of education through the Scientific Revolution, but more importantly, the Enlightenment (p. 73).

Combining religion and education together partially determine the social values of any society. Educated people from different cultures and ethnic backgrounds have greater tendencies to get along with each compared to uneducated people. New York City is an ideal model of how citizens of different nations can come together harmoniously to live and build a multicultural society. As a whole, America is a multicultural, and multiracial society that presents a model of democracy and equal rights. However, on foreign soil, people have a different opinion about American society. For example, foreigners fear that globalization, often understood as Americanization, might adversely affect religious and cultural identity, particularly for Muslims. However, in New York City, religious freedom has allowed individuals to perform their everyday rights as free citizens.

Prior to 9/11, New York City provided all ethnic groups with equal educational opportunities. Naturally, 9/11 brought about changes, particularly in epicenter of the terrorist attacks. Children of Arabs, Middle Eastern people, South Asian people, and those from Muslim backgrounds have conflicting feelings. On one hand, they feel sad and angry because of mistreatment by Americans. On the other hand, they feel guilty and

fearful because of the blame for terrorist acts. Many Muslim private schools in New York City closed after the terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center because they were afraid of becoming targets of revenge. Grasgreen (2008) writes about Mr. Hashmi, a student at the City University of New York's Brooklyn College, who was arrested on multiple charges relating to terrorism and is currently in solitary confinement at the Metropolitan Correctional Center in Manhattan. According to one of his instructors, he wrote his last class paper on the contradictions between basic American freedoms and ideals and the government's treatment of Middle Eastern or Arab-looking citizens since 9/11.

The students from Muslim countries in America have been teased and taunted for being terrorists. According to a study by Columbia University, "Twenty-eight percent of Muslim students report being stopped by a law enforcement officer as a result of racial profiling; 12 percent report being turned down for a job; 11 percent report suffering the destruction of property; and 7 percent said they have been physically assaulted" ("Post 9/11: NYC Muslim Public School Students Feel," 2008, para. 7).

Ironically, since 9/11, the number of immigrants from Muslim countries has doubled. Elliott (2006) writes, "In 2005, more people from Muslim countries became legal, permanent United States residents — nearly 96,000 — than in any year in the previous two decades" (para. 7). Also, he reveals an interesting fact: "...more than 40,000 of them were admitted last year, the highest annual number since the terrorist attacks" (Elliott, 2006, para. 7). Immigrants from Muslim countries are coming into the United States of America despite allegations that the Muslim world proposes against the

United States. Additionally, these immigrants come to attain the American dream of economic opportunity and political freedom. However, some may argue that Muslims are coming to seize the land and assimilate American society to the culture of Islam.

According to Wilders, the threat from Islam to western civilization not only comes through active terrorism but more often through assimilation “of our democratic societies by the vast growing numbers of Muslims immigrants” (Solomon et al., 2009, p. xiii).

Elliott (2006) mentions an interview with Behzad Yaghmaian, an Iranian exile and author of “*Embracing the Infidel: Stories of Muslim Migrants on the Journey West.*” According to Yaghmaian, “America has always been the promised land for Muslims and non-Muslims...Despite Muslims’ opposition to America’s foreign policy, they still come because the United States offers what they’re missing at home” (Elliot, 2006, para. 11). Therefore, what Muslims are missing in their native land is the freedom of religion and expression.

In the researcher’s personal experience, it is true that when extreme Muslims are unable to exercise force against the US and its Allied forces, they persecute Christians in Muslim countries, including moderate Muslims who do not approve of vengeful actions against non-Muslims. The Islamic world considers Christianity a Western religion and the US as a Christian country. Therefore, persecuting Christians in Muslim countries is justifiable in the eyes of extremists. When minorities arrive in New York City from predominantly Muslim countries, including moderate Muslims, they face the same discrimination, especially in schools where they have been branded as “terrorists.”

The study has given voice to Muslim young adults who have become the target of

hatred and discrimination. However, the focus remained on the positive experiences they had in the American school system. Therefore, the study contributed to new knowledge on this population. On the basis of the participants' everyday experiences and striving to become better citizens of this country, the teachers and administrators in the American school system can benefit from the study in various ways. First, the study gave voice to Muslim students from Pakistan and India that, in the light of their everyday experiences at the school, teachers and administrators can make changes in the schools' policies. Additionally, school counselors may be able to know how to unify Muslim and non-Muslim students; learning what can help Muslims young adults to feel included in the student body.

Research Question

The selected participants were asked a number of questions in an interview format to find the answer to the following research question: What is the lived experience of Muslim Pakistani and Indian students in their New York school system experience?

Guiding Questions.

The major research question was followed by a few guiding questions to seek detail information about the lived experience of Muslim Pakistani and Indian students in their New York school system experience.

1. What are the most prominent negative experiences that the participants had and are having in the New York school system?
2. What are the most prominent positive experiences that the participants had and are having in the New York school system?

3. What is the motivation denominator that has kept the participants pursuing their education in the New York school system to become better citizens of America?
4. How can these positive experiences be replicated in schools to promote peace and harmony among students?
5. How can these negative experiences be overcome and what are the implications for schools, policy makers, and future researchers as pertains to encouraging Muslim students to become part of the school?

Researcher's Interest in the Study

The researcher was born into a strong and prominent Christian family in the Punjab Province of Pakistan. Also, his father is a pastor in Pakistan. Growing up in the church, the researcher became very active in social outreach work. In Lahore, Pakistan, he took part in setting up a nonprofit organization, which is now a registered company designed to serve as an umbrella entity to cover various ongoing social ministries of the church, including The Mission School System and other programs that did not have any proper legal standing.

The researcher's main focus was on education. Specifically, he believes that it is a big misconception that all Muslims are the same; many Muslims worldwide are educated and open-minded in their religious institutions. Also, they think that war accomplishes nothing more than giving radical Muslims a platform to exercise more terrorism. These educated Muslims have studied Islam and found that Jihad Akbar or Kabir (Greater Jihad) is someone who fights against his own unrighteousness and lives according to the Qur'an and Sunnah (Traditions of the Prophet Muhammad). They

distinguish Jihad Asger or Sagir (Little Jihad), which is military action on the basis of present needs, versus the early days of Islam.

In 2005, under persecution, the researcher fled from Pakistan and obtained refugee status in the United States. Now, he lives in New York City and has received his undergraduate and graduate degrees from Christian schools. Here, in the United States of America, his classmates and church members have ridiculed him as a terrorist because he is from a Muslim country. The researcher questioned that if a Christian from a Muslim country, who has been persecuted for his faith, is being treated harshly by Christians, how Muslims can hope to be treated in the post 9/11 world. However, his positive experiences while attending Christian schools led him to believe that there is a way to overcome stereotypes and ignorance.

Delimitations

Although the study could have included Muslim Pakistani and Indian young adults from any school and college in the United States of America, the researcher decided to limit his sample to Muslim Pakistani and Indian young adults from New York who attended school in New York.

Key Terminology

9/11: September 11, 2001 when Muslim extremists flew two airplanes into the World Trade Center twin towers and killed about 3,000 people. This tragic incident began a new era of war—the war on terror.

Al-Hijra: It means to immigrate. It is an Islamic counterpart of A.D. Islamic calendar and starts with the date of Muhammad immigration (Hijra) from

Mecca to Medina. Also, it is the emigration of Muhammad and his followers into the city of Medina in 622 CE, marking the first year of the Islamic calendar: 1 AH (anno Hegirae). The Islamic calendar is a lunar calendar, and months begin when the first crescent of a new moon is sighted. The following are the names of Islamic months:

1. Muḥarram means "forbidden" in Arabic, so called because it was unlawful to fight during this month. Muharram is the second most sacred Muslim month, and includes the Day of Ashura.
2. Ṣafar means "void" in Arabic, supposedly named because pagan Arabs looted during this month and left the houses empty.
3. Rabīʿ I (Rabīʿ al-Awwal) means "the first Spring" in Arabic.
4. Rabīʿ II (Rabīʿ ath-Thānī or Rabīʿ al-Ākhir) means "the second (or last) Spring" in Arabic.
5. Jumādā I (Jumādā al-Ūlā) means "the first month of parched land" in Arabic.
6. Jumādā II (Jumādā ath-Thāniya or Jumādā al-Ākhira) means "the second (or last) month of parched land" in Arabic.
7. Rajab means "respect" or "honor" in Arabic. Rajab is another of the sacred months when fighting was traditionally forbidden.
8. Shaʿbān means "scattered" in Arabic, marking the time of year when Arab tribes disperse to find water.

9. Ramaḍān means "scorched" in Arabic. Ramadan is the most venerated month of the Hijri calendar, during which Muslims fast between sunrise and sunset.
10. Shawwāl means "raised" in Arabic, as she-camels begin to raise their tails during this time of year, after giving birth.
11. Dhū al-Qa‘da means "the one of truce" in Arabic. Dhu al-Qa'da was another month during which war was banned.
12. Dhū al-Ḥijja means "the one of pilgrimage" in Arabic, referring to the annual Muslim pilgrimage to Mecca, the Hajj.

Islam: (pronounced *al-‘islām* or *ʔis‘læ:m*) Islam is the official name of the religion followed by Muslims.

Imam: (pronounced A‘immah) It is an Islamic leadership position equivalent to religious leaders in other faiths. An Imam leads Islamic worship service and also provides religious answers to the issues of the Muslim community. Different sects of Islam define the position differently. Particularly, two major sects of Islam Sunni (90% of the total Muslim population in the world) and Shi’a (10% of the total Muslim population in the world) define position very differently. Sunni Muslims do not have a clergy like Christian priest (pastor, father, etc.) or Rabi. Therefore, Imam is not a cleric. Shi’a sect holds the position of Imam to be very secrete and unique. To Shi’a Muslims, the concept of Imam is a much more central religious position.

- Hadith: (pronounced /'hædɪθ/ or pronounced /hə'di:θ/[2]; al-ḥadīth [ħa'di:θ]; pl. aḥādīth; lit. "narrative") It implies the narration of a saying, act, or an approval of the prophet Muhammad, irrespective of whether the matter is authenticated or still disputed. The Hadith is a model of behavior by Muslims (Muslim Internet Dictionary).
- Hijab: (pronounced *he-zjab* or *hi'dʒæ:b*) in Arabic it literally means curtain or cover. Traditionally, Muslim women use head coverings and many cover their faces with the same covering. This act is a sign of modesty and is considered to be part of Muslim women's dress code.
- Jihad: (pronounced *ġihād* or *jihād*) Muslim Internet Dictionary (2009) defines: "It is an Arabic word the root of which is Jahada, which means to strive for a better way of life. The nouns are Juhd, Mujahid, Jihad, and Ijtihad. The other are: endeavor, strain, exertion, effort, diligence, fighting to defend one's life, land, and religion." It is also defined as a struggle to promote Islam. In the West, it is known as the "holy war" by Muslims. The Qur'an teaches Jihad.
- Muslim: (pronounced/'mʊslɪm/) A monotheist religious group that believes in Allah and an Arabian prophet, Muhammad. Muhammad founded this religion in the 6th century.
- Madrasah: An Islamic traditional school for Muslim children to learn the Qur'an and other religious subjects.

- Madrasas: (pronounced *madāris*) The plural form of Madrasah. Madris can also be used as plural of Madrasah.
- Madrasah ‘āmmah translates as "public school."
- Madrasah khāṣṣah translates as "private school."
- Madrasah dīniyyah translates as "religious school."
- Madrasah Islāmiyyah translates as "Islamic school."
- Madrasah jāmi‘ah translates as "university."
- Mosque: Place of Islamic worship. Muslims call it Masjid.
- Mujahedin: (pronounced singular *muğāhid* and plural *muğāhidīn*) A Muslim who fights Jihad is called a Mujahid. The plural form of Mujahid is Mujahedin.
- Militants: Islamic extremist train groups of Muslims for military purposes. These groups are officially unrecognized by the government.
- Maccan: The most holy city (place) for Muslims and the birth place of the Islamic prophet, Muhammad. Also, this is the place where Muslims from all over the world gather for Hajj, the Muslim pilgrimage.
- Medinan: The second most holy city (place) for Muslims and the death place of Islamic prophet, Muhammad.
- Mullah: (pronounced *mawlā*) A Muslim priest who teaches the Qur’an.
- Qur’an: (pronounced/kɒˈrɑːn *kor-AHN*/ *qurˈʔɑːn*) Muslims consider the Qur’an as the most holy book revealed to Muhammad from Allah.

- Shari'a: (pronounced *šarī'ah*) Islamic law is derived from the Qur'an, the Sunnah, and the hadith.
- Sunna: (pronounced '*sunna*') Also spelled Sunnah, it is the second source of Islamic jurisprudence, the first being the Qur'an. For Muslims, both sources are indispensable; one cannot practice Islam without consulting both of them. In Islam, the Arabic word Sunnah has come to denote the way Islamic prophet Muhammad lived his life (Muslim Internet Dictionary, 2009).
- Suras: (pronounced *sūrah*) The verses of a Qur'anic chapter.
- Shaheed: (pronounced singular *šahīd* plural *šuhadā'*) If a Muslim dies in battle while protecting a Muslim land or faith, Shaheed is the guarantee of entrance into paradise.
- Shi'a: (pronounced *Shī'ah*) The second largest denomination of Islam, after Sunni Islam. Shi'a Muslims broke from the Sunni majority in a disagreement over who should have succeeded Muhammad. This sect wanted Ali to be the successor because he was Muhammad's cousin and son-in-law became Shi'a, and those who accepted the legitimacy of the caliphs who followed Muhammad became Sunni. While the differences between Sunni and Shi'a were historically political in nature, different religious and legal traditions have since developed to further set them apart.

- Sufism: (pronounced *ṣūfī*) The mystical, esoteric dimension of Islam. Sufism can refer both to an approach to the practice and experience of Islam, which cuts across sectarian divisions, as well as more specific sets of practices propagated by Sufi orders.
- Sunni: The largest denomination of Islam. The term is derived from the word *Sunnah* and refers to the example and traditions of Muhammad.
- Ummah: According to Islamic theology, this world is divided between believers and unbelievers. Believers are those who follow Islam, and the teachings of the Qur'an and Prophet Mohammad. The term is used to describe both individual communities, both great and small, of faithful Muslims. It also refers to the worldwide community of Muslims—in the latter sense of the term it is synonymous with *Dar al-Islam*, or "The House of Islam," which refers to the world Islamic community. It is the Prophet Muhammad that is the founder of the *ummaḥ*
- Wahhabism: It is a religious movement originated in Saudi Arabia, this is a particularly strict variant of Sunni Islam, established in the 18th century by a Muslim cleric, Muhammad ibn Abd-al-Wahhab. Wahhabism is characterized by its call to return to the traditions and examples established by the first three generations of Muslims. Also, it is often regarded as a form of Salafism. Wahhabism is the dominant form of Islam practiced in Saudi Arabia, and this movement has spread all over the world due to Saudi money donated by the government and the royal families of Saudi Arabia

toward missionary work in the world.

CHAPTER TWO: REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Introduction

The United States of America has always welcomed immigrants with various ethnicities, cultures, races, and religious backgrounds. Furthermore, the American nation has never underestimated the power of freedom. In the United States, the opportunities to learn and explore have inspired other nations and its citizens to come and live in America. Specifically, education is central to the American dream. Lowe (2009) says, “Many people view it [education] as the means of social mobility and social stability. To others schooling can seem an obstacle to overcome and difficult to navigate effectively” (p. 10). Muslim immigrants have lived in America for decades and have enjoyed the equal opportunity of learning. However, the 9/11 tragedy divided the American nation on the issue of Islam and its followers. As a result, Muslim students in the American school system have suffered. In this chapter, the researcher will provide the arguments of both sides. The accompanied literature review will analyze the core issues of the division in America on the subject of Islam and how it has affected Pakistani and Indian Muslim students in the American school system.

Muslim Americans identify with their Muslim culture prior to identifying with the American culture. Naturally, Islamic education receives first priority; most Islamic schools do not charge fees, but provide benefits for those who attend the Islamic schools. Also, since these schools are non-profit and are usually run by an umbrella organization,

funding can come from any source. Logically, when an individual or an organization pays for the facility and programs, the school is responsible for carrying out the agenda or constitution of the funding resource, otherwise the school will risk being shut down due to lack of finances. Also, it makes young Muslim students vulnerable for indoctrination to please the beneficiary. Regarding this vulnerability, Horgan (2005) writes, “factors that point to some people having a greater openness to increased engagement than others.” For example, Coulson (2004) states that “Pakistan’s Muslim schools are privately run institutions that charge no fees and even provide free room and board in many cases” (p. 3). He accuses Saudi Arabia for providing funds to run these schools in Pakistan for the purpose of training students for militant work. He indicates in his report, “Potential terrorists are being educated today in tens of thousands of Islamist schools around the world” (Coulson, 2004, p.3).

According to Coulson’s report on various numbers of enrollments, he estimates a minimum 600,000 to 1.7 million, up to a third of Pakistan’s total student population, attends Madrasah. He claims that “militant madrases arm their students with an ideology that justifies and endorses violence against all who fall short of the Islamist ideal” (Coulson, 2004, p. 4). Furthermore, Horgan (2009) states,

It is not, nor has it even been, a valid presumption that terrorism can be *explained* through individual factors. Instead, the individual level of analysis should be characterized as aspiring to achieve a sense of both what role exists in terrorism studies for features assumed characteristics of individual issue (e.g. decision-making, personality, demographics, intelligence, predisposing risk factors for

involvement, etc).. (p. xx)

This chapter will examine the theoretical literature and empirical studies that relate to the Muslim community in America, particularly Muslim Pakistani and Indian students in the American school system, including all the aspects of Islam that influence Muslims worldwide.

Theoretical Framework

There have been attempts by researchers to define the learning process of Madrasah and how it contributes to the militant Islam throughout the world, but little research exists on the actual effects of modern Islamic schools in the West, particularly in America. Also, even less research exists on the perception of Muslim American students in the American school system. According to an organization known as the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL, 2003), “Classroom and school interventions that make learning environments safer, more caring, better managed, more participatory, and that enhance students’ social competence, have been shown to increase student attachment in school” (p. 2). In the aftermath of 9/11, Muslim Americans have reported discrimination, prejudice, and even physical assaults. As a part of American society, the Muslim students have been affected by such treatment. When a Muslim student in the American school system is forced to listen to derogatory remarks at school because of his or her physical appearance or religious affiliation, the student feels unsafe, and learning becomes secondary to survival. A Muslim student who has become a victim of bullying, prejudice, and discrimination faces multiple barriers daily in the form of verbal and physical aggression. Research shows that stress associated with bullying can

affect children in numerous ways, all of which are negative and, if left unattended, can lead to problems in adult life (Bulach, Penland Fulbright, & Williams, 2003; Copeland, 2009).

The American school system must provide safe classrooms (that is, safe from emotional or physical danger) for all students, including Muslim students. Bullying continues to be a major threat towards Muslim students emotionally and, at times, physically. Buhl (2010) indicates, “Most educators and parents would agree that schools should be safe and supportive with attention given not only to the intellectual capacities of children, but to their affective needs as well” (p. 13). The following are a few of the existing theories to provide a theoretical basis for the study.

The Theory of Frustration-Aggression and Bullying in Schools

There are two contrasting views about human frustration, aggression, and violence. Furthermore, these views are based on psychological theories of aggression and violence, questioning “whether humans are innately brutal or benign” (Gottesman & Brown, 1973). Gottesman and Brown (1973) adds that the theory of frustration and aggression “was originally formulated in 1939 by John Dollard et al., who proposed that frustration always leads to aggression and vice versa” (p. 322). Most of the research on frustration, aggression, and violence in the American school system relate to the growing phenomenon of bullying. Although violence and aggression is reported at an alarming rate among youth in the American society, it is also a global issue. Around the world, particularly in third world countries, this issue may exist because of poverty and poor education, but in America there are specific patterns that continue with each generation.

Bullying is one of the most common patterns among youth in the American school system with expressing frustration. Although the American media is currently giving more coverage to the issue than in previous times, children in the American school system are continuously forced to deal with this occurrence. However, for American Muslims, the phenomenon seems fairly new, and the tragedy of 9/11 has intensified its rate. For decades, bullying was limited to the traditional extortion of lunch money or verbally and physically humiliating the victims in front of the other students. However, in recent years, it has taken a whole new direction, involving gang formation within schools, which has encouraged bullies to use guns and other weapons to terrorize their victims. One particular resource states, “Aggressive bully-like behavior in schools is most often caused by an identifiable group of bullies who systematically victimize specific groups of their peers” (Bartini, p.14, as cited in Copeland, 2009, p. 12).

Muslim immigrants in America have adopted an attitude necessary to cope, and they are forming their own gangs. In an article, “The Rise of Muslim Gangs”, Valdemar (2009) wrote, “Rarely mentioned by the American media are gangs formed mostly of Middle Eastern immigrants” (para. 6). He expressed his fear that these Muslim gangs, formed by young Muslims Americans, are easy and accessible recruitment for international terrorists. The phenomenon of the rise of Muslim gangs was first published on Islam On Line (August, 2009) in an article written by Jamshed Bokan, entitled “In the Ghetto...? Youth Gangs and American Muslims”. Valdemar (2009) reviewed Bokan’s position on the phenomenon:

The Islam On Line article takes the point of view that these young Muslims are

only mimicking the popular styles of the American youth. They adapt the look, attitude, and behavior of the tough urbanized kids who are glamorized in gangsta' rap movies, music, and videos. Some say new gangster-style Muslims are only "wannabes," but this is the same denial expressed by earlier immigrant communities (para. 8).

Furthermore, Valdemar (2009) presented his position on the phenomenon of gangs in that all the gangs begin “with an excluded group who feel victimized by poverty, by the establishment, or by some other real or imagined injustice. They are fed by the anti-establishment culture of drugs, crime, hate, and racial separatism” (para. 1).

Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs

In 1943, Abraham Maslow's article “A Theory of Human Motivation”, and later his book “Toward a Psychology of Being”, present the following paradigm identifying a hierarchy of five basic needs that are crucial in the development of an individual (Buhl 2010; Simons, Irwin, & Drinnien, 1987).



Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs Chart

Maslow (1968) defined *self-actualization* as:

an episode, or a spurt in which the powers of the person come together in a particularly efficient and intensely enjoyable way, and in which he is more integrated and less split, more open for experience, more idiosyncratic, more perfectly expressive or spontaneous, or fully functioning, more creative, more humorous, more ego-transcending, more independent of his lower needs, etc. He becomes in these episodes more truly himself, more perfectly actualizing his potentialities, closer to the core of his being, more fully human. (p. 97)

In order to achieve the ultimate goal, self-actualization, a child's physiological needs (food, water, and oxygen), safety needs (love, affection, and belongingness), and social needs as defined by Maslow (1968) "No psychological health is possible unless this essential core of a person is fundamentally accepted, loved and respected by others and by himself" (p. 196). Buhl (2010) claimed "Once these basic needs are met, children can then develop the self-esteem." Simons et al. (1987) explained self-esteem as "a firmly based, high level of self-respect, and respect from others" (p. 2). To build on the research of Simons et al. (1987), Buhl (2010) called the process of Maslow theory of personality and the hierarchy of needs towards self-actualization "a fundamental step in the maturation and development of children" (p. 15).

The American school system could benefit by applying Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs when considering the developmental needs of Muslim Pakistani and Indian students in the New York school system experience. The Muslim and non-Muslim students in the American school system need gratification in the basic needs of belonging, safety, love, and respect, so that students can feel, "unthreatened, autonomous, interested,

and spontaneous, and thus dare to choose the unknown” (Maslow, 1968, p. 59). Also, Buhl (2010) states, “...it makes the choice to progress through the various levels attractive and less obtrusive” (p. 16) by “making the regressive choice less attractive and more costly” (Maslow, 1968, p. 59).

Social Development Theory

Muslims in America, particularly Pakistani and Indian students, are divided on the issue of social development. First, they are part of Muslim society worldwide. Secondly, they are part of South Asian Muslim society within the Muslim society. Lastly, Muslims are a part of American society. Social development process challenges their identification as Muslims and Americans.

The Social Development Theory, proposed by Vygotsky in 1978, states, “social interaction precedes development; consciousness and cognition are the end product of socialization and social behavior” (Learning Theories, 2009, p. 1). According to Moll (1990), Vygotsky argued, “A child’s development cannot be understood by a study of the individual. We must also examine the social world in which that individual life has developed” (p. 176). Buhl (2010) presents his opinion: “In Vygotsky’s theory, students play an active role in the learning process, and the experience is considered a reciprocal one between the teachers and the students” (p. 17). Teaching, according to the Social Development Theory, “implies a developmental progress, an unfolding of potential through the reciprocal influence of child and social environment” (Moll, 1990, p. 184).

Vygotsky (1978) writes, “Every function in the child’s cultural development appears twice: first, on the social level, and later, on the individual level; first, between

people (interpsychological) and then inside the child (intrapsychological)” (p. 28). Buhl (2010) suggests, “Learning, therefore, is embedded in the context of social relationships. A school environment that is caring helps to facilitate positive teacher-student interactions that promote effective development” (Noll, 1990, as cited by Buhl, 2010, p. 18).

Muslim students should be treated according to the theory of Vygotsky (1978), and their development must not be studied individually, but instead should, “examine the social world in which that individual life has developed” (p. 176).

Critical Race Theory (CRT)

According to Crenshaw and Peller (1995) this theory “is an intellectual movement that is both particular to our postmodern (and conservative) times and part of a long tradition of human resistance and liberation” (p. xi). The purpose of the Critical Race Theory was to “reexamine the terms by which race and racism have been negotiated in American consciousness, and to recover and revitalize the radical tradition of race-consciousness among African-Americans and other peoples of color” (Crenshaw & Peller, 1995, p. xiv).

This theory argues that Whites have been the primary beneficiaries of civil rights legislation. Ladson-Billings (1998) stated, “Critical race theory's usefulness in understanding education inequity is in its infancy. It requires a critique of some of the civil rights era's most cherished legal victories and educational reform movements, such as multiculturalism” (Abstract). American Muslims in the aftermath of 9/11 have reported that they are victims of racism. This study will examine whether the CRT

applies to the lived experience of Muslim Pakistani and Indian students in their New York school system experience.

Theory of Polarization

Borum (2010) defined his theory of polarization as, “The essence of which is an —us vs. them mindset, or what some would regard as in-group – out-group conflict” (p. 7). Polarization generates vulnerability for individuals to follow whatever and whoever makes them accepted and valued as an individual. The lack of belongingness among American Muslims students can be dangerous for the school system and the country. Goodenow (1993) defined belongingness as a “student’s sense of being accepted, valued, included, and encouraged by others (peers and teachers) in the academic classroom setting and of feeling oneself to be an important part of the life and activity of the class” (p. 25).

Cohesiveness of the Theoretical Framework

In this hermeneutical phenomenological study, the theoretical framework is based on The Theory of Frustration-Aggression, Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs, Social Development Theory, Critical Race Theory, and the Theory of Polarization. All of these theories are directly related to Muslim Pakistani and Indian students in their New York school system experience. This connection is created in order to balance the research context by considering parts, as well as the whole concept. According to van Manen (1990), a framework for hermeneutic phenomenological research should include a basic methodological structure of a dynamic interplay of six research activities: a) turning to a phenomenon, which seriously interests us and commits us to the world; b) investigating

the experience as we live it rather than as we conceptualize it; c) reflecting on the essential themes that characterize the phenomenon; d) describing the phenomenon through the art of writing and rewriting; e) maintaining a strong and oriented pedagogical relation to the phenomenon; and f) balancing the research context by considering parts, as well as the whole.

Secondly, van Manen (1990) indicated,

On one hand, it means that phenomenological research requires of the researcher that he or she stands in the fullness of life, in the midst of the world of living relations and shared situations. On the other hand it means that the researcher actively explores the category of lived experience in all its modalities and aspects.

(p. 32)

Therefore, this study adapted the Theory of Frustration-Aggression, Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, Social Development Theory, Critical Race Theory, and Theory of Polarization as the theoretical framework to analyze the data. The researcher was able to observe the life experience of the participants and balance "the research context by considering the part and the whole" (van Manen, 1990, p. 33) "in all its modalities and aspects" (van Manen, 1990, p. 32). The theories collectively and individually addressed the "human lifeworld" as suggested by van Manen "the lived world as experienced in everyday situations and relations" (p. 101). Lifeworld (lived world) is lived space (spatiality), lived body (corporeality), lived time (temporality), and lived human relation (relationally or community), van Manen (1990) called them "four existentials that may prove especially helpful as guides for reflection in the research process" (p. 101).

The data analysis and the emerged themes showed the interconnection of these theories. The Theory of Frustration-Aggression proposed that “frustration always leads to aggression and vice versa” (Gottesman & Brown, 1973, p. 322), and bullying is a form of aggression. Muslim Pakistani and Indian students are subject to frustration as victims and as perpetrators. This behavior is usually triggered when a child’s physiological needs, (food, water, and oxygen), safety needs (love, affection, and belongingness), and social needs are not met. As Maslow (1968) describes, “No psychological health is possible unless this essential core of a person is fundamentally accepted, loved and respected by others and by himself” (p. 196). Therefore, Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs provides an understanding of the participants’ Physiological Needs, Safety Needs, Social Needs, Esteem Needs, and Self Actualization.

Secondly, the lived experience of the participants was directly related to the Social Development Theory. The Social Development Theory (Vygotsky, 1978) emphasized the change that takes place in the life of a child during his social development which is an essential part of the “human lifeworld” (van Manen, 1990, p. 106). The lived experience of the Muslim Pakistani and Indian students in their New York school system experience couldn’t be fully understood by a study of the participants alone. Therefore, the Social Development Theory is required to examine the social world where the participants’ lives have developed (Moll, 1990; Vygotsky, 1978).

The Social Development Theory was interconnected with the Critical Race Theory because, in order to examine the social world where a Muslim child’s life developed, it was necessary to understand CRT in relation to the treatment that is reported

by Muslim Americans in the aftermath of 9/11. After the terrorist attacks on September 11th, racism, discrimination, and prejudice have been reported by Muslims more than any other minority group in America (Saeed, 2007; CAIR, 2010). As the result, Muslim Americans consider themselves to be a minority group and struggle with the issue of being American and Muslim concurrently (Khan, 2002). This issue with dual cultural identities lead to polarization, when a Muslim students develops the mindset of “us vs them” (Borum, 2010, p.7).

Regardless of how one looks at the framework, all the theories are interconnected and related to Muslim Pakistani and Indian students in their New York school system experience. For instance, if a young adult Muslim faces polarization (us vs them) during his social development, his social development will be effected because “social interaction precedes development; consciousness and cognition are the end product of socialization and social behavior” (Learning Theories, 2009, p. 1), whether that is due to racism, discrimination, or lack of self-esteem, bullying that can produce frustration and frustration always leads to aggression (Gottesman & Brown, 1973).

The cohesiveness of the framework helped to review literature, analyze the data, and formulate common themes. Therefore, the information derived from the theoretical framework provides a basis for the further literature review. The following section of this chapter will examine the available literature related to the theoretical framework.

The Western Media Propaganda and Social Development Theory

The Western media has constantly ignored the great amount of moderate Muslims and minorities in Muslim countries. The perception of the average American is subject to

the limited information he or she obtains on Islamic countries through the media.

Aandradi, Das, Khwaja, and Zajonc (2009) argue that it is troubling that most reviews fail to base their findings on publicly available data. A diminutive fraction of Muslims in predominately Muslim countries have influenced the international media. Their actions cannot represent the attitude of over 1.2 billion Muslims worldwide and many more non-Muslims living in the Muslim world. According to McClure (2009), the media in the West has exacerbated the issue, blatantly accusing Madrasas of cultivating radical Islam. Furthermore, a 9/11 Commission Report (2004) concluded that a rise of Islamic extremism can be traced back to their religious education system called the Madrasah. However, the report acknowledges the fact that corruption and often ineffective governments create environments where poor families are likely to send their children to schools where they will likely be recruited to side with radical Islam.

Muslims throughout the world have accused the Western Media of being a major instigator of prejudice against Islamic and Muslim countries. Also, it is a common belief among in the Muslim culture that Western media is actively involved in propagating anti-Arab and Muslim perceptions. According to Islam for Today (2010), an online source for Islamic theology, these prejudices are based in ignorance and are largely unfounded. Furthermore, the website demonstrates aggression and anguish against the Western media by rejecting their most frequently used terms, such as "fundamental," "extremist," or "discriminatory" in association with Islam. An article published on the site, "Islam and the Western media," attributes the negative connotations that inevitably go with these terms to be manipulated by Western biases that are then transferred to the media, further

exacerbating the issue. Ahmad (1993) advocates the Muslim perspective, pointing out the alternative consequences of this distortion of truth, in that the Western media, because of its negative portrayal of Islam and Muslims, is perceived as a hostile creature in itself. He considers the projection of “political instability” and “the poor treatment of women” to be two of the most impotent prejudices against Islam.

Ahmad (1993) also provides his predictions that after the collapse of the USSR, Islam would be the next enemy of the West. Now, the USSR has departed and Islam is supposedly standing in the way of the ultimate global supremacy of the West. He is expecting a final crusade between Islam and the West, holding the West and the Western media accountable for the aggressive behavior of the Muslims. The justification of violence, anger, and frustration exists because of the tragic lack of objective thought involved in the Islamic faith. According to Ahmad (1993), despair and wild impulses for revenge are much more common feelings associated with Islam. He claims that anyone who has access to the Western media, television, radio, or newspapers will be swamped with hostile projections of Islam and Muslims. Islam for Today (2010) states that the “negative images of Islam are very much more prevalent than any others, and that such images correspond, not to what Islam ‘is’...but to what prominent sectors of a particular society take it to be” (“Islam and the Western media,” 2010, para. 10). According to the site, those prominent sectors have the power to present a negative image of Islam. However, a movie obsession (2006) presents a different picture on “Obsession: Radical Islam’s war against the West.” This documentary depicts the hatred the Radicals are teaching on Arab television. Also, it suggests that it is not the Western media who is

responsible for hatred and prejudice but the Arab and Middle Eastern media who promote global jihad, and the Islamic goal of world domination.

Islamic Education System, the Modern World, and the Theory of Polarization

The Western media and Western researchers have been using an unusual term, Madrasah, since 9/11 regarding the military training and fundamental teaching centers of Jihad. It is exposed as a new education system that is responsible for training young Muslim men and women to resolve religious conflicts through violence. Madrasah, however, was not a new word to Muslims, but the rest of the world was unaware of this word and its underlying concept. In recent years, the West has accused Madrasah of being responsible for more of the ongoing terrorism in the world than in previous times. Blanchard (2008) points out the increasing interest of analysts and the officials involved in deciding United States policy in regards to their stance towards Madrased. He presents two popular views about the existence of Madrased: that “Madrased promote Islamic extremism and militancy, and are a recruiting ground of terrorism” (Blanchard, 2008, para. 1) and “most of these religious schools have been blamed unfairly for fostering anti-U.S. sentiments and argue that Madrased play an important role in countries where millions of Muslims live in poverty and state educational infrastructure is in decay” (Blanchard, 2008, para. 1).

Bergen and Pandey (2005) write in *The New York Times*’ article, “The Madrased Myth,” that “Secretary of Defense Donald H. Rumsfeld had queried in a leaked curiosity memorandum, ‘Are we capturing, killing or deterring and

dissuading more terrorists every day than the Madrasah and the radical clerics are recruiting, training and deploying against us?” (para. 1). The 9-11 Commission Report describes Madrasas as “incubators of violent extremism” (The 9/11 Commission, 2004, p. 367), but Bergen and Pandey (2005) argue that the report has left a gaping hole in important information by failing to report whether any of the 9/11 hijackers attended Madrasah training schools. Furthermore, they emphasize that most of the terrorists in recent attacks in the West were well-educated people. Some of them received their degrees from Western universities; and a few even held PhD degrees.

Farooqui (2002), a moderate Muslim from India, claims that Madrasas aren’t solely responsible for terrorism today; according to him, we can also look to Wahhabism, a Saudi funded ideology that is being promoted through Pakistani Madrasas. Another Bangladeshi Muslim comments on the same site that the problems of the world today lie in Saudi Arabia and Pakistan (Chatterjee, 2003, para. 1). Chatterjee (2003) expands the claim by stating, “These [Saudi Arabia and Pakistan] ignorant fanatics are pumping billions of petro-dollars to convert the entire world. It reshapes the thinking of individual cultures, small tribal customs, education, development, and terrorism” (para. 1). He asserts that when the United States of America sends wheat and blankets to earthquake victims as humanitarian aid somewhere, Saudis send the Qur’an. He goes on revealing another shocking fact that “the mosque is the source of hate, where mullahs [Muslim priests] speak so openly negative about other faiths. If particular non-Muslims say that Islam is

a religion of peace, I will tell you go to Pakistan, or Iran, or Saudi Arabia, live there for a few years and say it again” (Chaterjee, 2003, para. 1).

However, Falk (2006) argues the following:

According to contemporary media opinion, the problem with Islam, and by implication, with Islamic education, is that it never underwent a reformation that freed individual religious inquiry from the control of a religious hierarchy. Thus, it has been assumed that Islam and Islamic education remain bound to rigid seventh-century codes of belief. This opinion is indicative of Eurocentric assumptions and is subject to considerable scholarly debate. (Falk, 2006, “Abstract”)

Moreau, Yousafzai, Hussain, & Hirsh (2003), a team of *Newsweek* journalists, recorded a series of interviews with several Madrasses’ faculty and students in Pakistan. At one of the Madrasses, faculty member Mullah Taj Mohammad, gave the reason why Madrasses should continue teaching the Jihad. He said, "I've heard that many Muslim girls have infidel boyfriends—and clink glasses of alcohol with Jews" (Moreau et al., 2003, para. 2). According to the report, a worse concept is the killing of Muslims in Afghanistan and Iraq by Americans. Furthermore, Americans are accused of poisoning Muslim minds everywhere with movies and music. A particular young student Abdul declares that he dreams of enlisting in the jihad against Afghanistan's U.S.-backed president, Hamid Karzai in Afghanistan.

The *Newsweek* reporters witnessed a deep respect and gratitude toward Osama bin Laden and Mullah Omar in Pakistan. They found public support for Taliban, yet there are

many who advocate that these are simply schools providing religious education to boys (and some girls) who would probably be otherwise forced to bypass an education (Bergen et al., 2005, para. 4). Some Madrasas are, however, associated with providing fighters. Cockcroft et al. (2008) consider the significance of religious education as a main factor for why the Madrasah education system remains popular in Pakistan. They are convinced that poverty is not necessarily the major element to explain Muslims in Pakistan choose a Madrasah. The 9/11 Commission Report (2004) concludes the rise of Madrasas in the following words:

Pakistan's endemic poverty, widespread corruption, and often ineffective government create opportunities for Islamist recruitment. Poor education is a particular concern. Millions of families, especially those with little money, send their children to religious schools, or Madrasas. Many of these schools are the only opportunity available for an education, but some have been used as incubators for violent extremism. According to a Karachi's police commander; there are 859 Madrasas teaching more than 200,000 youngsters in his city alone. (The commission report, 2004, p. 367)

Cockcroft et al. (2008) claim otherwise, insisting that parents choose Madrasah educations for their children solely because they wish to provide an Islamic focused education. On the contrary, Blanchard (2008) points out that Madrasah attendance has risen in proportion to the nation's lack of public school systems and their government's encouragement for parents to send their children to Madrasas. The method of education is debatable because these Islamic schools are given credit for preserving areas of

knowledge, such as science, philosophy, medicine, and mathematics during the dark ages (Tierra, 2010). Nevertheless, it is nearly impossible to learn the correct statistics about present day Madrasas and the enrollment because no records can be found of their existence. According to Andrabi et al. (2009), the only reliable source they have found in Pakistan was the official 1998 Census of Population, the 1991, 1998, and 2001 rounds of the Pakistan Integrated Household Surveys, and a 2003 census of schooling choice conducted by their research team. Their team noticed that speculation about the rise of enrollment in Pakistani Madrasas as a preferred education system in the recent year is false. They argue that despite the importance of the veracity of this information, the reports used to make this statement is, tragically, not based on any public data.

According to Khalid and Khan (2006), the use and institutionalization of Madrasas is both about control over the flow of information and the solidification of a deep-rooted Islamic value system. Khalid and Khan are neither religious leaders nor Madrasah teachers; both are professors in two modern colleges. Specifically, Khalid teaches at Government College Township, Lahore, Pakistan, and Khan teaches at the Institute of Policy Studies Islamabad, Pakistan. They reveal the following, which could be considered a core reason why some of the Muslims are anti-West:

With the decline of the Mogul Empire, European nations started removing the guise of trade expeditions and assumed the role of traditional imperial powers. When the East India Company was granted civil powers in 1765, it decided to employ the instrument of education to consolidate its rule. To achieve this end, it focused attention on opening schools run by Christian missionaries. Though

Muslims were hesitant about their children being educated in schools run by Christian missionaries, Hindus were happily admitted to these institutions (Khalid et al., 2006, p. 307).

It is remarkable how the Madrasah education is different in every country in terms of curriculum and structure. On the other hand, the focus remains on teaching the Qur'an, and the Hadith. According to Blanchard (2008), Madrasah institutions exist not only in the Middle East, but in all major parts of Asia, parts of Africa, Europe, and the United States. Therefore, the difference between Islamic education system and the western education system produce polarization among Muslim students. Both education system condemn the methods of each other's, and blame each other for indoctrination and brainwashing.

Quran and Terrorism and the Theory of Frustration-Aggression

It is hard to define the term terrorism, Berrebi (2007) writes, "Definitions of terrorism vary widely, and it is therefore difficult, if not impossible, to find a single definition that covers all aspects of terrorism as they exist in today's world." However, the U.S State Department provides a definition that seems to be acceptable in scholarly literature. The definition is provided in Title 22 of the United States Code, Section 2656f (d), stating: The term 'terrorism' means premeditated, politically motivated violence perpetrated against noncombatant¹¹ targets by subnational groups or clandestine agents, usually intended to influence an audience (Berrebi, 2007; Conway, 2002; Karolyi & Martell, 2006; & Ruby, 2003).

Whether Islam promotes terrorism depends on the interpretation of the Qur'anic

teaching. McClure (2009) indicates that these religious schools [Madrases] usually include mandatory lessons in the Qur'an, including reading and memorization. Keurst (2009) mentions how the government of Pakistan controls the educational system and encourages the teaching of Islam in all Pakistani schools, not only Madrases.

Interestingly enough, Muslim countries have been the target of terrorist activities by extreme Muslims for decades. Kazim et al. (2008) indicate in their research that in Pakistan over 1,000 people have died as a result of terrorist actions. The protest of these extremists is very legitimate according to their Qur'anic interpretation.

Despite the number of casualties being so high, there is no information yet available on the Pakistani public's feelings toward terrorist suicide bombings within their country. It has, however, been determined that sympathetic attitudes toward suicide bombings usually come from a mindset that is unable to separate religion from politics, along with belonging to the Sunni sect and having deep religious convictions. It has been found that other Shi'a sects are less responsive to illegal and violent activity (Kazim et al, 2008). According to the Kazim et al. (2008), a study of the mindset of suicide bombers shows that among suicide bombers the idea of martyrdom is a popular theology: that of receiving paradise as a reward from Allah. However, in the study the majority of the sample group disagreed with this theology. Benmelech and Berrebi (2007) state in their study that suicide bombers find rational explanation for their suicide-related activities. Furthermore, Benmelech and Berrebi (2007) provide the following list of the benefits suicide bombers receive:

The benefits of suicide-related activities include: fame, honor, and recognition;

moral status; value of accomplishment; beneficial consequences and rewards for significant others; beneficial consequences and rewards for self; and the magnitude of harm and humiliation imposed on enemies. These benefits are likely to be increasing in the expected impact of a suicide attack. Accordingly, if able suicide bombers are capable of launching more successful attacks, individuals with greater human capital will be willing to participate in larger-scale suicide attacks (p. 224).

When extremists, especially religious extremists, cannot serve their society, religion and government in a constructive way, and when they are unable to express their beliefs and strong convictions, they turn to a goal beyond this world. Life seems meaningless before the glory and dignity a person can receive in that certain group or society (Borum, 2004).

Sixteenth century philosopher and famous mathematician Blaise Pascal said “Men never do evil so completely and cheerfully as when they do it from religious conviction” (QuoteDB, 2011). The teachings of Jihad, and dying for the cause of Allah becomes an easy escape from this world and also greater respect, fame and honor in this world as Benmelech et al. (2007) mentioned in the above quote. Although, the commandments in the Qur’an were given to sixth century Muslims during the time of the Prophet Muhammad, the verses have everlasting influence on every Muslim generation. For example, many of the suicide bombers who failed to activate the bombs and were arrested recite the promise of paradise from the Qur’an. For example, Qur’an 3:140-143 assures how “martyrs” for Allah will “enter heaven”. Secondly, Qur’an 17:33 is one of the most significant verses to suicide bombers and terrorists because it not only justifies

the death of Shahid but also the deaths of other Kafirs: “And do not kill the soul which Allah has forbidden, except by right.” Some other Qur’anic verses are as following:

- Let those fight in the way of Allah who sell the life of this world for the other. Who so fighteth in the way of Allah, be he slain or be he victorious, on him We shall bestow a vast reward (Qur’an 4:74)
- Allah hath purchased of the believers their persons and their goods; for theirs (in return) is the garden (of Paradise): they fight in His cause, and slay and are slain: a promise binding on Him in truth, through the Law, the Gospel, and the Qur'an: and who is more faithful to his covenant than Allah? then rejoice in the bargain which ye have concluded: that is the achievement supreme (Qur’an 9:111).
- And there is the type of man who gives his life to earn the pleasure of Allah... (Qur’an 2:207).
- O ye who believe! Shall I lead you to a bargain that will save you from a grievous Penalty? That ye believe in Allah and His Messenger, and that ye strive (your utmost) in the Cause of Allah, with your property and your persons: That will be best for you, if ye but knew! He will forgive you your sins, and admit you to Gardens beneath which Rivers flow, and to beautiful mansions in Gardens of Eternity: that is indeed the Supreme Achievement." This verse was given at the battle Uhud and uses the Arabic word, Jihad (Qur’an 61:10-12).

- And if you are killed in the cause of Allah or die - then forgiveness from Allah and mercy are better than whatever they accumulate [in this world]. And whether you die or are killed, unto Allah you will be gathered (Qur'an 3:157-158).
- Those who are slain in the way of Allah - he will never let their deeds be lost. Soon will he guide them and improve their condition, and admit them to the Garden, which he has announced for them (Qur'an 47:4-6).
- And never think of those who have been killed in the cause of Allah as dead. Rather, they are alive with their Lord, receiving provision, Rejoicing in what Allah has bestowed upon them of His bounty, and they receive good tidings about those [to be martyred] after them who have not yet joined them - that there will be no fear concerning them, nor will they grieve. They receive good tidings of favor from Allah and bounty and [of the fact] that Allah does not allow the reward of believers to be lost (Qur'an 3:169-171).
- So let those fight in the cause of Allah who sell the life of this world for the Hereafter. And he who fights in the cause of Allah and is killed or achieves victory - We will bestow upon him a great reward (Qur'an 4:74).
- Fight them until there is no [more] fitnah and [until] worship is [acknowledged to be] for Allah. But if they cease, then there is to be no aggression except against the oppressors (Qur'an 2:193).

- And fight them until there is no fitnah and [until] the religion, all of it, is for Allah . And if they cease - then indeed, Allah is Seeing of what they do (Qur'an 8:39).
- Fighting has been enjoined upon you while it is hateful to you. But perhaps you hate a thing and it is good for you; and perhaps you love a thing and it is bad for you. And Allah Knows, while you know not (Qur'an 2:216).
- (different translation:) Prescribed for you is fighting, though it is hateful to you.
- Indeed, Allah has purchased from the believers their lives and their properties [in exchange] for that they will have Paradise. They fight in the cause of Allah , so they kill and are killed. [It is] a true promise [binding] upon Him in the Torah and the Gospel and the Qur'an. And who is truer to his covenant than Allah ? So rejoice in your transaction which you have contracted. And it is that which is the great attainment (Qur'an 9:111).
- Those who believe fight in the cause of Allah , and those who disbelieve fight in the cause of Taghut. So fight against the allies of Satan. Indeed, the plot of Satan has ever been weak (Qur'an 4:76).
- ...But if they turn away, then seize them and kill them wherever you find them... (Qur'an 4:89).

- And from those who say, "We are Christians" We took their covenant; but they forgot a portion of that of which they were reminded. So We caused among them animosity and hatred until the Day of Resurrection. And Allah is going to inform them about what they used to do (Qur'an 5:14).
- O believers, take not Jews and Christians as friends; they are friends of each other. Those of you who make them his friends is one of them. God does not guide an unjust people (Qur'an 5:51).
- Make war on them until idolatry is no more and Allah's religion reigns supreme (Qur'an 8:39).
- O Prophet! Exhort the believers to fight. If there are 20 steadfast men among you, they shall vanquish 200; and if there are a hundred, they shall rout a thousand unbelievers, for they are devoid of understanding (Qur'an 8:65).
- It is not for any Prophet to have captives until he has made slaughter in the land. (Qur'an 8:67).
- And when the sacred months have passed, then kill the polytheists wherever you find them and capture them and besiege them and sit in wait for them at every place of ambush. But if they should repent, establish prayer, and give zakah, let them [go] on their way. Indeed, Allah is Forgiving and Merciful (Qur'an 9:5).

- O you who have believed, indeed the polytheists are unclean, so let them not approach al-Masjid al-Haram after this, their [final] year. And if you fear privation, Allah will enrich you from His bounty if He wills. Indeed, Allah is Knowing and Wise (Qur'an 9:28).
- Fight those who believe neither in God nor the Last Day, nor what has been forbidden by God and his messenger, nor acknowledge the religion of Truth, even if they are People of the Book, until they pay the tribute and have been humbled (Qur'an 9:29) Another source translation states: The unbelievers are impure and their abode is hell. Another translation for the same verse states: Humiliate the non-Muslims to such an extent that they surrender and pay tribute.
- Whether unarmed or well-equipped, march on and fight for the cause of Allah, with your wealth and your persons (Qur'an 9:41)
- O Prophet! Make war on the unbelievers and the hypocrites. Be harsh with them. Their ultimate abode is hell, a hapless journey's end (Qur'an 9:73).
- Fight unbelievers who are near to you (Qur'an 9:123), different translation:
- Believers! Make war on the infidels who dwell around you. Let them find harshness in you. Another translation: Ye who believe! Murder those of the disbelievers....

- ...Allah is an enemy to the disbelievers... (Qur'an 2:98).
- So when you meet those who disbelieve [in battle], strike [their] necks until, when you have inflicted slaughter upon them, then secure their bonds, and either [confer] favor afterwards or ransom [them] until the war lays down its burdens. That [is the command]. And if Allah had willed, He could have taken vengeance upon them [Himself], but [He ordered armed struggle] to test some of you by means of others. And those who are killed in the cause of Allah - never will He waste their deeds (Qur'an 47:4),
- different translation: When you meet the unbelievers in the battlefield, strike off their heads, and when you have laid them low, bind your captives firmly.
- Muhammad is Allah's apostle. Those who follow him are ruthless to the unbelievers but merciful to one another. Through them, Allah seeks to enrage the unbelievers (Qur'an 48:29).
- Prophet! Make war on the unbelievers and the hypocrites and deal sternly with them. Hell shall be their home, evil their fate (Qur'an 66:9).
- Indeed, they who disbelieved among the People of the Scripture and the polytheists will be in the fire of Hell, abiding eternally therein. Those are the worst of creatures (Qur'an 98:6).

Hadith is the second holiest spiritual instructions for Muslims, and Hadith states:

- Bukhari (52:54) - The words of Muhammad: "I would love to be martyred in Allah's Cause and then get resurrected and then get martyred, and then get resurrected again and then get martyred and then get resurrected again and then get martyred."
- Muslim (20:4635) - "Nobody who enters Paradise will (ever like to) return to this world even if he were offered everything on the surface of the earth (as an inducement) except the martyr who will desire to return to this world and be killed ten times for the sake of the great honor that has been bestowed upon him."
- Muslim (20:4681) - "Surely, the gates of Paradise are under the shadows of the swords."
- Muslim (20:4655) - A man asks Muhammad "which of men is the best?" Muhammad replies that it is the man who is always ready for battle and flies into it "seeking death at places where it can be expected."

The above-mentioned verses are part of the education Muslim students receive from Islamic schools, and the portion of the Qur'an containing the above verses is widely memorized by young Muslims throughout the world. Therefore, depending on the interpretation and philosophy of the school, Muslim students receive different explanation of the verses. For instance, the Middle East Media Research Institute published a special report (2002) stating that Saudi Arabia has control over education in the Kingdom (Stalinsky, 2002). Also, Saudi Arabia is deeply involved in a quest to spread Islam as far as possible to all parts of the world. Saudi Arabia teaches Wahhabism

as a sect of Islam. The founder of the Wahhabiyya movement, Sheikh Muhammad Ibn Abd Al-Wahhab, started the crusade in the 18th century. Furthermore, other Muslim countries practice the same control over education. Almost every Muslim country has been attacked by Muslim terrorists on the basis of theological and political differences. As a result, Muslim people are worried about these attacks and afraid of Islamic extremism. The Pew Research Center's (2005) report finds a balance of opinion in predominantly Muslim countries, that Islam is gradually having a larger impact on politics and there is little opposition to this impact on politics. The larger impact of Islamic extremism foreshadows Islamic hegemony.

The Theory of Frustration-Aggression

McCauley and Moskaleiko (2008) identify political radicalization as an outcome that occurs through a change in extremist's "beliefs, feelings, and behaviors in directions that increasingly justify intergroup violence and demand sacrifice in defense of the in group" (p. 416). There are a number of things that can contribute to the making of a suicide bomber, including indoctrination based on spirituality, political and economical motivation, a social and regional agenda, poverty, illiteracy, government, ethnicity, race, or unresolved conflict. For instance, McCauley and Moskaleiko (2008) provide the twelve most prominent mechanisms that encourages radicalization: (1) Personal victimization, (2) Political grievance, (3) Joining a radical group—the slippery slope, (4) Joining a radical group—the power of love, (5) Extremity shift in like-minded groups, (6) Extreme cohesion under isolation and threat, (7) Competition for the same base of support, (8) Competition with state power—condensation, (9) Within-group competition

—fissioning, (10) Jujitsu politics, (11), Hate, and (12) Martyrdom. Furthermore, Moghaddam (2005) indicates a consistent pattern among those who become terrorists. First, potential terrorists feel discontent and perceive themselves or their group as being deprived, which leads to feelings of frustration and aggression. According to Borum (2004), aggression is always produced by frustration, which leads to aggression; he also suggests that a group or an individual first identifies an undesirable state of affairs; then frames that event as unjust; then blames the injustice on a target policy, person, or nation; and then demonizes the responsible party to justify the aggression.

According to the Pew Research Center, Osama bin Laden's popularity is declining among Muslim nations. Muslim people consider the Islamic extremists a threat to their countries. According to the survey, "Nearly three-quarters of Moroccans and roughly half of those in Pakistan, Turkey, and Indonesia see Islamic extremism as a threat to their countries. At the same time, most Muslims are expressing less support for terrorism than in the past" (Pew Research Center, 2005, para. 1). The data provided by Pew Research Center reflects the true picture of Muslim people who consider Islamic extremism a threat to their own countries (See Table 1). Based on this information, there is a question on the factors that have contributed to the unexpected change in the Muslim world. Also, there is an uncertainty on whether Wahhabism is losing its respect among Muslims or are moderate Muslims able to influence the Islamic societies. The report reveals another fact, that despite such a drastic change in the opinion of Muslims and non-Muslims in predominantly Muslim countries concerning Islamic extremism, that it is bad in any

form, yet they are agreed that Islam is a revolution and a changing agent in the world's policies. Muslims believe that Islam is playing a "greater" role in politics.

Also, the data shows the decline in suicide bombing support (See Table 2). This support is the result of mutual efforts of Muslim governments. Specifically, there are portions of the Qur'an which forbid suicide attacks:

- O ye who believe!... [do not] kill yourselves, for truly Allah has been to you Most Merciful. If any do that in rancor and injustice, soon shall We cast him into the Fire... (Qur'an 4:29-30).
- O ye who believe! Remain steadfast for Allah, bearing witness to justice. Do not allow your hatred for others make you swerve to wrongdoing and turn you away from justice. Be just; that is closer to true piety (Qur'an 5:8).
- Qur'an continues exulting the value of a life: "...if any one slew a person - unless it be for murder or for spreading mischief in the land - it would be as if he slew the whole people: and if any one saved a life, it would be as if he saved the life of the whole people" (Qur'an 5:32).

According to Berrebi (2007), most suicide bombers have little in common with traditional suicide victims. One of the extreme Islamic groups responsible for suicide bombing is Al-Qaeda. This group has used suicidal assaults as a weapon within Islamic countries to blackmail the government and against Western countries to threaten them (Kazim et al., 2008; & Preti, 2006). Nadar (2010) brings another side of the same argument that the radical Muslims have changed the teachings of Islam to fulfill their personal ambitions. Also, Al-Qaeda rejects the authority of the Hadith and Sunna

because they are made by men and contradict the Qur'an. He finds roots of today's radical Muslim back in the 6th century at the origin of Islam. He writes: "They even broke the laws of the Qur'an itself by taking the verses out of context to serve their purpose" (Nadar, 2010, para. 2). Furthermore, Nadar presents specific verses to prove that radical Muslims have broken the laws of the Qur'an. The Qur'an teaches, "We will deal with the dividers. They accept the Quran only partially" (Qur'an 15:90-91).

Another Qur'anic verse suggests the idea of humanity, peace, and brotherhood: "O people, we created you from the same male and female, and rendered you distinct peoples and tribes, that you may recognize one another. The best among you in the sight of GOD is the most righteous. GOD is Omniscient, Cognizant" (Qur'an, 49:13). Also, the Qur'an commands Muslims not to kill anyone because life is sacred before Allah: "You shall not kill - GOD has made life sacred - except in the course of justice. These are His commandments to you that you may understand" (Qur'an, 6:151, 17:33).

An online source submission ("Terrorism and Islam," 2010) claims that Islam is not to blame for terrorist activities, but it is the terrorist individuals that are the cause. He goes on to further state, "not everyone who calls himself is a Muslim" (para. 31), implying that Islamic terrorists are not even fundamentally Muslim. Furthermore, Wike and Samaranayake (2006) provide a literature review on suicide bombing and Islam. According to these authors and other researchers, Islamic groups use suicide attacks when nothing else meets the requirements of posing a threat on the target and other strategies have failed. Other reasons for use of this tactic could be because one group wants to prove its authenticity or supremacy over the other Islamic militant groups, or for

political reasons (Crenshaw, 1998; Bloom, 2005; Pape, 2003; Abadie, 2004). Wike and Samaranayake (2006) conclude that opposition to American policy is a driving force behind terrorist organizations. Other sources, such as Atran (2004), find no evidence that most people who support suicide actions hate Americans' cultural freedoms, but they oppose U.S. foreign policies, particularly regarding the Middle East. The study by Wike and Samaranayake (2006) shows that people who favor terrorism will have an unfavorable opinion of the United States. Also, they believe that US policy is inconsiderate of Islamic nations, and are afraid of the potential for military involvement in their country.

The Qur'an encourages Muslims to fight against non-Muslims. Natan (2010) provides a list of 164 Qur'anic verses that encourage Muslims to slay non-Muslims without mercy "and slay them wherever ye catch them...." (Qur'an 2:191). For instance, Islam teaches that Allah says, "O you who believe, fight those of the unbelievers near you and let them see how harsh you can be. Know that Allah is with the righteous" (Qur'an 9:123). Many Islamic militant groups use verses, such as "Fighting is prescribed for you, and ye dislike it. But it is possible that ye dislike a thing which is good for you, and that ye love a thing which is bad for you. But Allah knoweth, and ye know not" (Qur'an 2:216), to condemn the moderate Muslims who do not want to engage in any violence.

Also, these groups claim that they will stop everything if the world will accept Islam and become Muslim. They justify their position in Qur'anic verses; for example,

Say to the Unbelievers, if (now) they desist (from Unbelief), their past would be forgiven them; but if they persist, the punishment of those before them is already

(a matter of warning for them). And fight them on until there is no more tumult or oppression, and there prevail justice and faith in Allah altogether and everywhere; but if they cease, verily Allah doth see all that they do (Qur'an, 8:38-39).

Contrastingly, the Qur'an contains verses encouraging peace and Jihad. The dilemma could be resolved by looking at the historical development of the Qur'an. The Qur'an is not in chronological order; therefore, it is hard to understand why it would encourage terrorism and discourage it at the same time. The Qur'an can be divided into two parts, the Meccan suras (chapters), and the Medinan suras (chapters). Those chapters that Prophet Muhammad claimed were revealed to him from Allah through Gabriel while in Mecca are called Meccan suras, and those that were revealed to him in Medina are called Medinan suras. According to Islamic history, in 622, Muhammad went to Yathrib (later called Medina) and became a true military leader. Therefore, the Medinan suras tend to be much more belligerent ("Peace with Realism," 2010, para. 1).

Madrases have been viewed as a place to brainwash and indoctrinate. Teachers in these types of Islamic education centers take the negative parts of the Qur'an and use them to inspire their students. Muslims throughout the world consider Islamic education essential for their children. Regardless of sect or wealth, they want their children to learn the Qur'an and the Hadith. It is the duty of governments to hold Madrasas accountable for the content and methods that are used in education.

Brief History of Religion and Education in America

The history of America provides a deep connection between religion and education. However, the constitution forbids any establishment of the law that promotes

or discourages certain faiths. Many sociology scholars and researchers have written on the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution that states, “Congress shall make no law respecting any establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof...” (Dodge, 1969; McConnel, 1990; Lupu, 1989). In the 16th century, when state-affiliated Christianity in Europe was challenged by theologians like Martin Luther, state-sponsored persecution began in this country. Under this religious oppression, the migration of Europeans formed a new country where everyone could practice their faith without any maltreatment. Therefore, North America became their refuge. “The primary education of upper class children in colonial days included reading, writing, simple math, poems, and prayers. Paper and textbooks were scarce so boys and girls recited their lessons until they memorized them” (Stratford Hall, 2011, para. 1). A list of most commonly used book in early days included “the Bible, a primer, and a hornbook” (Stratford Hall, 2011, para. 1).

Ethnically Diverse Muslim Communities in America

There are several different stories about the origin of Islam in the United States of America. Many Muslims have attempted to trace the origin of Islam as far back as five centuries before Columbus stumbled upon America. According to Mroueh (1996), during the 10th century and under the Umayyad Caliph Abdul-Rahman III, Muslims from Africa and Spain brought Islam to America both before and concurrently with Columbus.

Conversely, Wright (2008) refuses to accept the common story of the origin of Islam. He writes that the gaping hole between the period of slavery and the mid-1900s, where Islam is said to arrive with the Nation of Islam, can be explained by great numbers

of African slaves that were Muslim prior to their being brought to America (Wright, 2008). Wallace Fard Muhammad and Elijah Muhammad are considered the founders of the Nation of Islam. It was founded in 1933 but truly thrived in the late 1940s under the dynamic leadership of Malcolm X, who was appointed spokesperson of the Nation.

Wright (2008) states:

Malcolm X drew on a long legacy of using Islam to articulate anti-colonial and anti-racist liberation ideology, but through his ability to reach a broad audience, he nonetheless marks a watershed in terms of Islam's place in American society, where many contemporary converts still trace the roots of their conversion to his example. (para. 9)

According to Benson (2005), Malcolm X left the Nation of Islam after his pilgrimage to Mecca where he met Muslims from all over the world. He found that Elijah Muhammad's teachings were based on racism and false teaching. On his return from Saudi Arabia, he introduced the Sunni sect of Islam. He later expressed his regret for his widespread endorsement of what he now believed to be a misled faith in the Nation of Islam. Malcolm X was assassinated in 1965 by his fellow Muslim brethren, and Elijah Muhammad died in 1975 leaving leadership for his son Warith Deen Muhammad, who is still the primary leader of the Nation of Islam.

In 1960, liberalization of immigration policies brought astonishing numbers of foreign Muslims to America. Many of today's Muslim organizations were founded during that time. The Islamic Circle of North America (ICNA) was founded in 1971; the Association of American Social Scientists (AMSS) was founded in 1972; in 1982, United

Muslims of America was founded; the Islamic Society of North America (ISNA) was founded in 1982; and in 1988, Muslim Public Affairs Council (MPAC) was founded. As more Muslims immigrated to the United States from predominantly Muslim countries, they formed new organizations. For example, the American Muslim Alliance was founded in 1992, and in 1994, the Council on American Islamic Relations (CAIR) was founded. With support of CAIR, MPAC, and AMN, a Muslim political organization was founded in 1998. It was named the American Muslim Political Coordination Council (Wright, 2008, para. 12).

Today, the United States has an ethnically diverse Muslim community. According to the Pew Memorial Trusts, about 7 million Muslim Americans were born in the United States, including South Asians 32%, Arab 26%, West Asian 26%, African Americans 20%, African 7% and other backgrounds 14% (Digital History, 2001). Muslim Americans are known as hardworking people with high levels of education and professional occupations. Also, most have come to find a better life and are able to invite their relatives to come and experience the same life. Historically, a lack of literature on Arabs in America has created many misunderstandings.

According to Shaheen (2011), “Most of Muslims are neither Arab nor Persian, but Indonesians, Indian or Malaysian” (p. 7). Since many Americans do not know the difference between Iranians, Afghanis, Middle Easterns and Arabs, “many Americans believe only Arabs are Muslims, and many wrongly assume that Iranians are Arabs as well” (Shaheen, 2006, p. 7). There is a diverse population of Arabs, but most Americans think all Arabs are Muslim. Shaheen (2006) claims that approximately 15 million

Christians live in Arab countries and about 30% of Arab-Americans are Muslims. Arabs are different from Persians; also they are neither Armenians, Afghans, Kurds, nor Turks (Diliberto, 2009). Smith (2006) points out that the American community of Muslims is rapidly undergoing a shift as the second generation of Muslims (from the 1940s) is now in control. According to one 2003 poll, less than one-third of Americans are able to say that they understand what Islam is as a religion (Smith, 2006). The recognition of the Muslim community in the United States of America is subject to their ethnicity; however, Muslims prefer to be identified as Muslims rather than as "Arabs" or immigrants. Smith (2006) reports on Kareem El-Refai, a Muslim immigrant whose parents came from Egypt. He had never heard about Osama bin Laden until the day of 9/11. He said, "My parents didn't have people looking down upon them like they were terrorists, like they were going to kill them" (Smith, 2006, para. 4).

Muslim Students and Critical Race Theory

It would be necessary to understand whether Muslim students are facing racism as a minority community in the American society, or if their religious affiliation is the prime reason for the discrimination reported in the aftermath of 9/11 by Muslim communities (Council on American Islamic Relations, 2001, 2002, 2003, & 2010a, 2010b). Racism has been a major issue in the history of the American school system. In 1896, *Plessy V. Ferguson* was the beginning of state-sponsored segregation in America. However, the decision was overturned in 1954 by the United States Supreme Court in *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka*, 347 U. S. 483 declaring state laws establishing separate public schools for black and white students to be unconstitutional (Kluger, 1975).

Additionally, many researchers in America believe that race plays a critical role in the American school system (Bartlett, McKinley, & Brayboy, 2006; Lowe, 2009).

Therefore, Pakistani and Indian Muslim students in the American school system perhaps are the victims of racism rather than religious discrimination. Bartlett, McKinley, and Brayboy (2006) state, “race has been and continues to be significant in matters of schooling. Popular, public discourses and academic discourses reflect continuously on the racial achievement gap in schooling...” (p. 361). Lowe (2009) suggests that “many studies explore the effects of social class and gender, race...” (p. 21). Ladson-Billings and Tate (1995) present three propositions concerning social inequity and school inequity:

1. Race continues to be a significant factor in determining inequity in the United States.
2. U.S. society is based on property rights.
3. The intersection of race and property rights creates a tool through which one can understand social and school inequity (1995, p. 48).

In addition, Lowe (2009) explains, “Issues of gender and class do not alone account for the extremely high rates of school dropout, suspension, expulsion, and failure among males of color” (p. 22). In that case, Muslim Pakistani and Indian students should have high rates of dropout, suspension, expulsion, and failure; however, it is the other way. Generally, Muslim students from Pakistan and India are exceptional students who possess a desire to continue their education. Although the majority of the Muslim Pakistani and Indians in America fit the profile of typical minority community on basis of

their ethnicity, food, culture, language, social status, and population, they are certainly doing better in the schools. Lowe (2009) argues another point that American society is based on property rights, “the proposition is best explicated by situating it within the context of critical race theory” (Lowe, 2010, p. 22). Ladson-Billings and Tate (1995), indicate this in their explanation for critical race theory:

1. The assumption that racism is culturally, legally, and psychologically ingrained in American life;
2. The understanding that civil-rights laws are undermined before they can “fulfill their promise”;
3. The challenge of the traditional claims of a color blind system that camouflages the self-interest of the dominant group;
4. The reformulation of legal doctrine to reflect the experience of those victimized by racism firsthand;
5. The use of first person accounts.

Lowe (2009) furthers her analysis of the Critical Race Theory based on Ladson-Billings and Tate, and other researchers. She writes,

...the authors [Ladson-Billings and Tate (1995)] presented that the voices of the oppressed are necessary to objectively judge the success of U.S. schools. People of color are routinely silenced, even in university and research settings. Data is analyzed that constructs realities in ways that benefit the dominant and maintain their privilege (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995). Without the authentic voice of

people of color, it is doubtful that anything useful will be known about education (p. 23).

However, Gintis (1998) gives a different perspective of the school and minority communities, saying, “education is an institution for socializing youth into the dominant social structure. You can’t depend on schools to create an equal society” (p. 120).

Regardless, Muslim Americans are not silent, and neither are they generally economically or educationally deprived. For example, many Muslims own businesses and property. Organizations like CAIR, MSA, ISNA, ICNA, AMSS, MPAC, and AMN continue to strive for the rights of the Muslim community in North America.

Islamophobia

The West has accused Muslims of extremism, but recently a new term, “Islamophobia,” has been introduced by moderate Muslims. Rosenthal (2006) shares his fear that “‘Islamophobia’ can easily degrade into a simple form of racism. The jihadist threat is entirely a product of Islam or the ‘Muslim world’ and consequently wholly alien to ‘the West’” (para. 1). One can trace the roots of such a term back to the 1980s.

According to Malki (2009), “Islamophobia refers to the irrational fear that connotes a social anxiety, discrimination, and prejudice against Muslims and Islam” (para. 2).

However, the roots of such a concept can be found as far back as the 1960s and 1970s.

Malki (2009) finds Hollywood responsible for promoting such ideology. Hollywood and television shows have been depicting offensive images of Arabs and Muslims. There is very little truth in these images, and they are a partial, exaggerated form of sarcasm.

The problem with the Muslim culture could be their sensitivity but such images have encouraged extremists to misrepresent the United States of America before simple and innocent Muslims in their countries. Recently, terrorism has strengthened the division between the United States and the Islamic world. The war on terror has subsequently contributed to this phenomenon; today, a chasm exists between the Western civilization and the Islamic civilization within the United States of America. Malki (2009) argues that “this anti-Muslim racism leads to the exclusion of Muslim citizens from mainstream social and political America, the marginalization of their communities and institutions, and the presumption of their guilt by association which fuels hate crimes”(para. 2).

According to a survey taken by a Washington Post-ABC News poll (2006), negative feelings towards Islam are much more pronounced now than in the immediate aftermath of the September 11, 2001 terror attacks. Goldenberg (2006) notices that “more than half of Americans believe there are more violent extremists within Islam than in any other religion and that faith encourages violence against non-Muslims”(para. 2). She also points out, “Since January 2002 the proportion of those who believe mainstream Islam promotes violence against non-believers has risen from 14% to 32%”(Goldenberg, 2006, para. 3).

Islamophobia fosters fear both towards and among the American Muslim community. This fear results in broadening civil rights abuses, hate crimes, and discrimination by non-Muslims. It also destroys the integration between Muslims and non-Muslims in America by causing confusion in the minds of Muslims about the

possibility and desirability of integration. Consequently, resentment begins and isolationists within the community take advantage of this resentment to propagate their objectives; and the objective of isolationists is to promote a negative image of America in the Muslim culture, which makes it impossible for Muslims abroad to see the good that America does in the world.

The Council on American-Islamic Relations (2010) presents their definition of Islamophobia as an “unfounded fear of and hostility towards Islam” (para. 1). Additionally, the Council predicts that “such fear and hostility leads to discriminations against Muslims, exclusion of Muslims from mainstream political or social process, stereotyping, the presumption of guilt by association, and finally hate crimes” (Council on American Islamic Relations, 2010, para.1). The office website of the Council states that Islamophobia has resulted in the general, unquestioned acceptance of the following:

- Islam is monolithic and cannot adept to new realities.
- Islam does not share common values with other major faiths.
- Islam as a religion is inferior to the West. It is archaic, barbaric, and irrational.
- Islam is a religion of violence and supports terrorism.
- Islam is a violent political ideology.

Myrick (2007), founder of the bipartisan Anti-Terrorism Caucus, writes,

My principle concern in this day and age of terrorism is: the general public doesn't understand the threats we face from radical jihadists, who they are, what they want, and what we can do about the threat. Americans are not being properly

informed about the nature of the jihadist threat and their plans to do us harm.

(Myrick, 2007, para. 1) Both Americans and Muslims in America have legitimate concerns. For instance, in light of the Qur'an and Islamic history, it is hard to diagnose the truth. In Islam, it is acceptable to hide the truth for the sake of Allah and the spread of Islam. According to Ibrahim (2010), many Muslims believe in al-Taqiya (dissimulation), which means showing outwardly something other than what one feels inside. This is, in fact, lying and hypocrisy; it is a skill in deceiving people. This is not committed by Muslims in times of fear; rather, they observe al-Taqiya as a religious duty for minor and major matters, both at times of fear and safety.

Additionally, Muslims who practice al-Taqiya on a regular basis justify their actions of lying (hiding truth) and deception particularly to non-Muslims with following Qur'anic verses. The Qur'an uses the word *makr* for deception, deceiver, and scheme. "But they (the Jews) were deceptive, and Allah was deceptive, for Allah is the best of deceivers" (Qur'an 3:54; & 8:30). Also, the Qur'an says "Are they then secure from Allah's deception (*makra Allahi*)? None deemeth himself secure from Allah's deception (*makra Allahi*) save folk that perish" (Qur'an 7:99). Allah said, "So they schemed a scheme: and We schemed a scheme (*Wamakaroo makran wamakarna makran*), while they perceived not" (Qur'an In 27:50). Evidently, again Islamic extremists find the truthfulness of their actions in the Qur'an to contradict what moderate Muslims say about Islam and the Qur'an.

Discrimination

Discrimination based on ethnicity, religion, and treatment of people from predominately Muslim countries produces negative attitudes in some Muslims toward the West. Having the mindset of a free man in America and lacking the equal respect and opportunity turns these Muslims into anti-Westerners. Rosenthal (2006) mentions a particular incident that “in any case, the ‘Islamism’ of the inmates, like that of their comrade-in-arms Zacarias Moussaoui, is clearly a product not of the ‘Muslim world’ alone, but rather of a certain encounter between Islamic traditions and modern European culture and society” (“Fighting the Malevolent Force,” para. 6). Schwartz (2005) argues a controversial point that the most common position of those who consider America’s success and domination as a world power is the primary reason for the 9/11 tragedy. In addition, he presents a different picture focusing on a historical issue between the Muslim world and the West. He writes, “Saudis decided to create an American Islamic establishment based on the radical doctrines of Wahhabism” (Schwartz, 2005, para. 5).

He continues his claim with the supporting evidence that Saudis have tremendous influence in the U.S., because throughout the United States, in all the Federal and state prisons, Muslim chaplains are Wahhabis (with the exception of one chaplain). Also, all the Muslim chaplains who serve in the United States military were trained in Saudi Arabia and became Wahhabis. He also considers one of the prime reasons to be the Middle East and Israeli conflict. However, it was not the low income, less-resourced, and uneducated Palestinians from Gaza, Pakistanis, Afghanis, or Egyptians who were seeking revenge but non-conflicted and wealthy Saudis. In fact, most of the people who have

been arrested and found guilty in relation to 9/11 terrorist attacks were Saudis. This group originated from a country that “Americans often think of as their most solid and dependable ally in the Arab world” (Schwartz, 2005, para. 2).

In the 1980s and 1990s, a large population of immigrants from Pakistan, India, and Bangladesh arrived in the United States. They started their own, smaller ethnic community without any central structure. The Wahhabis and Sunni missionaries, supported by Saudi Arabia and Pakistan, took advantage of their unstructured existence in the United States to promote hostility against the West. Before the rise of Wahhabism and Sunnism in America, American Muslims were tolerant, moderate, and not distinct from American society. However, in the last couple of decades the massive number of Muslims from Arabian Peninsula and South Asia has formed an isolated society within American society. Their isolation has raised suspicion among other citizens, resulting in assumptions and sarcastic comments. It has also broadened the distance between Muslims and other people groups in the United States. In the aftermath of September 11, 2001, this distance and suspicion has turned into reality. Pre-9/11 assumptions became stereotypes; and thus, the history of America repeated itself in the form of prejudice on the basis of color and ethnicity.

According to Singh (2002), this prejudice existed long before any terrorist attack took place on American soil. It actually started during the Middle East tension between the 1970s and 1980s. The article states, “Arab and Muslim activists point to the 1973 Arab-Israeli war and oil embargo as a starting point for increased prejudice and hostility against their communities in the United States” (Singh, 2002, p. 10). It became worse

during the Iran hostage crisis in 1979. The ABSCAM scandal of 1980, followed by “the hijacking of TWA Flight 847 by Shiite militants on June 14, 1985, and the hijacking of the Italian cruise liner the Achille Lauro on October 7, 1985, by the Palestinian Liberation Organization” (Singh, 2002, p. 11), the government lost public trust. Americans were convinced the Arabs and Muslims are anti-America. Then, the Persian Gulf War began in 1990, which brought the biggest wave of prejudice and hate crimes against Arabs and Muslims since the pre-9/11 era. President George H.W. Bush strongly “called for an end to hate attacks against Arab-Americans, insisting on September 24, 1990, that ‘death threats, physical attacks, vandalism, religious violence, and discrimination against Arab-Americans must end’” (Singh, 2002, p. 12).

After the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks and the release of news that Arab Muslims were responsible, Arabs, Muslims, and those perceived to be Arab or Muslim in America were frightened by the possibility of becoming targets of backlash violence. Truthfully, their fears became reality because Arabs (Muslim and non-Muslim), Sikhs (because of their turbans and beards), and South Asians, became victims of a severe wave of backlash violence. They were beaten and murdered “because they shared or were perceived as sharing the national background or religion of the hijackers and al-Qaeda members deemed responsible for attacking the World Trade Center and the Pentagon” (Singh, 2002, p. 3).

Furthermore, schools and colleges were not immune to such discrimination. Espinoza (2010) states that according to Saroya, the president of the Minnesota chapter of the Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR), “A growing number of Muslim high

school students are reporting harassment from other students, teachers, and even a bus driver” (Espinoza, 2010, para. 2). As an example of discrimination on school grounds, Patel (2007) describes a particular incident:

A few months ago, at one of my lectures, a young mother approached me and said, eyes downcast, that her seven-year-old son didn’t want to go to school anymore because of the names people were calling him, such as ‘Terrorist,’ ‘Osama,’ and ‘America-hater.’ Kids were starting to gang up on him on the playground, pushing him down, sometimes kicking him. (Patel, 2007, para. 1)

This discrimination has also been shown by employers. Since September 11, 2001, the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) has received more than 800 charge filings throughout the country “alleging backlash discrimination by individuals who are or who are perceived to be Muslim, Arabic, Middle Eastern, South Asian or Sikh” (Panaro, 2010, para. 1). He enlightens EEOC achievements regarding these charges and states, “The EEOC settled a harassment lawsuit on behalf of four employees (Pakistani-American Muslims) for \$1.1 million” (Panaro, 2010, para. 4). Singh (2002) shows data on the progress of hate crimes in the United States, collectively and in select major cities, by graphs (See Figures 1 and 2). The main concern surrounds the results of this discrimination and hate crimes toward Arabs, Muslims, or those perceived to be Arab or Muslim. As an initial point of view, some Americans hold to the following:

The experiences of German and Japanese Americans in the First and Second World Wars, suggest several refinements to the theory of reactive identity formation. Specifically, they suggest that while discrimination and pressure to

assimilate can provoke reactive solidarity and identification, they don't always do so, and sometimes have the opposite effect --hastening integration and identificational assimilation. (Bradford, 2008, para. 6)

Stereotypes

There are many stereotypes about Muslims and people from predominately Muslim countries with difficulty placed origins. For example, Muslims, regardless of their birthplace, are ridiculed by derogatory names, such as "camel jockey" and "rag head." Specifically, "camel jockey" has been used in an insulting fashion to describe anyone from the Middle East. Historically, little children who weighed less than 45 kilograms were kidnapped or brought from India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh to be given as slaves to people in the Middle East and Arabia for camel racing. Therefore, the stereotype was given its association. Another definition, according to the website Urban Dictionary (2005), describes it as "the rag being a turban and the head being that of a Middle Eastern or far eastern male. Although not all Middle Eastern or far eastern people wear turbans, the term rag head is used in any case"(p. 1). However, neither of these terms is appropriate for any Muslim.

Muslims often protest the stereotype that Muslims believe in an angry God who allows terrorism and suicide bombings. Allah is associated with the pre-Islamic Arabian Moon God, but Muslims argue it is simply the Arabic word for God. Additionally, Muslims claim that they believe in the same God of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Ishmael. This is the same God that Jews and Christians worship. As evidence, Muslims present the example of Arab Christians who use the term "Allah". However, Arab Christians

refuse these claims. They distinguish themselves by using the term *Allāh al-Ab*, which simply means God the Father. Other stereotypes are as follows:

1. Jihad: In the West, Jihad means “holy war.” Terrorism is another term which is extensively used in reference to Jihad. Most Muslims consider it a stereotype by defining the word Jihad in Arabic language. In Arabic, it means "struggle." There are two types of Jihad. The first type involves a struggle to control one's character and the other a military effort. According to moderate teaching, Jihad military effort should not be used until all other means have failed. The primary Qur’anic verse to support the ideology that Islam is the religion of peace is 2:255 -- “No compulsion in religion.”
2. Extremism: Many Muslim teachers have been preaching the message of peace, condemning extremism publicly through the Qur’an. Some of the verses that have been used excessively are 6:141, "God does not love the excessive ones" and 2:143, "We made you a nation that should take the middle way in all its affairs before all humanity . . ." Therefore, many Muslims refuse the notion of extremism in Islam.
3. Suicide (Shaheed “martyrdom”): As previously stated, there has been a decline in suicide support throughout the world. Yet the continuing act of suicide bombers proves the stereotype true. However, the Qur’an teaches against suicide: "Do not kill yourselves" (Qur’an 4:29).
4. Terrorism and ongoing killing of innocent people: Today most Muslims refuse to be associated with these teachings. Not all Muslims are terrorists; neither are all

terrorists Muslims. It has been previously discussed how people use the Qur'anic verses to satisfy their personal agendas: "And do not kill the soul that God gave sanctity to except by law" (Qur'an 17:33).

5. The Arab, Middle Eastern, South Asian, and Muslim: Throughout the Islamic world, many other nations and religious groups live among Muslims. Even within Islam there are many sects. Some are very moderate and others extreme. When the researcher says, "I am a Pakistani," most Americans assume he is a Muslim. When he tells them "I am Christian," they find it surprising that there are Christians in Pakistan. This is the same in other Islamic countries.
6. Treatment of women: Adi (2010), the director of the Islamic Cultural Center of Eugene, Oregon, rejects the stereotype that Islam does not give woman any rights or respect. In many cultures, Muslim women are not being treated equally, yet Islam teaches respect and honor for women. Also, Adi provides some highlights on women in Islam: (1) Paradise is under the "feet" of the mother; (2) a good wife is half a man's religion, (3) men are ordered to "treat them in good ways," (Koran 4:19) and that, in the words of the prophet Mohammed in his last sermon, (4) "the best of you is the one that is best to his wife."

Furthermore, Adi (2010) protests the inhuman behavior of Islamic African countries that practice female genital mutilation. He condemns this ritual and ensures that it is not based on Islamic teaching. However, sheikyermami (2007) reports "The Prophet [Muhammad] said that circumcision is obligatory for men, and is noble for women. This means that for the sake of her honor, a woman can be circumcised" (para. 6).

Today, there are 150 sects of Islam (Contender Ministries, 2010) and each interprets the Qur'an and practices Islam differently.

America: A Safe Haven

Schwartz (2005) reports complaints by Muslims in America that as a minority they suffer discrimination and hurtful stereotypes. Regardless of the discrimination, the United States still remains a refuge for those “seeking sanctuary from political unrest and persecution” (Thomas, 2006, p. 71). Muslims and non-Muslim people in America choose to stay in America because living in America is much better than their own countries. Since 9/11, the local and federal government of New York has encouraged nonprofit organizations and government agencies to educate Americans about Islam and the Islamic culture. Singh (2002) suggests six policies to avoid discrimination future backlash. He states that (a) law enforcement authorities should prepare a “backlash emergency mitigation plan,” (b) that public officials, civic and social leaders declare that “those who engage in it will be prosecuted,” (c) “when the possibility of backlash crimes arise, police should heighten their presence in vulnerable communities,” (d) one or two officers in every law enforcement agency should be trained to “identify and investigate bias-motivated crimes,” (e) when the police find that the crime may be bias-motivated, it should be given to a law enforcement officer who is trained to identify and investigate bias-motivated crimes to review the case for guidance, (f) “Law enforcement agencies should ensure that residents in their jurisdictions know where and to whom and how to report hate crimes” (Singh, 2002, p. 4).

Summary

The available literature identifies the problem of discrimination and prejudice in America on the basis of color, race, gender, ethnicity, and social status an ongoing issue in American society. The available literature and research material also suggests that the United States of America was the first country to take action and place anti-discrimination laws to protect its citizens. The U.S. has also advocated equal rights on an international level to encourage the international community to introduce anti-discrimination laws in their countries. Throughout American history, there has been no sign of discrimination and prejudice on the basis of religion. The citizens of America have always been fortunate to practice their religion without any restrictions and problems. However, in the aftermath of 9/11, Muslims have reported discrimination and prejudice because of their affiliation with Islam, although most of the studies that have reported discrimination and prejudice against Muslims are funded or conducted by Muslim religious and political organizations in America. The research studies conducted put their entire focus on the negative experiences of the Muslim community in America. These studies claimed the following reasons why there is such vibrant discrimination against Muslims in America: the misconception about Islam, misunderstanding about Islam, and the stereotypes about Muslims.

However, since 9/11, the United States of America has stated constantly that the war on terror is not war on Islam. Regrettably, the Muslim culture rejects this notion and connects these two notions. Therefore, political-religious Muslim organizations, such as ISNA, ICNA, MSA, and many others have been in action since 9/11 to inform Muslim

Americans and non-Muslim Americans that they are discriminated against on the basis of their religion. The literature review has also identified a clear division within the Muslim community on the basis of their theological interpretation of the Qur'an, as there are an immense number of Qur'anic verses that justify the religious struggle to promote Jihad, fighting, and killing among the adherents of Islam. However, there are Qur'anic verses about peace and harmony. The review showed a conflict between political Islam of the 6th century and the effort to revive 6th century Islamic society in the 21st century. Today, the Saudi attempts to maintain their religious and cultural influence throughout the world, particularly in America.

Also, this study found a gap between the stories that are told by Muslims and the reality that more Muslims have immigrated to the United States since 9/11. There is confusion that if significant discrimination exists, why are Muslims continuing to come to the United States. Also, research has reported that Muslim students are being discriminated against in the American school system by their teachers and classmates, but these reports have not provided a detailed analysis of the situation. The available literature reports that Muslim Pakistani and Indian students are the victims of hate and prejudice, but these reports do not offer any concrete solution to the problem other than repeating the same suggestions and recommendations those other studies have made, in terms of how to integrate Muslims into America.

It appears that all of the previous studies on Muslims in America are focused on the negative experiences of Muslims. This study will attempt to provide a different

perspective by allowing the participants to share their everyday experiences at school, keeping the focus on positive experiences.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

Introduction

The overarching purpose of this study was to investigate the experiences of Muslim Pakistani and Indian young adults in the American school system. This study described the challenges of Muslim young adults from Pakistan and India in the New York area post-9/11. The experiences and challenges of these young adults were difficult to quantify because the phenomena was internal. Therefore, hermeneutical phenomenology was employed. This research intended to represent the group by considering their everyday challenges. Also, it will contribute to the educational process of teachers and administrators by providing insight on dealing with cross-cultural differences, discrimination, and the mindsets of those who suffer from discrimination. It also helps school counselors evaluate the psychological and emotional stress of these students.

Specifically, it examined and explored the lived experience of Muslims from Pakistan and India in the aftermath of 9/11 and documented their positive and negative experiences in the American school system. Specifically, through their positive experiences, teachers and school administrators will know what to promote in the school system. Conversely, through their negative experiences, teachers and school administrators will know what to discourage in the school system in order to prevent repeat occurrences. Thus, the purpose of this study was to collect the stories of Muslim

Pakistani and Indian students who attended high school before and in the aftermath of the September 11th terrorist attacks.

Research Question

The selected participants were asked a number of questions in an interview format to find the answer to the following research question: What is the lived experience of Muslim Pakistani and Indian students in their New York school system experience?

Guiding Questions

The major research question was followed by a few guiding questions to seek detailed information about the lived experience of Muslim Pakistani and Indian students in their New York school system experience.

1. What are the most prominent negative experiences that the participants had and are having in the New York school system?
2. What are the most prominent positive experiences that the participants had and are having in the New York school system?
3. What is the motivation denominator that has kept the participants pursuing their education in the New York school system to become better citizens of America?
4. How can these positive experiences be replicated in schools to promote peace and harmony among students?
5. How can these negative experiences be overcome and what are the implications for schools, policy makers, and future researchers as pertains to encouraging Muslim students to become part of the school?

Design of Hermeneutical Phenomenology

The study was done by using hermeneutical phenomenology; one branch of phenomenology. Basic Hermeneutics is the theory or practice of interpretation. Phenomenology is “always a bringing to speech of something, and this thoughtful bringing to speech is most commonly a writing activity” (van Manen, 1990, p. 32). The ultimate aim of Phenomenological study is “the fulfillment of our human nature: to become more fully who we are” (van Manen, 1990, p. 12). By definition, Phenomena are observable facts or experiences (van Manen, 1990 & Creswell, 2007). Therefore, hermeneutical phenomenology is the interpretation of studies or observable facts or experiences. In hermeneutical phenomenology, the narrative of an individual’s experience is the primary subject where analysis is completed to discover the essence of individual experiences. The approach seeks to describe basic lived experiences, and the basic purpose of phenomenology is to describe the universal essence and reduce the essence of individual experiences (Creswell, 2007; van Manen, 1990). Van Manen (1990) described the essence of phenomenon: “it is universal, which can be described through a study of the structure that governs the instances or particular manifestations of the essence of that phenomenon” (p.10).

Secondly, phenomenology is a qualitative research method focusing on collecting and interpreting an immense amount of data from lived experiences. The method is deeply rooted in philosophy, psychology, and education (Creswell, 2007). The hermeneutical phenomenology method allowed the researcher to interpret the experiences of participants and define the meanings of the in-depth narrative writings of lived

experiences. Data was collected through in-depth interviewing, followed by an analysis of transcripts to summarize several of the participant's experiences, and finally extrapolating them in order to identify the universal essence in the experiences of all the participants. The body language of the participants and the everyday challenges they face was noted in the research, which may interest future researchers studying related aspects.

During data analysis many themes were prompted, but seven essential themes were adopted on the basis of the van Manen (1990) guidelines for “determining incidental and essential themes” (p. 106). Van Manen (1990) stated, “In determining the universal or essential quality of a theme, our concern is to discover aspects or qualities that make a phenomenon what it is and without which the phenomenon could not be what it is” (p. 107). The process of free imaginative variation was used to generate essential themes (van Manen, 1990). In the process, the researcher asked the question, as recommended by van Manen, “Is this phenomenon still the same if we imaginatively change or delete this them from the phenomenon?” (p. 107). All of the incidental and essential themes went through the same process. When it was asked “Does the phenomenon without this theme lose its fundamental meaning?” (van Manen, 1990, p. 107). The following essential themes become the focus of Chapter IV and Chapter V: (a) Teachers and Administrators, (b) Muslim and Non-Muslim Students, (c) Muslim Men vs. Muslim Women. (d) Media and Literature, (e) Muslim Initiative, (f) Students Interaction, (g) Minority Effect.

Site

According to Creswell (2007), “Qualitative researchers tend to collect data in the field at the site where participants’ experience the issue or problem under study” (p. 37). He also suggests that typically researchers do not send out instruments for individuals to complete, but they interact with the participants face to face in the natural setting (Creswell, 2007). The topic of interest is directly related to New York City because the 9/11 incident severely affected the perceptions of residents in New York City toward Muslims. Currently, the place where the twin towers of the World Trade Center stood brings back bitter memories. Therefore, in 2009, the proposed mosque plan near Ground Zero became a very intense subject. The immediate response to these memories colors the initial reactions to foreigners, especially those immigrating from South Asia, Middle East, and Arab. Thus, the participants were recruited from the New York area, particularly from New York City. The interviews took place at Hephzibah House in Manhattan, in a private office setting.

Participants

In this kind of study, the data collecting is discontinued when data saturation is achieved (Journal of Clinical Nursing, October, 2006). The journal states that “sample size might be determined by reaching the point of ‘data saturation’”, specifically for hermeneutical phenomenology, the journal states the following:

This exemption is because ‘rich’ data are sought from a limited number of people where the data set is treated as a whole, often interpreted hermeneutically.

Phenomenology is about possible meanings of experiences and often

encompasses existential issues for which people may have many variations. The results are a tentative guide for practice and mostly for an empathy building affect. (Journal of Clinical Nursing, October, 2006, para. 9)

In this study, the data saturation occurred at five participants but an additional two participants were interviewed to ensure the data saturation. The participants were Muslim young adults ethnically from Pakistan and India currently residing in the United States of America. The group, consisting of seven Muslim men and women, were interviewed. In this group, all attended high school here in the United States, claimed to be faithful and practicing Muslims, and were very active members of the society.

The participants were carefully selected based on required qualifications. A demographic survey was completed and recorded by potential candidates for the research process. The survey was not a standard survey recognized by any organization or authority. In this kind of qualitative research, most of the time researchers do not follow any previous survey or questionnaires. Creswell (2007) states, “They [researchers] do not tend to use or rely on questionnaires or instruments developed by other researchers” (p. 38). The demographic survey, developed by the researcher to identify eligible participants, was added after the approval of the dissertation chair. The perception of the people in New York City is directly related to the following topics:

- i. The use of the terms terrorism, Islamism, and the War on Terror
- ii. The meanings of Muslims and Islam, and identification as an American
- iii. The use of the terms jihad, jihadis and jihadism in both Islam and in America.

Therefore, the survey sought to find participants based on the above mentioned topics. The knowledge of these terms was essential to qualify for the survey; the survey is available in this chapter under the heading “Demographic Survey.”

In the study, there were two female participants and five male participants. The participants were given pseudonyms to hide their identities, as it was promised in the consent form. Ali is male and had become a professional apologist and outreach coordinator for the Muslim Student Association (MSA). He was also connected to the Islamic center at Cornell University and Yale University. Participant Two, Nadia, is female and had become a social worker to help Muslim students. She was also connected to MSA and other religious political organizations, such as the New York University Islamic Center. Participant Three, Bilal, is male and is still in school. He attends school in Brooklyn, New York City. He has no ties with any religiously or politically organized group. Participant Four, Najima, is female and is not connected to any religious or political organization, but is still a student. Participant Five, Jamal, is male and is connected to a social and cultural group of local Muslims and has no connections with any political or religious organizations. Participant Six, Ahmad, is male and is a special education student because of his disability. Participant Seven, Basheer, is male and is also a special education student.

Inclusion Criteria

There are eight hundred spoken languages in New York City, representing a number of different ethnicities (Roberts, 2010). Some of the ethnic groups in New York City are from South Asia, the Middle East, Arab, Central Asia, Caribbean, and South

America who share similar facial appearance. Therefore, a qualification survey questionnaire was acquired to distinguish the participants. The group was conditioned to have high school experience in the United States school system; they all had attended high school in the United States.

The survey provided the researcher with basic information to determine whether all the participants lived through the same circumstances, including information on their home country, home environment, family structure, and religious and political affiliation. Questions regarding the participant's background provided understanding of the factors that have played a vital role in the life of the participants, and consequently, the fact that they remained in the United States of America. The survey has served as a screening tool to find whether the participants belong to the Muslim Pakistani and Indian community who have attended American schools before or/and after the tragedy of 9/11. To identify the ethnicity or religious affiliation of the participants and whether they have gone through any discriminatory treatment a semi-structured open ended interview, based on 13 questions, was used (see Appendix I). These questions provided the everyday lived experiences of the participants. However, the focus remained on the positive experiences the participants had in the American school system. Previous research has given more representation to Western opinion in light of what the media or the American government perceive about Islam and the Muslim culture (Patel, 2007; Patrick, 2003; Shaheen, 2011). Therefore, the research was focused on the lived experience of young adults from Pakistan and India who are residing in New York area to hear about their experiences as Muslim immigrants in the American school system.

To review the questions and add content validity, three people assisted the researcher throughout the experiment. Two out of the three participants have served as missionaries and worked in New York City as respected and well-reputed leaders. Lois Ewald is the director of Hephzibah House, a ministry in New York City, and Lorene Miley is on staff at Hephzibah House. Lois Ewald has been a friend to a Muslim in New York City for years and understands Muslims' struggles in the aftermath of 9/11. Finally, the third assistant is Jason Casper who has worked in an advertisement company run by Muslims. He also lives in Manhattan, New York..

The survey questions were used as a basis to discuss the personal experiences of participants at various points. The participants in the research have explained, in their own words, how they saw themselves as Muslim students in the American education systems and how other students, teachers, and school staff perceived them in the school system. The participants were allowed to discuss important issues of Islamic doctrine, so that they may address the unambiguously negative attention they have received from Americans in the aftermath of 9/11. However, most of the participants avoided talking about Islamic doctrine. Muslim Americans have been and continues to be the prime suspect for any terrorist activity in the United States of America:

Thousands of Muslims have been interviewed, detained and deported in the aftermath of 9/11 and many more have been subjected to increased suspicion and discrimination as well as heightened public scrutiny as they have come to be regarded as potential suspects or informants as well as spokesmen to and for their

religious communities, ethnic groups and nations of origin. (Bradford, 2008, p. 3)

The following questionnaire is the demographic survey:

Demographic Survey

1. What is your date of birth? M/Year / Gender: ☐ Male ☐ Female
2. When did you come to the United States? M/Year /
3. What is the name of your home country? ☐ Pakistan ☐ India
4. Are you living here as a refugee? ☐ Yes ☐ No
5. What grade did you enter the American school system? / /
6. What year did you start your school here in the United States of America? M/Year
 /
7. Do you have any formal education back in your home country? ☐ Yes ☐ No
8. Did you attend Madrasah (Islamic school) in your home country? ☐ Yes ☐ No
9. Do you consider yourself a faithful Muslim (practicing Islam)? ☐ Yes ☐ No
10. What are the factors that motivated you to come to the United States of America?

Which of the following statements is true? Please circle the letter of all that you consider apply to you.

- a. I am here because I wanted to come to the USA, because it is the best country in the world.

- b. I am here because I wanted to learn about the American people and culture.
- c. I am here because my parents wanted me to go to America to get a higher education.
- d. I am here because my family moved to America.
- e. I am here because I love America.
- f. I am here because I was being persecuted for...
 - i. My faith
 - ii. Personal beliefs
 - iii. Political involvements
- g. I am here because God wants me to be here.
- h. I am here because I did not have any choice.

11. Have people ever made assumptions on based on your religion? ☐Yes ☐No

12. Do you want to go back to your home country someday? ☐Yes ☐No

13. Do you like American life and culture? ☐Yes ☐No

Researcher's Perspective and Qualifications as a Researcher

Creswell (2007) describes the researcher as the key instrument in the process of collecting data. Therefore, the perspective of the researcher and his qualification to conduct such study was critical. Creswell (2006) adds,

The qualitative researchers collect data themselves through examining documents, observing behavior, and interviewing participants. They may use a protocol-an instrument for collecting data-but the researchers are the ones who actually gather the information. They do not tend to use or rely on questionnaires or instruments developed by other researchers. (p. 38)

The researcher's background contributed to the perspective of the topic. His father has been working in Pakistan as a pastor for almost 40 years. His entire family has faced severe persecution in Pakistan because of their Christian faith. When he was born on July 12, 1980, his father was working with a Christian mission organization but was, soon after, forced to resign. The researcher's family has spent most of their lives in poverty. Also, the researcher has only been able to attend school because of scholarships. It was not easy to get scholarships in Pakistan, and when you are a Christian, it becomes even harder.

In Pakistan, because he was a Christian, the researcher was neglected and rejected in every institution of society. For minorities in Pakistan, discrimination based on religion is common. When he went to college, he was forced to work for the Islamic Student Union on campus, which was considered to be one of the more extreme Islamic groups. Because it was the only student union, every student was required to participate. Saying "no" to the organization was commensurate to saying "no" to one's college education. This student union, Islami Jamiyat Tulba, requires the students to memorize specific parts (called Hifz) of the Qur'an, which he studied for two years.

Most Christians have lower class occupations and are looked down upon for doing the more unpleasant jobs in society, like sewer work, which no one else wants to do. In the researcher's personal experience, most food services do not allow Christians to eat or drink. Also, the researcher witnessed a young Christian guy who was harshly beaten because he drank water from the same glass as Muslims. Generally, as long as people do not know that someone is a Christian, they will treat him well. However, once they learn that someone is a Christian, they will treat him worse than an animal. Some Muslim sects are considered non-Muslim because they are not Sunni; nonetheless, they still have a better social standing than the Christians.

On June 19, 2009, a Pakistani Christian woman Asia Bibi who was accused of blasphemy against Prophet Muhammad was sentenced to death. She told the reporters from *The Christian Post* that no one gave her a chance in one year of trial to tell her side of the story. She says, "What my village people have accused me of is a complete lie" (The Christian Post, 2010, p. 1). Working in the fields she was asked by one of the Pakistani Muslim women for water. After Asia fetched the water, the other Muslim women told the woman not to drink water brought by an "untouchable" and "dirty woman." Asia said, "I asked them if Christians were not human ... why the discrimination?... This annoyed them, and they started verbally abusing me. We were soon engaged in a heated argument" (The Christian Post, 2010). Five days later, the priest of the local mosque came to her house with a mob of Muslims, dragged her out of her house, and beat her; then, the police took her into custody and registered a case under 295 C, a penal code that has been used to persecute minorities in Pakistan.

The West must understand the mindset of Pakistani Muslims in order to understand Asia Bibi's case and the problem of discrimination based on religion in Pakistan. The majority of the population in Pakistan consists of an extreme sect of Islam, called Sunni Muslims. In the constitution of Pakistan, the state religion is Islam. Sunni Muslims consider Muslims in other sects and non-Muslims to be lesser human beings. They have a very exclusive and radical point of view regarding other nations, even other Muslim nations. They believe that they are the only faithful ones holding to the orthodoxy of Islam. They find their roots in the leadership of Islam.

As a student in the United States, the researcher has gone through similar social treatment as many Muslims in post-9/11 American society. In his personal experience, when people look at him they do not see the pain and sorrow behind his eyes or his religious affiliation as a Christian, only his Middle Eastern face. For instance, in May of 2010, he was chosen out of hundreds of people for a random check at LaGuardia Airport in New York City, while he was on his way to the Campus Crusade head office for Christian work. The researcher has resided in the United States for four years and has been treated like a foreign Muslim from the Islamic world.

Also, the researcher has witnessed the miseries fallen upon Christians in Pakistan because the West decided to kill Muslim terrorists in Muslim countries. The Muslim brotherhood *Ummah* compels Muslims to do the same thing with Christians because they consider Pakistani Christians a brotherhood of the West, which is certainly an incorrect perception. Therefore, as a Pakistani Christian, the researcher has been discriminated against in Pakistan due to his religious beliefs and in the West because of his nationality.

The researcher, as a student of Doctorate of Education at Liberty University, was instructed in many forms of both qualitative and quantitative research methods by his professors. As an education professional and community worker, he worked among Muslims in New York City and he was well aware of the challenges both Muslims and non-Muslims from Pakistan and India face in NYC after 9/11.

The researcher also personally participated in the study as an unbiased observer. He developed a three layer system to avoid his biased opinion or observation. First, he had three people watch over the process of data analysis to ensure that the researcher would not misinterpret or simply overlook some important information. Second, one professional person was brought on board from another university who was a teacher's aide and partially taught a few undergraduate classes on Islam to double check the audio interview, interview transcripts, notes, and observations to avoid any biased observation or comments the research may have made. Third, the traditional method of triangulation was employed to maintain the credibility and validity of the data.

Prior Approval and Planning

Because the study involved many sensitive issues, a form of consent was given to the participants for their written approval. This form can be found in appendix IV. It was a requirement to secure Institutional Review Board approval of the study, and that was done prior to collecting any data. Appendix IV contains the IRB application, and the decision of the IRB for the study can be found in appendix VI.

Data Collection

The data collection was one of the most difficult and crucial steps in this qualitative study. Interviews and observations were two prevailing forms of data collection associated with qualitative inquiry. The primary method of data collection was semi-structured open-ended interviews. Creswell (2007) states:

Qualitative researchers typically gather multiple forms of data, such as interviews, observations, and documents, rather than rely on a single data source. Then the researchers review all of the data and make sense of them organizing them into categories or themes that cut across all of the data sources. (p. 38)

Interviews

This research was intended to become the voice of Muslim Pakistani and Indian students based on their everyday challenges (Creswell, 2007). Therefore, the researcher conducted open-ended interviews, in close succession of a follow-up interview to clarify whether the researcher understood the information correctly. Also, this follow-up interview served to give validity to the questions asked in the previous meeting to ensure all the participants understood the questions identically and interpreted them accordingly. The follow-up interview allowed both the participants and the researcher to clarify if either one had any objection or had any problem with understanding each other. The second interview also allowed the researcher to ask the participants any additional questions he may have in response to their answers to the guiding questions. Thus, a total of two interviews with each participant took place. The first interview lasted from an hour to an hour and a half. The follow-up interview's length depended on whether the

participants or the researcher needed further clarification. Appendix I includes the open-ended, semi-structured interview guide. The interview guide fundamentally focuses on the following topics:

- i. The interviewee's life history in the United States;
- ii. Experiences with and perceptions of anti-Muslim prejudice and discrimination in the schools of the United States of America;
- iii. Self-identification;
- iv. Positive and negative experience in the American school system;

The research sought to hear the voice of the participants regarding the focused topics.

Phone Conversation

Where it was possible, all telephone conversations with the participants were recorded on tapes; otherwise, the notes were taken while the participant was speaking. All initial interviews were conducted in person, but for clarifying details or the second round of interviews, some participants chose to talk on the phone and Skype, so their conversations were recorded on a digital voice recorder. The conversation was documented immediately after the conversation was over, including audio recording material, running thoughts, observations, and notes. These materials were kept with the other interview records. Furthermore, the researcher kept written and audio records of the interviews.

Narrative Records of the Observation

Each participant had his or her own body language, while they shared their experiences. This is because within Pakistan or India, there are many kinds of Muslim

citizens, therefore, some were more aggressive in their talk and others were very quiet. Some were rushing to catch the next thought, and others were taking their time to think through the question before they replied. Also, some were in Pakistani or Indian outfits, and others carried the appearance of very Americanized Muslims. The researcher found these observations very interesting, so he kept them in a separate record. Observations in a hand-written draft as an original documentation were kept as a record. This record, which the researcher carried with him each time he met with the participants, was interpreted to compare how diverse the next participant could be. The original narrative records were not accessible to anyone unless it was necessary for the research to be shared with another.

Documents

The researcher collected all the documents related to the history of the participants. It included, as Tellis (1997) suggests, “Documents that could be letters, memoranda, agendas, administrative documents, newspaper articles, or any document that is germane to the investigation. In the interest of triangulation of evidence, the documents serve to corroborate the evidence from other sources” (para. 43). There are 15 Pakistani newspapers, all of which reflect the everyday life of Muslim Pakistanis in New York City. The researcher collected the newspapers throughout the research. Also, by simply walking in the Muslim Pakistani neighborhood, the researcher was able to find flyers related to young adults. He also made note of the lifestyle of Muslim young adults from Pakistan and India in the neighborhood. He visited mosques and Muslim shops, such as grocery shops, barber shops, telephone card shops, money transfer shops, movie

shops, religious article shops, and Muslim Halal fast food shops. Sometimes, the researcher simply stood in the squares where these young adults meet and hang out. The researcher was able to collect several documents that he considered very helpful in understanding the life of Muslim young adults from Pakistan and India in New York City.

E-mail Correspondence

When each participant answered the questions through e-mail or preferred to verify the interpreted interview through e-mail, the researcher kept all electronic correspondence in an email folder online and also saved a copy on his external hard drive. This external drive was protected by a password. A printout with the observation notes was obtained. Security and the sensitivity of the data was the priority of the researcher.

Data Analysis

Van Manen (1990) used the term “Reflection” rather than “Data Analysis”, and he described the process of analyzing the data to be both easy and difficult. It is easy because every human being analyzes (reflects) every day, and that makes it an easy task. For example, an individual could reflect on the time, whether it is daytime or nighttime, but if someone asks for the time, then it is hard to explain. Van Manen (1990) states, “What is much more difficult is to come to a reflective determination and explication” (p. 77) of what time is. Also, he indicated “there is a difference between our pre-reflective lived understanding of the meaning of time and our reflective grasp of the phenomenological structure of the lived meaning of time” (van Manen, 1990, p. 77). The method of hermeneutical phenomenology was used to analyze the data. The researcher

looked for the common theme in the experiences of all the participants. The last stage of analyzing the data was synthesizing and validating it by checking with participants (Gall, 1996).

The researcher followed van Manen's six research activities as the basic methodological structure to analyze the data. The six activities were mentioned in Chapter two as well. Van Manen (1990) developed a framework for hermeneutic phenomenological research that suggests the study should include a basic methodological structure of a dynamic interplay of six research activities: a) turning to a phenomenon which seriously interests us and commits us to the world; b) investigating experience as we live it rather than as we conceptualize it; c) reflecting on the essential themes which characterize the phenomenon; d) describing the phenomenon through the art of writing and rewriting; e) maintaining a strong and oriented pedagogical relation to the phenomenon; and f) balancing the research context by considering parts and whole (pp. 320-331).

1. Turning to a phenomenon which seriously interests us and commits us to the world.

Van Manen (1990) described turning to the nature of the lived experiences as "given over to some quest, a true task, a deep questioning of something that restores an original sense of what it means to be a thinker, researcher, a theorist" (p. 31). The researcher's turning was an exploration of his own quest into the experience of being a Pakistani student in the American education system. Since 2003, as a student at an American school in Athens, Greece, and later as a student in New York, the researcher

has committed his life to understanding the Western culture and fitting into American society. Furthermore, his desire to integrate into American society and to hold on to his South Asian values has been a struggle and a challenge. He has suffered polarization; his effort to be identified as a Christian vs. being identified as Pakistani has always created an identity issue, both in Pakistan and in the United States of America. If he understands the lived experience of Muslim Pakistani and Indian students in the American school system, he can begin to understand how to integrate them with the American school system and, ultimately, the society.

2. Investigating experience as we live it rather than as we conceptualize it.

Van Manen (1990) explained his point by quoting Merleau-Ponty, to investigate an experience as we live it rather than as we conceptualize it, “means relearning to look at the world by re-awakening the basic experience of the world” (p. 32). Thus, it was a significant step towards the development of the methodology in order to attain rich data to relearn a worldview, by re-awakening the basic experiences of the world. For the researcher, it was simply one step back from what he already knew about the participants, in light of his personal experience as a minority group in Pakistan and later as a member of the Pakistani minority in America.

On the one hand, it means that phenomenological research requires of the researcher that he or she stands in the fullness of life, in the midst of the world of living relations and shared situations. On the other hand it means that the researcher actively explores the category of lived experience in all its modalities and aspects. (van Manen, 1990, p. 32)

The researcher, following the guidelines provided by van Manen, approached the phenomenon of student experiences in the American school system through investigating published material, walking in the neighborhood, going to local Mosques and schools in New York City, and through the information gathered from the direct experiences of Muslim Pakistani and Indian students in their New York school system. The students were encouraged in conversations to describe their experiences located within specific situations, as suggested by van Manen. A transcript of face-to-face conversations (interviews) was prepared and kept in record with the digital format copy of the conversations.

3. Reflecting on the essential themes which characterize the phenomenon.

In order to get the meaning of the text, the text was organized in terms of structures of meaning or themes. Van Manen (1990) states, "Phenomenological research, unlike any other kind of research, makes a distinction between appearance and essence, between the things of our experience and that which grounds the things of our experience" (p. 32). Furthermore, he suggested four "existential lifeworld themes" (van Manen, 1990, p. 101) as guides for the reflective research process, the four existential life-world (lived world) themes were mentioned in Chapter two as "lived space (spatiality), lived body (corporeality), lived time (temporality), and lived human relation (relationally or community)" (p. 101). In order to get the meaning of the data, the data was organized in terms of structures of meaning or themes. Phenomenological notions of themes and meaning is not like the themes commonly understood and used in various disciplines in the humanities, art, and literary criticism (van Manen, 1990). Van Manen

(1990) indicated that “in literature, ‘Theme’ refers to an element (motif, formula or device) which occurs frequently in the text” (p. 79) and “Theme analysis” is the process of recovering the themes “that are embodied and dramatized in the evolving meanings and imagery of the work” (van Manen, 1990, p.79). All too often, theme analysis isn’t taken as a subjective science. In reality, it is not a methodical, step-by-step process with any room for interpretation (van Manen, 1990).

Phenomenological themes are “structures of experiences” (van Manen, 1990) and during the study’s analysis of the phenomenon, the researcher tried to determine what the themes were, which were basically, “the experiential structures that make up that experience” (van Manen, 1990 , p. 79). As the researcher was exploring the phenomenon, he uncovered some initial themes by using the process of thematizing, as it is provided by van Manen. Thus, the data collected by the participants was organized by “meaning” unites and “themes.” Van Manen, (1990) described the function and process of meaning that, in meaning, “we try to unearth something ‘telling,’ something ‘meaningful,’ something ‘thematic,’ in the various experiential accounts. We work at mining meaning from them” (p. 86).

4. Describing the phenomenon through the art of writing and rewriting.

Once the data was collected, the primary task of phenomenological study began, “Phenomenology is the application of logos (language and thoughtfulness) to a phenomenon (an aspect of lived experience), to what shows itself precisely as it shows itself” (van Manen, 1990, p. 33). Writing the analyzed data was challenging “to write is to measure our thoughtfulness” (van Manen, 1990, p. 127) because according to the van

Manen guidelines the data should be an interpretation movement around, through, beneath, and into mining for meaning and essence of the lived experience. For this study, the process of mining provided extra validity and credibility to the study.

5. Maintaining a strong and oriented pedagogical relation to the phenomenon.

The reason a researcher in a phenomenological study has to maintain a strong and oriented pedagogical relation to the phenomenon is “pedagogic reflection is a form of ‘self-reflectivity’” (van Manen, 1990, p. 89). Van Manen, (1990) stated that “self-reflection is the way in which pedagogy reflects on itself while serving other” (p. 89). The researcher was aware that in phenomenological study, “Self” and “other” “are fundamental categories of the pedagogic relation” (van Manen, 1990, p. 89). At this point the researcher was able to think about the participants more clearly than ever before, because “Pedagogy is that essence, that transformation, that coverts woman into mother, man into father (into teacher, into therapist, into grandparents, etc.)” (van Manen, 1990, p. 89).

The researcher’s understanding of the themes is the insight that permits him to make sense of the text of the lives of Muslim Pakistani and Indian students in their New York school system experience, and to be practically responsive, as the author to the text of their lives as students and citizen of America. The responsibility to write the text of their lives kept the focus of study on the lived experience of the participants.

6. Balancing the research context by considering parts and whole.

Van Manen (1990) concluded his methodological structure by recommending balancing the research “context by considering part and the whole” (p. 33). In the

process of interpreting the data, the researcher stepped back and looked at the whole study to see how the phenomenon was positioned in the study and its context. The process allowed the researcher to hold himself accountable to the text, and to not get sucked into unimportant themes of the data (incidental themes, as van Manen suggested). The aspect of moving from part to the whole or vice versa forced the researcher to seek beyond the surface, deeper, yet always grounded within the larger context. Themes were the critical element for balancing the research context. Van Manen (1990) suggested that “the theme is the needfulness or desire to make sense” (p. 88) out of the data.

As it is discussed in Chapter two, The Theory of Frustration-Aggression, Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs, Social Development Theory, Critical Race Theory, and Theory of Polarization serve as the theoretical framework. For balancing the research context by considering parts and whole, the researcher carefully looked at the theoretical framework as a collective unit to examine the study as a whole, but he also stepped back to look at each theory presented above to evaluate the balance in the research context. For example, Muslim Pakistani and Indian students in New York school system have been reported as the victims of discrimination, prejudice and racism. The researcher was able to observe the lived experience of the Participants, and balance “the research context by considering part and the whole” (van Manen, 1990, p. 33) “in all its modalities and aspects” (van Manen, 1990, p. 32). The theories collectively and individually addressed as “human lifeworld” as suggested by van Manen are “the lived world as experienced in everyday situations and relations” (p. 101). Lifeworld (lived world) is lived space (spatiality), lived body (corporeality), lived time (temporality), and lived human relation

(relationally or community), van Manen (1990) called them “four existentials that may prove especially helpful as guides for reflection in the research process” (p. 101).

In the following section of data analysis, the researcher described how certain themes have emerged because of the balance of the research context. The Theory of Frustration-Aggression proposed that “frustration always leads to aggression and vice versa” (Gottesman & Brown, 1973, p. 322) and bullying is a form of aggression. The Muslim Pakistani and Indian students are subject to such frustration as victims and also as perpetrators. Such behavior usually triggers when a child’s physiological needs, (food, water, and oxygen), safety needs (love, affection, and belongingness), and social needs, described by Maslow (1968) to be, “No psychological health is possible unless this essential core of a person is fundamentally accepted, loved and respected by others and by himself” (p. 196) are not met. Therefore, Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs provides an understanding of the participants’ Physiological Needs, Safety Needs, Social Needs, Esteem Needs, and Self Actualization. The lived experience of the participants was also directly related to Social Development Theory. The Social Development Theory (Vygotsky, 1978) emphasized the change that takes place in the life of a child during his social development which is essential part of “human lifeworld” (van Manen, 1990, p. 106). The lived experience of the Muslim Pakistani and Indian students in their New York school system experience couldn’t be fully understood by a study of the participants alone. The Social Development Theory is required to examine the social world in which the participants’ lives have developed (Moll, 1990; Vygotsky, 1978).

The Social Development Theory was interconnected with the Critical Race Theory, because in order to examine the social world in which a Muslim child's life developed, it was necessary to understand CRT in relation to the treatment that is reported by Muslim Americans after 9/11. In the aftermath of 9/11 racism, discrimination and prejudice have been reported by the Muslims more than any other minority group in America (Saeed, 2007; CAIR, 2010). As the result of these feelings, Muslim Americans consider themselves a minority group and struggle with the issue of being American and being Muslims (Khan, 2002). That leads to polarization, when a Muslim student develops the mindset of "us vs. them" (Borum, 2010, p.7).

Due to the balance in the research context, no matter how one looks at the framework all the theories are interconnected and related to Muslim Pakistani and Indian students in their New York school system experience. If a Muslim young adult faces polarization (us vs. them) during his social development, that is, "social interaction precedes development; consciousness and cognition are the end product of socialization and social behavior" (Learning Theories, 2009, p. 1), whether that is due to racism, discrimination, lack of self-esteem, or bullying, that can produce frustration and frustration always leads to aggression (Gottesman & Brown, 1973).

Formation of the Themes

The text of the data was written by following the above six steps. The lifeworld, that is, lived space (spatiality), lived body (corporeality), lived time (temporality), and lived human relation (relationally or community), van Manen (1990) calls the "four existentials that may prove especially helpful as guides for reflection in the research

process” (p. 101) became conceptual framework to find meanings (themes). “The lived world as experienced in everyday situation and relations, our lived experiences and the structures of meaning (themes) in terms of which these lived experiences can be described and interpreted constitute the immense complexity of the lifeworld” (van Manen, 1990, p. 101).

The researcher conducted a Thematic Analysis (van Manen, 1990). Thematic Analysis is, according to van Manen (1990), “when we analyze a phenomenon, we are trying to determine what the themes are, and what the experiential structures that make up that experience are” (p. 79). The themes are “conceptual formulations or categorical statements” (van Manen, 1990, p. 79) that the researcher found during data analysis. There were many themes; however, van Manen provided guidelines to determine incidental and essential themes. He states, “The most difficult and controversial element of phenomenological human science may be to differentiate between essential themes and themes that are more incidentally related to the phenomenon under study” (van Manen, 1990, p. 106). Following the process of free imaginative variation, the researcher eliminated the incidental themes and continued his data analysis with essential themes.

There were seven essential themes, and each theme was given sub-headings. The guiding questions were used as sub-headings to provide the lived experience of Muslim Pakistani and Indian students in their New York school system experience.

Research Notes

The researcher kept and saved all notes taken during the research process and filed them in a separate plastic bin and locked them in the same place where the rest of the documents were locked in a cabinet.

Credibility/Dependability(Validity)

In order to reduce the risk of compromised validity and reliability of findings (Crotty, 1998; Wolcott, 2001; Lowe, 2009), the researcher used some well-implemented strategies to reduce personal bias and increase credibility. The researcher took the following steps:

1. Articulating a statement of subjectivities as an acknowledgement that the problem of biased opinion exists and that the researcher needs to practice constant awareness of those personal subjectivities which is one of the most common ways to increase credibility and reduce personal bias. Therefore, in this section, the researcher has provided his statement of subjectivity.
2. One of the most significant tasks every researcher has to perform is to provide credibility/dependability for validity purpose and maintain that credibility. Typically, the strategy to improve the validity and reliability of qualitative research or evaluate the findings is called triangulation (Golafshani, 2003). Mathison (1988) states, “Triangulation has risen an important methodological issue in naturalistic and qualitative approaches to evaluation [in order to] control bias and establishing valid propositions because traditional scientific techniques are incompatible with this alternate epistemology” (p. 13). According to Patton (2001), “Triangulation strengthens a study by

combining methods. This can mean using several kinds of methods or data, including using both quantitative and qualitative approaches” (p. 247).

Therefore, the method of triangulation was acquired to provide maximum validity and reliability to the study. All the original documents were kept and most of the time was verified by the signature of the participants. The audio and video tapes provide additional credibility.

Triangulation. Audit trail, member checks, and feedback served as a three legged stool to strengthen the research by providing credibility to the data. Interviews, direct observations, and documents were the source of data collection. As an effort to provide extra validity and to reduce the risk of compromised validity, the researcher took a few more steps to strengthen his finding.

Audit Trail. The researcher recorded all the observations, interviews, even the hand written notes on a voice recorder (the researcher read his notes to record it on voice recorder). The audio record also included the thoughts of the researcher, which were recorded right after each participant left the room, and before the researcher left the room. These running thoughts were written in a short hand format during the interview on the separate sheet. A digital voice recorder was used to record the data.

Member Checks. After taking notes, the researcher showed them to the participants and asked the participants if he had a general understanding. This process was done in two ways: 1) the participants were asked to look at the notes and see if it was the correct information or 2) the researcher provided the transcript of the interview to the

participants to verify that the information contained was correct. The participants were asked to make any applicable changes.

Feedback. The researcher asked Sarah McDowell, a knowledgeable student aid to a professor for Islamic studies at Eastern University, St. Davids, PA, about the topic for feedback on the notes, interviews, and the observations, both before and after the interpretation. It was under the light of her critical feedback that the researcher was able to avoid any bias. The following is the feedback that the researcher received from the consultant to control bias and also to add more validity to the study:

The researcher's biggest critique of the interviewee's statements is the fact that the two interviews that seem to him to be the most negative come from individuals that are involved with Islamic Organizations of varying kinds. According to the researcher, there is a possible connection between their involvement in the Islamic Organizations and their pessimistic views on American society's opinions on Islam. That is possible, but I would disagree here, in that I don't believe that these two interviewees (Participant no. 1 and Participant no. 2) seemed to have the most negative experiences. From my perspective, it seems that Participant no. 2 and Participant no. 4 had the most negative experiences, and the fact that these two interviewees were the only two women out of the seven speaks volumes to me. I think that based on these interviews, it seems that all the interviewees had an overall positive experience growing up in the United States with racial and religious differences, but the women took such experiences in a different way. It is possible, therefore, that the women's experiences were more

negative based on their gender perceptions as well as their being treated differently by others due to their gender.

Furthermore, I would critique the researcher's argument that, in his opinion, Islam should not be addressed any differently in schools. I would critique this on the grounds that, while we are all striving for equality and while it would not be fair to give Islam an unfair advantage when it comes to introductions at a young age in schooling, Islam is already at a disadvantage that most other religions do not face. If Islam is at a disadvantage to begin with, then to treat it just as any other religion would be to further its disadvantage in the long run.

However, despite these disagreements, I would have to say that the researcher has a very well thought out argument for his topics of discussion, and he clearly comes from a standpoint of a personal understanding of the issues that I cannot hope to understand because of my lack of background experience in the area.

Audio Transcripts. The transcripts of audio tapes were written down by the researcher and verified with the participants for validity purposes.

Memoing (reflexivity). The researcher kept a record of his thoughts as he observed and wrote down the facts. The record was secured by placing where the rest of the documents were locked in a cabinet.

Ethical Considerations. Following IRB approval, the researcher informed the participants about the study with full disclosure at three different levels and occasions. First, at the time of the recruitment of the participants, the researcher went over the details of the consent form, which includes purpose of the study, risks to participate in the study, confidentiality, and procedures. Prior to an in person meeting, full disclosure was provided in a written document in initial contact whether through an e-mail or via mail.

Finally, to ensure that the participants of this study were in full awareness of the purpose, procedure, and their personal rights as they pertain to the study at hand, the researcher took care to review the consent forms prior to the interview. The researcher also personally participated in the study as an unbiased observer. In order to further reduce the risk of a bias being introduced to the study, the researcher has issued a statement of subjectivity and kept subjectivities at the forefront of their awareness throughout the interview process. As required by the Institutional Review Board (IRB) of Liberty University (2008), the researcher must and has protected the identities, privacies, rights, and dignity of interview participants.

The researcher has properly explained that participants have the option to cease participation in the study at any time with the assurance that their personal data will be properly disposed of and not included in the study. Also, the researcher has also properly explained any and all risks that may occur as a result of participation in the study and has acted in accordance with the honesty and integrity expected by Liberty University. The researcher has also explained and assured anonymity and confidentiality through the use of pseudonyms or codes for any personally identifying information, with regards to the study, and has taken care to store consent forms separate from the data itself and limit outside access to data with identifying characteristics without the expressed permission of the participant. Furthermore, the researcher has the approval of the IRB of Liberty University expressed through a written consent form issued to each participant to sign according to the requirements of the IRB, with the approval of the Human Subjects Committee of Liberty University, and assuring ethical treatment of participants. The

researcher's statement of subjectivity follows in the next section. Appendix IV contains the IRB application; at the bottom of the application the consent form is provided.

Statement of Subjectivity

It was described briefly under the heading of “Researcher’s perspective” and “Researcher’s qualification” that the researcher was persecuted and discriminated by Pakistani Muslims based on religious differences. He has also faced a substantial amount of prejudice in the United States based on his ethnicity. As an educator, leader, Christian, pastor, doctoral student, citizen of Pakistan, and a resident of New York, the researcher felt that he was in the unique position to address some of the issues Pakistani and Indian Muslims are facing as minorities in the American school system. However, in doing so, he also felt that his previous experiences as a member of a minority in Pakistan could potentially add to the research accompanied by both positive, as well as negative feelings. Due to the fact that he was forced to leave his country and also was graciously given refuge in the United States of America, it could stir up potentially negative and biased opinions in the study. However, the positive side of his involvement in the study was that he was able to critically review the treatment that the participants received in the American school system from various perspectives.

In the process of scholarly research, the researcher’s position as an educator in New York City allowed him to evaluate research on an educational level, from an informed perspective. Three concerns are presented to the researcher: What will work in the urban, multiracial, multiethnic, and multicultural setting of New York City?; could the researcher, as a professional, find ways to encourage and enable the school system to

adapt to the recommended procedures?; and as a community member, would the researcher be able to meet his own expectations? The researcher's previous background, current experiences, and all the positions he holds allowed him to view the process of the study with multiple layers of critical thought.

CHAPTER FOUR: THE FINDINGS

Introduction

The Western and the Eastern civilizations are not especially difficult to understand and integrate at particular levels. The understanding of the Eastern culture could be discussed and learned, but when it comes to Islamic civilization or Islamic culture, no book or material could fully cover or even begin to comprehend the vastness of the subject; particularly when the material or the book is written by a citizen of the West, as Participant Two mentioned in her interview. The fundamental beliefs and practices of Pakistani and Indian Muslims in New York City are part of their religion, traditions, culture, and civilization. This is imperative for a Muslim person to act differently in American society than a non-Muslim American. In order to develop a clear understanding of the traditions and cultural values, one must understand Islam. Islam provides a proper system for education, economics, government and politics, social life, and religious practices. Therefore, the uncomfortable dynamic between Muslim and non-Muslim students in the American school system requires bold steps and genuine effort to restore the trust between both student groups. It was necessary to examine the stories of personal lived experiences of Muslim Pakistani and Indian students in the American school system.

Furthermore, in order to develop a harmonious environment in the American school system, it is necessary to consider the lived experience of Muslim Pakistani and

Indian students in the American school system, which will open new doors to integrate the Western civilization with Islamic civilization and culture. At the very least, it would be possible to identify the common denominators that play a vital role in setting the stage for bullying and prejudice against Muslim students. In addition, the data collected can be used to begin conversations concerning educators, Muslim and non-Muslim students, and the American school system's successes and obstacles at various levels in terms of equal rights for all students. Also, this data could provide guidelines for the school system in decision making and ultimately add to the research literature concerning practices that increase interest to diversify the school community and integrate diversity into the school's mission.

As stated in Chapter one, the study reported the lived experience of Muslim Pakistani and Indian students in their New York school system experience in an effort to help teachers, school administrators, policy makers and counselors to understand how they can overcome the ongoing prejudice against Muslims in the American school system. This chapter begins with a brief introduction of the participants, followed by a brief description of the strong presence of Islam in the Greater New York City area under the heading "The Study Community." Next, there would be a biography of the participants. Following "Biography of the participants", the chapter reports the perception of the participants regarding the American school system.

Next, the chapter reports the themes emerged from the data analysis. The common themes will be discussed in light of the participants' responses for each question asked during the interviews for examination and comparison. In order to increase the validity

and reliability of the data and for future research, this chapter will follow van Manen's directions for data analysis and collection themes. Also, direct quotes from the participants will be used. This chapter will summarize the answers for the five specific guiding questions posed in Chapter one to answer the research question: What is the lived experience of Muslim Pakistani and Indian students in their New York school system experience?

Guiding Questions

The major research question was followed by a few guiding questions to seek detailed information about the lived experience of Muslim Pakistani and Indian students in their New York school system experience.

1. What are the most prominent negative experiences that the participants had and are having in the New York school system?
2. What are the most prominent positive experiences that the participants had and are having in the New York school system?
3. What is the motivation denominator that has kept the participants pursuing their education in the New York school system to become better citizens of America?
4. How can these positive experiences be replicated in schools to promote peace and harmony among students?
5. How can these negative experiences be overcome and what are the implications for schools, policy makers, and future researchers as pertains to encouraging Muslim students to become part of the school?

Brief Introduction of the Participants

In the study, there were two female participants and five male participants. All the participants were given pseudonyms names to keep the identity of the participants secrete as it was promised in the consent form. Ali is a male Muslim and had become a professional apologist and outreach coordinator for the Muslim Student Association (MSA). He was also connected to the Islamic center at Cornell University and Yale University. Participant Two Nadia is a female Muslim and had become a social worker to help Muslim students. She was also connected to MSA and other religious, political organizations such as the New York University Islamic Center. Participant Three is Bilal, a male Muslim and is still in school in Brooklyn. He has no ties with any religiously or politically organized group. Participant Four, Najima, is a female Muslim and was not connected to any religious or political organization and still a student. Participant Five Jamal is a male Muslim and was connected to a social and cultural group of local Muslims and had no connections with any political or religious organizations. Participant Six Ahmad is a male Muslim and was a special education student because of his disability. Participant Seven, Basheer, is a male Muslim and was also a special education student.

The Study of the Community

New York City, where the study took place, is a very diverse city. New York City is one of the largest cities outside the Islamic world and is nearly as large as Chicago and Los Angeles combined. Greater New York area has around one million Muslims in the 75 mile radius around Times Square. In 2000, the total number of Pakistanis living in

America was 229,306 and 100,000 of them lived in New York. According to the online source StateUniversity.com, 97% of the population of Pakistan is Muslim. Therefore, most of the Pakistanis living in America are Muslims too. Nationwide about 70% of all Muslims fall between the ages of 16 and 65, and the average size of a Muslim household is 4.9 persons. About 42% of Muslims are African American, 24% are South Asian, which includes Pakistani and Indian Muslims, and 12% are Arab Muslims. In America, 10% of Muslims are related to the engineering and computer field, 8% to the Medical field, and 4% to the financial field. In New York City, most of the Muslims own their own businesses. Muslims are reported to earn as little as \$32,000 per year (mostly African American Muslims) and as high as \$69,000 per year. 20.2% of all American Muslims are students, 14.1% hold at least a high school diploma, and 19.4% have some college education, 30.0% have Bachelor's degrees, and 32.1% American Muslims have advanced degrees (Mujahid, 2010). According to Allied Media Corp (2010), most of the Muslims in America belong to the younger generation, ages 18-29 are 39.8%, 30-49 are 49.5% and in New York City this is also true. Out of 1.1 million students in New York City, 120,000 or 12% are Muslims.

Biography of the Participants

In the study, there were two female participants, Nadia, and Najima and there were five male participants: Ali, Bilal, Jamal, Ahmad, and Basheer. Ali was the first interviewee. Ali's parents were moved to New York when he was 3 years old. He attended middle school and high school here in the States. He is 35 years old, he has a fair complexion, and is a well built, tall man. He continued his studies and received his

undergraduate and graduate degrees in a prestigious University in New York. While he was a student he was asked to join the staff of his University and work as a coordinator. He became a professional apologist and outreach coordinator for the Muslim Student Association (MSA). He was also connected to the Islamic center at Cornell University and Yale University. Ali lives in New York, and he is married to a Pakistani Muslim woman and they have an 8 year old son. Ali is also an Imam, and a chaplain for one of the best Universities in the United States of America. Ali wears western-style clothes, but he has a long beard with gray hair in it.

The second interviewee was Nadia. She was born in Queens, New York, and went to school in Queens. She has received her undergraduate and graduate degrees from a prestigious university in New York. She has become a social worker to help Muslim students. She is also connected to MSA and some other religious-political organizations such as the New York University Islamic Center. Nadia wears a Hijab, but she also wears western-style clothes. Nadia is a New Yorker and witnessed the tragedy of 9/11. She was a couple of blocks away from the World Trade Center on the morning of 9/11 when the planes hit the towers. She is in her early 30s and she has comparatively short height and light skin color. Bilal was the third participant, who lives in Brooklyn, New York. Bilal is a Muslim young adult who goes to school in Brooklyn, New York City. He has brown skin, and is tall, but not too tall for a 17 year old. Also, Bilal is a very friendly young man, who was comfortable with his identity as a Muslim American. The researcher first met him at a local shop in Coney Island, Brooklyn, New York City. He is a well-built young man in western-style clothes. He does not have any connection with religious or

political organizations. Najima was the fourth person who agreed to be interviewed. She moved to New York from Pakistan with her family right after the tragedy of 9/11. She attended middle school and high school in the states. Now she is studying pre-med in a prestigious university in New York. She has dark hair, brown skin, normal height, and is 19 years old. Najima does not wear a Hijab and was dressed in western-style clothes. Najima mentioned that she was not a part of any religious or political organization at school. The next participant, Jamal was connected to a social and cultural group of local Muslims and had no connections with any political or religious organizations. He is a short, muscular man, and he wore a track suit when he appeared for the interview. He is 26 years old and has a fair complexion. Also, Jamal was born in Brooklyn, New York and attended middle school and high school in Brooklyn, New York City. He has an undergraduate degree and runs his own business in a predominately Muslim neighborhood in New York City. Ahmed was the sixth interviewee who was wearing traditional Pakistani clothes. He attended middle and high school in New York City, specifically in a special education program because of his disabilities. The next participant, Ahmad, is a thin man with very fair complexion, and was very friendly. He mentioned that he was not connected to any religious or political group. The last interviewee, Basheer is a tall, thin man. He was 20 years old and has attended high school in New York City. He was also a special education program student. He mentioned that he was not connected with any Islamic organization. Furthermore, he wore western-style clothes.

Perception of the participants regarding the American school system

The following section of the chapter is focused on the perceptions of the participants based on the open-ended, semi-structured questions (see Appendix I) to answer the five guiding questions stated in Chapter one in order to find an answer to the research question: What is the lived experience of Muslim Pakistani and Indian students in their New York school system experience?

The group was diverse in their social lives, but they all shared many similar thoughts about the American school system. All the participants in the group considered themselves faithful Muslims. All the participants had positive experiences, only two reported discrimination and prejudice in the American school system, which they also referred to as a form of bullying in middle school. It was acknowledged by the participants that in middle school, bullying is common and because the non-Muslim students did not know any better, they made fun of the Muslim traditions, such as their appearance, particularly the Hijab. The first two participants talked in detail about the issue of misunderstandings, wrong perceptions, discrimination, the need to educate teachers about Islam, and also the need to invite Muslim trainers into the schools. However, one of them clearly confessed that he had never had any problem as a Muslim student in the American school system.

The first two participants provided comparatively long interviews, whereas the rest of the five gave very short interviews, because they simply did not have many negative experiences. Moreover, they were highly satisfied with the performance and the treatment they received from the educators in the school. The positive experiences were

overwhelming and the gratitude the participants shared with the researcher for having the opportunity to go to school in the United States of America was immense and would need additional words to be described.

The female students were the only participants who reported mistreatment and discrimination. The male students did not report any incidents of mistreatment or discrimination; rather, they felt that they had great experiences and did not face any problem in fitting into the school. An intensive review of the interviews with all the participants suggests three points overall:

1. Pakistani students talked about how they felt that they blended in with the American society, while still abstaining from things their culture and religion did not allow, such as drinking and dating.
2. All initially said they did not know what teachers could do about the problems with Islamic identification, but overall thought they could just generally introduce it as a subject to familiarize children with the Islamic culture.
3. All had overall positive things to say about American acceptance of Islam and Muslims, and seemed to think that the media overdramatizes the issue when asked the question, “Tell me about your experiences as a student in the American school system?”

Question Data Analysis and Common Themes

Following the six steps suggested by van Manen (1990) which are discussed in Chapter III under Data Analysis the following section was written. The “lifeworld” that is lived space (spatiality), lived body (corporeality), lived time (temporality), and lived

human relation (relationally or community), van Manen (1990) calls the lifeworld “four existentials that may prove especially helpful as guides for reflection in the research process” (p. 101) became conceptual framework to find meanings (themes). He adds, “The lived world as experienced in everyday situation and relations, our lived experiences and the structures of meaning (themes) in terms of which these lived experiences can be described and interpreted constitute the immense complexity of the lifeworld” (van Manen, 1990, p. 101). The researcher conducted a Thematic Analysis (van Manen, 1990). In Thematic Analysis, according to van Manen (1990), “when we analyze a phenomenon, we are trying to determine what the themes are, and what the experiential structures that make up that experience are” (p. 79). The themes are “conceptual formulations or categorical statements” (van Manen, 1990, p. 79) that the researcher found during data analysis. There were many themes, however van Manen provided guidelines to determine incidental and essential themes: “The most difficult and controversial element of phenomenological human science may be to differentiate between essential themes and themes that are more incidentally related to the phenomenon under study” (van Manen, 1990, p. 106). Following the process of free imaginative variation the researcher eliminated the incident themes and continued his data analysis with essential themes.

Lifeworld Existential as Guide

As mentioned in above section, “Lifeworld” was used as a conceptual framework to obtain rich data about the lived experience of the participants. To find the answer for the research question: What is the lived experience of Muslim Pakistani and Indian

students in their New York school system experience? A semi-structured, open-ended interview that consists of primarily 13 Questions was used, which are based on lived space (spatiality), lived body (corporeality), lived time (temporality), and lived human relation (relationally or community) to examine the phenomenon (van Manen, 1990). The Lifeworld Existential provided a number of themes but through the process of free imaginative variation the following themes stood out as essential themes.

The data analysis showed that there were seven common themes in all the interviews. All the participants talked about the following seven themes: (a) Teachers and Administrators, (b) Muslim and Non-Muslim Students, (c) Muslim Men vs. Muslim Women. (d) Media and Literature, (e) Muslim Initiative, (f) Students Interaction, (g) Minority Effect. The transcripts of the interviews, observations, and notes indicated the above themes to be true in the lives of all the participants. First, this section will discuss briefly Lifeworld as the primary methodological approach to investigate the phenomenon of the lived experience of Muslim Pakistani and Indian students in the American school system, and then it will discuss the seven themes that have emerged from the data analysis.

Lived Space (spatiality)

This concept is defined as felt space. It is not mathematical space, or the length, height and depth dimensions of space. Van Manen (1990) states, “lived space is more difficult to put into words since the experience of lived (as lived time, body) is largely pre-verbal; we not ordinarily reflect on it” (p. 102). It is the place where one feels protected, and without that place one feels lost, vulnerable, or stranger. The same author

adds, “When we want to understand a person we ask about his or her world, profession, interests, background, place of birth and childhood, etc.” (van Manen, 1990, p. 103). All of this helps to examine the nature of the lived space that “renders that particular experience its quality of meaning” (van Manen, 1990, p. 103). Phenomenologically, the lived experiences of Ali, Nadia, Bilal, Najima, Jamal, Ahmad, and Basheer, can only be fully understood if the researcher understands “the various qualities and aspects of lived space” (van Manen, 1990, p. 103). The interviewees were asked about their personal experiences repeatedly in several different ways to find about the lived space, and they were encouraged to provide details about the lived space. The following are some of the responses that provide information about the “world, profession, interests, background, place of birth and childhood, etc.” (van Manen, 1990, p. 103) of the participants:

Ali, a professional Muslim representative to the American society, who talks about Islam and initiates interfaith dialogue, was born in Pakistan. He was born in the city of Raheem Yaar Khan and moved in America when he was three years old. All of his primary and secondary schooling took place in the United States. He said that the majority of his elementary to junior high schooling was in Binghamton, in upstate New York. The reason he mentioned this was because the community was predominantly white, middle class. He went to a public high school until college. He said, “The reason why I mentioned all of that is I was actually aware at a relatively early age of being an ethnic minority and also being a religious minority.” He was one of the very few South Asians, specifically Pakistanis. Also, he said in his elementary school, junior high school, and high school, he was one of the only Pakistani, South Asian students.

Specifically, Ali says, “I mean you could count on your hands the number of Muslims in the school, and so for me...the school in that way was very formative.”

Furthermore, he played sports and had non-Pakistani, non-Muslim friends growing up all the way through college. He said, “My whole life was being culturally focused, you know; we spoke Urdu and Punjabi at home; we eat South Asian food and kept those kinds of cultural traditions alive.” Ali continued that it was in a way “the sense of walking with one foot in this world and one foot in that world.” He continued, “Sort of one world living the American life style and one in the Pakistani Muslim household.” He acknowledged and emphasized that it was not troubling. He said, “I mean, I can’t really look back and recall many episodes of systematic Islamophobia or prejudice against me as Pakistani or as a Muslim. In that way, I was very fortunate up until much later.” The researcher asked “When you say much later what does that mean?” and Ali replied, “I mean basically all the way, until I was in graduate school when 9/11 happened.” He said, “After 9/11, because of the situation of post 9/11 and the aftermath, we saw a whole rash of Islamophobia across the country. There were comments on the air, sort of discourse shape change.” He continued, “You heard incidents of Muslims being discriminated against, you know mosques are...having death threats and being attacked and Muslims being harassed and what not.” He said the reason he mentioned this is because “upstate New York is quite different than down state. That one thing I have talked about many times, down states you look at New York City, Long Island, but upstate New York is politically and socially quite conservative.” He also said, “I think given the ratio, the socio-economic class sort of makes up many parts of upstate

New York, and is not the most diverse open-minded kind of a place.” He thought the kind of incidents that were going on there were not the same as in the Middle America. It was a very liberal place where he was living before and at the time of 9/11.

Nadia, a Muslim woman, talked about her background concerning the phenomenon that she had “very balanced and very different experiences.” She was born in New York City, and when she was a child, she attended kindergarten, first grade, and second grade in the states as a young child. She says, “I knew I was kind of different. I didn’t eat out, and I didn’t eat school lunches or what not. I was aware that I was the darkest child in my class, but I got along with everybody”. She adds, “I did fairly well at school. I had a number of friends there, so I really liked school and probably part of that was that I felt it came easy to me.” Also, she remembered that she would walk into the classroom and know pretty much what would be there, and because there was no apparent stress, it was very easy.

Socially, she got along with her peers, but then she went to Pakistan and came back to the United States in 1988. Upon her arrival, she decided to wear a Hijab, and she was so disappointed about her move back to the States that she decided to go to school wearing Shalwar Kameez (Pakistani traditional clothing, a long shirt with baggy pants). She recalls, “I was coming in, my first day was Halloween, so I told my mom there is no way I am going.” She remembered and laughed about this particular memory. On Nov. 1, 1988, when she returned to her school in New York City, she experienced a big shock. She realized that some of the kids she had gone to the school with previously did not recognize her. This was the year she experienced racism, discrimination, and an

extensive amount of bullying. “People would try to pull my Hijab off and they would call me really ridiculous names like Gandhi, Mother Teresa, Crocodile Dundee, things just for the sake of saying it,” she mentioned with embarrassment. She adds, “Really, not knowing, really not understanding, they were really not asking questions. When they would ask questions, they would try ask just to get information to mock me with and to laugh at later on.”

Nadia was aware of that and she said, “When people are calling you Crocodile Dundee, which is so stupid even at that age, I was rolling my eyes and saying it is just really ridiculous. My parents even asked if I was sure that I wanted to go to school like that and offered to buy me American clothes.” Her parents were concerned with the everyday bullying and discrimination that she was facing at school. They told her, “You are really young; you really do not have to do this now.” She just thought to herself, “Do I really want to be like these kids, and even if I were to do this, would they even stop teasing me? And I thought to myself, even if I take that off, they are going to find something else to make fun of me for.” So she concluded that there was no point taking off the Hijab and wearing American clothes. She asked herself, “Do I really want to be like them?” and she decided not to care what people said about her. Therefore, she would wear and do whatever she wanted. She also mentioned that during middle school, she was very quiet and did not interact much with her peers. There were one or two children that she went to school with who at some point reach out to her and talked to her, and she would tell them, “Do you remember I used to go to that school too,” and until this day she continues a relationship with only one or two childhood friends.

Nadia shared, “The most positive experience I had then was with the African American community” Additionally, she said, “They were non-Muslim, but they were exposed to Muslims in their own kind of communities. So they were the ones I talked to on the first day, and I was just staring at the crowd, and I did not know where to go. It was a completely different culture, but you know they welcomed me, and it was really, really sweet, and they were my friends for a really long time as well.” Because of this, she managed to deal with the discrimination from the rest of her peers and was able to graduate from middle school and into a more academically based high school. However, Nadia emphasized, “[it was] not the one in my region”. Regardless, she thought it would be slightly better than the middle school. She said, “But I do remember when I first started high school, there was this anxiety within me about what is it going to be like, are people going to ...what are people’s responses going to be like?” but she was really surprised, it was more than what she expected. She walked in the first day and saw people were saying to her Aslam-alakum (the Islamic greeting). She said, “I was totally thrown off, but it was more of a positive experience. They were more welcoming; they were curious; they were asking questions to learn and not to make fun of me. So that was kind of a nice welcome.” She experienced a significant change in every way. The teachers were more receptive and more sensitive: “Like in the middle school, teachers knew that I was being picked on. The teachers knew exactly what was going on, but nobody came to say anything until I was in the 8th grade.” This is where she recalled another story from her middle school experience in the 8th grade. “The most popular teacher in the school kind of very much embarrassed me in a good way.” She explained

that her teacher said, “You know, I have a lot of respect for this girl she is following her belief.” She said in front of the entire class, “Being an 8th grader, I was totally embarrassed to be called out like that. It was after that things began to change a little bit for me in middle school.” She said, “But in high school, I just never had any kind of experiences of prejudice. Now, I didn’t have that many friendships. The same one or two people that I had in middle school, I ended up going to high school with.” Those were the people she was closest with but there was still an acknowledgement and awareness that she was different.

Nadia continues, “I am not dating; I am not drinking; I am not smoking pot; I am not doing all that stuff. I came from a very strict background, and with great difficulty, I got permission to stay after school for extra curriculum.” She said, “So there was a difference that I was aware of, and they were aware of it. So, after some kind of casual interactions the other stuff was different.” Sometimes, she felt remorse that she would never be in that group, but she was fine with it overall. Ultimately, she was fine with being on the outside, rather than getting very close to the other students. She did not need to be involved in the details of their dramatic, everyday lives.

Bilal was a Muslim student in a local high school in Brooklyn, New York. He did not have much to say because his experience at the school was very positive. He said, “My experience was great; I learned a lot of things, and it was way better than any other place. It’s easy; it’s just cool, you know. All you have to do is go to school, and you will learn the best things.”

Najima was a female Muslim student who wasn't born in America, and lived in Pakistan until she was nine years old. She moved here at a very difficult time, "at the beginning of middle school, when bullying is very common and being different is seen as a bad thing." It was also a few weeks before 9/11, "so my start was very rough." She said that she experienced culture-shock and had a very hard time adapting to life in America.

Jamal was born in America and his experience in the American school system was very good. He liked the school, the teachers, students, and everyone at the school. He said it was because he was very nice to everyone; therefore everyone treated him with kindness. To him, the American school system was the best school system in the world and everyone should go to school here if possible. He said all the Pakistanis who do not go to school or who go to school and drop out should go to school. He said, "The teachers are very good; they teach in a way that makes sense. I had a great school experience as a Muslim student." He also mentioned that there was no difference in treatment whether you were a Muslim. Overall, Jamal reported that the teachers were very good and he liked his school.

Ahmad was not born in America but he expressed that "my experience in the American school system was very good as well." He said, "I came after 9/11." According to him, in junior high school there is not so much attention but in high school, "kids go wild." He continued, "...and then they have negative and positive experiences. They do good things and bad things but it depends on the ethnicity." He said, "People come from different backgrounds, different cultures, different religions; and therefore,

they have their own opinions, culture, food, and everything.” He attended Samuel J Tilden High School in Brooklyn, New York and graduated in 2008. He said, “The school, the principal, the teachers, and security guards, everyone was nice.”

Basheer immigrated to America, and said, “In the American school system, high school is very nice. The programs they offer are very good. I like it here; I love the American school system.” He also said that all the teachers were very nice and helpful and the studies were very powerful. Basheer states, “My overall experience in the American school system was great, and I have no complaints.” He started high school after 9/11 and finished in 2010. He attended high school for so long, that now he has had to go for his GED. This is because during his school year, there were problems back home forcing him to go to Pakistan. Additionally, it was because he was much older than the other students that he had to go for his GED. Also, his grandmother was sick so this attributed to his break in school enrollment. Basheer wanted to go to college for criminal justice. He got many practical experiences during his high school studies, gaining experience in the medical field, and as a security guard. In his free time, he studied. He said, “In the American school system, if you study regularly, you will get your diploma; and if you do not study, you will not. It is easy though. I like studying here. Some people who go to school say it is hard, but I like it. I think it is really good.”

Lived Body (corporeality) It is a phenomenological fact that “we are always bodily in the world” (van Manen, 1990, p.103). Van Manen (1990) explained “In our physical or bodily presence we both reveal something about ourselves and we always conceal something at the same time-not necessarily consciously or deliberately, but rather

in spite of ourselves” (p. 103). Therefore, it was necessary to assume that the participants would conceal information, maybe not deliberately, but in order to get the best information about the lived experience, more questions were asked. Sometimes, the interviewee went back to a previously mentioned experience to add something valuable. An example of this occurred in the following portion of the interview with Ali.

Ali started his answer going back to the story of his birth and the story of growing up. He said that he grew up in a very moderate family in terms of practicing religion. He did not grow up in a very conservative and strict household. His parents were more Pakistani or South Asian in their cultural orientation and the way they ran house, but they were explicitly Muslims. He did not grow up obsessed with haram (religiously forbidden food) and halal (religiously permitted food); it was his own choice at a much later time that he became more conservative in his eating habits. He said that he drew to that much later in his life where he found himself caught into that kind of mentality. Up until the age of 15, it was not really all that much of a difference. He knew he had a different skin color, different language, different culture at the home, but outside, it was not that different. Ali said that, especially in high school, the normal American cultural lifestyle of people included going to parties, drinking, and having girlfriends. He realized that those things that were gender norms in America were not acceptable in his religion and culture. That’s where he found it challenging. “How do you navigate an American normal public high school life but also try to stay within a certain set of cultural beliefs?” he wondered. He grew up in a very small community in his early days. All his friends were going out on Friday nights after football games and on weekends to do things he

was not partaking in at all. “Where, as you know, when you are in high school, you are surrounded by that kind of stuff. I think to me that was one of the major points of diversion,” he said. He went through a phase toward the end of high school, when he started studying Islam, reading a lot about Islam, spending time at the local mosque with the Imam, and befriending some more conservative people. He said, “I became aware of my own religious identity; I think I had a sort of awaking at that level or at that time.” Ali recognized that, for him, it became even more of a division as to how American he was, and he did not fit in because he was Pakistani. He had this new struggle with how far is far enough to draw the line. The struggle is that Pakistanis and the religion of Islam have a different set of guidelines, which are a bit more restricted than American norms. Even so, he was wary of certain things he would not ever want to engage in because they were not only cultural taboos but religiously impermissible. Those were the main things for him growing up that he said made him aware of differences.

Lived Time (temporality) This is not the time people experience every day. The lived time is subjective time contradicting the clock’s time, which is the objective time. The lived time is the kind of time when one feels happy or is enjoying the lived experience, the time appears to speeds up and when one feels sad, anxious, or bored, it slows down. Furthermore, the lived time is important in relation to fully understand the lived experiences because it is temporal tensions of past, present, and future. Human beings are temporal beings, and what is experienced today will go in the running record of our histories to be recalled when we encounter the experience again, perhaps in a very different form. Van Manen (1990) states, “What I have encountered in my past sticks to

me as memories or as (near) forgotten experiences that how leave their traces on my being-the way I carry myself” (p.104). Yet, van Manen suggested, “It is true too that the past changes under pressures and influences of the present” (p. 103). If the participants have skipped any of the five hierarchy steps of Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs theory, then the lived time can help the participants discuss their experiences. Talking about the present, past, and the future helped to identify the core issue Muslim Pakistani and Indian students in the American school system go through in their everyday lives. The interviewees talked about some memories from the past that they considered pleasant or painful. Particularly, Ali and Nadia talked about something they experienced in the past but now they have changed their opinion due to the current experience.

Nadia said at school she “either had positive experience with people or neutral, not the other way around”.

Ali said, “Where I grew up, I was very much fascinated by this whole concept of the American military and the cool factor”, and later, “But I think I became very disillusioned with the American political establishment, military establishment, and how they were defending what It meant to be American.” Their latter experiences took over the previous experiences which form their new philosophy about American society.

Nadia also mentioned, “People would try to pull my Hijab off and they would call me really ridiculous names like Gandhi, Mother Teresa, Crocodile Dundee, things just for the sake of saying it”, which is the only experience she recalls as negative but that has changed her opinion about the treatment Muslim are receiving in the American school system.

Lived Other (relationally) This term can be described as lived relations; how one perceives or presents oneself to others. Even if someone hears or reads about someone else, although it is an indirect presentation of the person, it will form a physical impression of the person “which later may get confirmed, or negated when we find out, to our surprise, that the person looks very different from the way we expected” (van Manen, 1990, p. 105). The interviewees shared some of their experiences, which changed the direction of the study. The reviewed literature and theoretical framework talks about racism, prejudice, discrimination and bullying toward Muslim students in the American school system, but most of the participant would disagree with the notion that they have been mistreated in the American school system.

Bilal said, “Everybody was still the same, and nothing changed in the aftermath of 9/11.” He explicitly mentioned, “You know, when the Times Square thing happened and that was all over the news and some people were saying stuff about the Muslims, it was some people, not most.” The participant was confident and very comfortable with the treatment he has received in the aftermath of 9/11. He said, “It was just myself; I never felt discriminated against at all.” He had not noticed any change at school in his teachers, classmates, and other staff. He said, “I did not see any change in the behavior of my non-Muslim friends after the Times Square bombing occurred. They were the same.”

Jamal agreed with Bilal. Jamal said, “Not personally with me,” but he had heard stories about other people that he believes come largely from the media. “The media does not tell the story of both sides,” he said, “other than that, no difference.” He said

that if he would not treat others badly, others will not treat him badly either. “I did not feel any conflict between being Muslim and being American after or before 9/11,” he emphasized.”

Ahmad was in agreement that in the aftermath of 9/11 he has not faced any issue at school either. He said, “No, I never felt that. I was just a simple man and that is it. I felt that I am American and Muslim. An American Muslim.”

Basheer had a very good experience in school. He had people in his class who were Christians, Hindus, Jews, and Muslims, so he does not think there was any difference. All the students were the same in his experience. Some may have different opinions about others in the school, but that is their personal opinion. He personally never saw any signs of different treatment. Some may think in their minds, “You are Muslim, but this is a Christian country. But in my mind, everyone is the same here.” He said that Christian or Muslim, all are Americans, and God is one, whether some say Christian God or Muslim God; God is one. There is no difference between us, and there is no difference in our God. He emphasized over and over again that God is the same so there is no difference between Muslims and Christians because all believe in the same God. He said, “So I do not see any conflict in being Muslim or American. I like it here.”

Common Themes

Following the directions of van Manen, and by conducting thematic analysis, the following essential themes were emerged:

Teachers and Administrators

If not as a collective unit, at least individually many schools across the country, particularly in New York City, have taken initiative to deal with bullying, discrimination, and prejudice in the aftermath of 9/11. The themes that emerged from the interviews with the participants suggest that to reduce and avoid prejudice, the effective steps taken by the teachers and administrators in the American school system in the aftermath of 9/11 are plausible and need to be replicated across the country. Also, the themes have indicated a number of other elements, related to American society, that contributed to the reduction and prevention of bullying, discrimination, and prejudice against Muslim Pakistani and Indian students in their New York school system experience. The Theory of Frustration-Aggression, Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, Social Development Theory, Critical Race Theory, and Theory of Polarization provide a clear picture of what it would look like if the teachers and administrators in the American school system in the aftermath of 9/11 would take their position seriously and work together. The students, Muslim and non-Muslim, are at a high risk of getting involved in aggression, violence, and bullying, through either perpetrating or becoming victims. Many teachers and administrators are challenged by the overwhelming need of integration between Muslim and non-Muslim students. Those who have attempted to engage in the process of integration for pluralism and tolerance are facing structural and cultural obstacles. Nevertheless, since the tragedy of 9/11, many teachers and administrators have taken a personal interest in educating themselves about Islam. They have attended or facilitated workshops and seminars on Islam to understand the religion and culture.. Apart from

special events, social study teachers have personally taken advantage of the opportunity when it comes to the medieval times and the Middle Eastern and South Asian history. Some schools have required teachers to attend staff training to receive, not only adequate knowledge about South Asia, but also to understand Islam in a new way that had never been introduced to America or published in its literature. These trainings have made accurate resource materials about the Middle East, Islam, and the various South Asian groups, specifically Pakistani and Indian Muslims in the United States, particularly in New York City.

Perception of the Participants

Ali stated, “You know, I would be happy to say there are a lot more positive experiences than negative.” He gave an example: “I was aware at a relatively early age of my differences. My teachers didn’t make a big deal out of it in a bad way at all.” He said that he would be very happy to say that looking back he really had no bad experiences. He said, “I cannot recall any experience from my life where I was discriminated against during elementary school, junior high school, or high school.” He went to school, and his friends appreciated the fact that he was different. Furthermore, when 9/11 happened, he was in graduate school. “It was nothing like how others say because there was nothing negative for me. My being Muslim did not really come up at all.”

Bilal said, “They [teachers] tell you about drugs, positive things about life, business, everything. They [teachers] are always very helpful. They help you a lot, and they are always there for you. You just have to go to the right person.”

Jamal was in agreement with Bilal, saying, “my whole school experience was a positive experience and that no one treated me differently. Teachers, the principal, counselors, and students were nice because I was nice.” He added, “When one knows that you are a nice person, they treat you well regardless of your religion.”

Ahmad agreed with Ali, Bilal, and Jamal, on the point that when he came to the United States of America, he attended a great high school. He said, “I had no problems in school at all.” He said, “One thing in this country is the tremendous opportunity. They have books; they have a lot of teachers; they will help you as much as possible.” Ahmad said that if you want help from other teachers they will oblige. Ultimately, he thinks they helped him a lot. Also, because of a disability, he was in special education. He went to Montgomery, Alabama, attended school there for two years, and then came back and went to Tilden High School in Brooklyn, New York. Even there, all the teachers helped him in every way possible.

Basheer supported all the above participants by saying, “at school everyone was very helpful.”

Ali said most current educators at the kindergarten through 12th grade levels had heard about Islam, because Islam is such an important subject to current events. These people’s source of learning about Islam is media: newspaper, internet and news broadcasts. He thought there are better sources to learn about Islam. However, he states “I would venture that the majority of the exposure is negative. There is a lot of misinformation out there.” Ali told a story about such misinformation. He said, “I can tell you a quick story that to me illustrates this point.” Right after 9/11, he became an

outreach coordinator for the department of Middle Eastern studies at Cornell University. Being the outreach contact person for the department put him on very good terms with many of the faculty members. He was taking classes there, and they knew much about him and the work he did in that community. He said, "Ithaca, as I said, is in a liberal bubble, but once you go a few miles off of campus, you are in the heart of Upstate New York. They are quite conservative in many ways, so I went to local churches, elementary schools, and high schools." There was a district twenty minutes outside of the Cornell Campus that invited him to come and talk to their eighth grade class that was studying world events. This class wanted him to come and talk about what sort of things are going on in the Muslim culture after 9/11. This was even a year or two after 9/11, and at some point, he developed a standard discussion about Islam and Muslims. In the 15 minute talk, he asked the class, "Has anyone heard of Jihad, and do you know what it means?" A lot of hands went up in class, and he said that initially he was impressed with the kids' exposure to the concept of Jihad. However, a lot of kids raised their hands saying that they thought that it meant "holy war" and admitted that they learned it from their teacher. The Participant then spent the lecture describing that Jihad is not a militaristic term and has become a misnomer. He emphasized his belief that, overall, educators are doing a good job, but that there is not enough available information for teachers to handle the subject of properly teaching about Islam. Ali emphasized that teachers who teach kindergarten through 12th grade are literally preparing the next generations of children. He expressed his hope that there will be better educators. He states, "I think it's easy when you get to the college level, you can have departments; now, they teach classes on

science, literature, history, and relational studies on Islam and the Muslim world.” He adds that it gets better at the college level; obviously you have academic institutions that are successful in this area. He considers this to be good news at the college level. Although, there are some limitations; it is much better than it is at secondary school level.

Nadia did not think that most educators know about Islam. She said, “I have serious issues with how they perceive Islam going back to the time when they taught it to me.” She was in the ninth grade when the first Gulf War broke out, and she had a teacher who was Jewish. He would say things about Islam, and when she would read statements from her textbook, she would constantly raise her hand and inform her teacher that the information was wrong. She said, “I have to give him credit, after a certain time he stopped using his notes, he stopped using the text book, and he was like let’s ask [he used the name of the participant].” So, “it became Q & A with her and that was pretty much the entire section, and that is how she learned global history.” She believed that there are definitely misconceptions of how things are portrayed. She said, “So, yeah, I do not think that people have a true understanding. I do not think people really seek to understand how Islam is experienced by Muslims, so they teach as an outsider looking in, so one does not get the full picture.”

Bilal strongly felt that, based on his knowledge, his teachers have a good understanding of Islam. He said, “Yes they do, they know Islam.”

Najima partially agreed with Bilal. She said, “At that time in 2001, the teacher did not have much of an understanding of Islam because before 9/11 not many people in

America bothered to learn about Islam, and no one considered it a threat. Afterwards, everyone was confused and scared.” She said, “My teachers didn’t know what to do when kids asked questions because they had questions themselves.” According to her, “9/11 brought a desperate need to learn about Islam and the teachers certainly became more educated about Islam than they were before the incident of 9/11. So certainly now, in the aftermath of 9/11, teachers do know about Islam.”

Jamal said, “I cannot tell whether or not teachers know about Islam or Muslims before 9/11, but definitely after 9/11 I feel that they do. Even those people who did not have any interest in the subject started looking into Islam to know what Islam teaches.” He said, “I think teachers know about Islam now because they are teachers, and they need to know in order to answer the questions of the students.” He also emphasized, “The teachers should know about Islam, because it is an important topic.”

Ahmad gave a similar answer as the others. He does not know whether teachers know about Islam. However, he assumes that “They [teachers and administrators] know because I have not experienced otherwise.” He also said, “I do not know. I was a student and do not know about teachers, but I know some teachers know more about Islam than others. Some of them are Muslim, but some know nothing about Islam.”

Basheer was confident that teachers know about Islam. He said, “Yes I think they do; actually, there are some who really know a lot about Islam.” He added, “Especially in colleges and universities, it is even better.” He gave an example of the professors at Columbia. He said, “There are great scholars, and they are very famous in their knowledge about Islam.” He adds, “This was true in his high school experience

too.” His teachers knew about Islam. Basheer states, “Regardless of whether his teachers were Christian, Hindu, or Jewish, they did have all the knowledge about Islam in my understanding.” He gave another example on how he assessed that his teachers were more knowledgeable about Islam than he or other Muslims know about other religions. He said, “They knew about the Muslim holidays, and they celebrated them. To me we are the same. I respect them. They understand everything about Islam and respect Islamic traditions.”

Participants’ Recommendations

All but one reported that teachers and administrators must learn about Islam and Muslims.

Ali said that he is “a big proponent of the major universities and people affiliated with them really doing more educational outreach work. Doing workshops and preparing modules on how to teach Islam and the Muslim world and the current events to K through 12 classes.” He continued, “There are many quite sophisticated ways to do it,” he said. “I think it is a problem of access and resources. A lot of the teachers are already overburdened and have limited resources where they may not be able to get out there and have access.” He also said that Muslims need to be more involved in promotion. He proposed those schools with centers like Yale, Harvard, Jamestown, NYU, and others should work with the American school system to develop modules and lessons for teachers and provide them with training sessions on Islam. He said, “Many major universities have Middle Eastern studies outreach centers. You work with the faculty, and you work with the administrators, and you work with the people who are very good at

teaching.” Also, he said that there is a need to provide more funding to the people who develop those workshops and modules and get those opportunities opened up to the teachers. In his experience, while there is little resistance from select teachers, overall, there is actually a lot of interest. Social studies teachers, for example, want to bring in people who are dynamic teachers or outreach coordinators that have good materials and could share with their classes giving them much better assessment tools to teach their classes. Ali concluded his answer by saying “I think this is the number one thing you could do to improve education on Islam.”

Nadia agreed with Ali and provided more simple steps to educate teachers, students (Muslims and non-Muslims) and administrators about Islam. She shared out of her experience a few very simple, but effective, steps that a school could take to improve the understanding of Islam and to reduce tensions between students and teachers regarding Islam and Muslims. She said, “I did this in my classes. When I was a junior and senior, one of my other history teachers invited me to come to speak in his freshmen and sophomore class when they were doing a module on the Indian and Pakistan region.” She was able to go for a question and answer session, and she reported it to be a really good experience. She suggested it is better to bring a guest speaker instead of using a member of the class, because sometimes kids get nervous. If they are a Muslim or South Asian student in a classroom, they will experience a lot of pressure. She has been a guest speaker in recent years in colleges and universities. She said, “It becomes a very powerful tool because I am there, and I get to challenge misconceptions.” She said that active work, rather than reading, would be the number one priority. The second thing she

mentioned is being more creative in the text that people choose to present to the classes. If all the literature is written by non-Muslims, then there is going to be a biased picture.

Bilal contradicted Ali and Nadia, “They [teachers and administrators] know already; they read books and stuff on the matter.”

Najima supported Ali and Nadia’s response by stating, “I think that educators, especially those that teach young children, need to learn how to answer the inevitable questions that kids will have about Islam.” She said, “After 9/11, so many kids had questions about Islam and Muslims, but they did not know the answers so they were bad-mouthing Islam, and the teachers did not know what to do. Teachers need to be impartial and fair,” she concluded.

Jamal thought that the best way to learn about Islam is to contact an Imam. He said, “Go to the mosque and talk to the Imam; no one knows better than an Imam. I think the teachers should go to the Imam or read books. There are many good books on Islam and they are available in English.”

Ahmad suggested, “I think here in the United States there is no such thing as talking about Islam in high schools. There is no kind of book that teaches Islam like in Pakistan and other countries.” Ahmad was seeking a similar system, as in Pakistan, in terms of teaching Islam. In Pakistan, every subject talks about Islam, whether the class is English, Urdu, or in any other language, mathematics, social studies, science, physics, chemistry, biology, civil study, or ethics. Ultimately, in every subject, Islam is discussed. On top of all the other courses, there are special classes on Islam throughout high school. Ahmad assumed that “if teachers knew about Islam, then they would know more about

the Muslim students and their background.” He said that “when you want to learn about Islam, you have to go to a person who knows about Islam.” He provided an example that “Imams in the mosque have more knowledge than us because they study more than us. You could read the books on Islam. You could even read a Quran in the English translation.”

Basheer did not think that he would be a good person to answer this question because in his experience, “The teachers always knew about Islam. Besides, everyone has a choice. Some want to learn about other religions, and others do not,” and he thinks, “we should respect the decisions of others. To me whether a teacher is Muslim or non-Muslim really does not matter. All people believe in the same God.”

Muslim and Non-Muslims Students

There has been a curiosity amongst the non-Muslim students about Muslims traditions, their skin color, and sometimes, even their appearances. However, in the aftermath of 9/11 with the mutual correlation of nonprofit educational institutions, Muslim organizations and schools have been able to bring both groups together to talk about some of the important issues. In general, the problem of bullying and violence in school is a growing issue. Many studies have been done on this issue, and the schools have taken serious steps to control such problems, but it is still growing. However, the bullying of Muslim Pakistani and Indian students has raised the issue to another level. According to Copeland (2009), female and male adolescents respond to bullying differently. Although the traditional form of bullying still exists, “[in] today’s world we are now threatened with an even more powerful and possibly more psychologically

damaging form of bullying, which is commonly referred to as ‘cyber bullying’” (Copeland, 2009, p.6). DESE (2006) indicate various ways of occurrence of bullying in the following words: Bullying occurs when a student communicates with another by any means including telephone, writing, or via electronic communications, with the intention to intimidate, or inflict physical, emotional, or mental harm without legitimate purpose. Bullying also occurs when a student contacts another person with the intent to intimidate or to inflict physical, emotional, or mental harm without legitimate purpose. Physical contact does not require physical touching, although touching may be included. (p .8)

Mutual respect and sensitivity, regarding Islamic beliefs and practices, has become a major campaign in many schools in predominantly Muslim areas of the city. Nevertheless, clashes between American culture and Islamic culture are inevitable. Muslim Pakistani and Indian students, based on their cultural and socioeconomic status, are different from many of the other Muslim groups in the United States. There is a significant difference, to an extent, where one can distinguish both people groups by looking at their everyday life. Teachers and school administrators have realized these differences and have taken drastic measures to discuss the topic of Muslims in detail on the basis of their ethnicity, socioeconomic, and ancestral origin. In efforts to maintain friendly and unbiased atmospheres, many schools continue to emphasize training for teachers on the current events and the issues of the Middle East. Constant news of Pakistan’s involvement in the world’s politics, and many of the terrorist attacks around the world, requires the American school system to continue striving to keep the school

environment pure from prejudice and discrimination against Pakistani and Indian Muslims.

Perception of the Participants

Ali gave the illustration of growing up in a very moderate family in terms of practicing religion. He did not grow up in a very conservative, strict household. His parents were more Pakistani or South Asian in their cultural orientation and in the way they conducted their household, but they were explicitly Muslims. Therefore, he did not grow up obsessed with haram (religiously forbidden food) and halal (religiously permitted food). However, it was his choice at a much later time, so he became more conservative in his eating habits. He said that he was drawn to observing haram and halal much later in his life where he found himself drawn into that kind of mentality. Until the age of 15, there was not a noticeable difference. Ali was aware of his different skin color, language, and culture at home, but outside, it was not that different. He said that especially in high school, the normal American cultural lifestyle of people included going to parties, drinking, and having girlfriends. He realized that those things, that were gender norms in America, were not acceptable in his religion and culture. This is where he found it challenging. “How do you navigate an American normal public high school life but also try to stay within a certain set of cultural beliefs?” he wondered. Ali grew up in a very small community in his early days. All of his friends were going out on Friday nights after football games and on weekends to do things he was not partaking in at all. “Where, as you know, when you are in high school, you are surrounded by that kind of stuff. I think to me that was one of the major points of diversion,” he said. He went

through a phase toward the end of high school when he started studying Islam, reading a lot about Islam, spending time at the local mosque with the Imam and befriending some more conservative people. He said, “I became aware of my own religious identity; I think I had a sort of awaking at that level or at that time.” Also, he recognized that, for him, it became even more of a division of how American he was, and he did not fit in because he was Pakistani. He had this new struggle with how far he should draw the line. Secondly, the struggle is that Pakistanis and the religion of Islam have a different set of guidelines, which are a bit more restricted than American norms. Even so, he was wary of certain activities that he avoided, because they were not only cultural taboos but religiously impermissible. Those were the main things for him growing up that he said made him aware of differences. Regarding non-Muslim teachers and administrators, he said, they “are well-intentioned people. But unfortunately, they are products of the system. Systems here meaning that consumers with a lot of information and misinformation about Islam.” He called it “a sort of media cloud out there.” He claimed that “consciously or sub- consciously they have developed certain attitudes.” He said, “The academics work has been Islamophobic on multiple levels such as broadcasting media, print media, and in cultural diffusion. It’s a sensitive topic to talk about religion in public schools and people who are professionals know where those lines are and they know exactly how one should and should not talk about religion. So when it becomes a hot issue like that, I understand the administrator’s job is to keep the peace and to run a smooth ship. So they don’t want to rock the boat and get angry phone calls from parents or teachers about why you are doing this.” He adds that he had his own experience that

he could share. He said, “I thought administrators are sensitive people; they just need to be approached in the right way.” The participant said there is a good way to do this and a right way of bringing in people. He shared a personal story, “I was approached by two social studies teachers at Homer High School in Homer, New York.” He said the story typifies in some ways what upstate New York’s cultural life is like in terms of politics and social lives. The teachers contacted him because he was working as the outreach coordinator at a major university. He adds, “They wanted me to visit their school and give a talk on Islam. This was around 2005 or 2006. They wanted me to come and give a talk to the entire school, including freshman through seniors. They wanted me to talk about what was going on during that time in the Islamic world.” He was very excited and went and met with them at the school. Ali said, “At that meeting, some concerned parties, possibly school board members, said they were deeply uncomfortable with me coming in because I was a Muslim.” They believed talking about Islam was a bad idea at the height of what was a very controversial time in the US, with the war in Iraq and other factors. After leaving that day, Ali was incredibly disappointed that he did not ask them to re-think the situation. He said, “If I wanted to, I could have made an issue out of it. I had mentioned it just to some of my colleagues and professors at Cornell, and they said that I shouldn’t.” Finally, they contacted him again and said they said that they would love to invite him back, but they needed some ground rules. So Ali had another meeting and met with more concerned parties to set some ground rules. “Hundreds of students came in, and all the teachers and staff came to hear the talk, but they all had the option of

whether they wanted to do so or not. The school sent a letter to their homes allowing parents to opt out if they did not want their students to attend.”

Nadia said, “For the most part, I think a lot of this depends mostly on people’s personal experiences with Muslims.” She grew up in a predominately white neighborhood, which became a lot more integrated with time. This area was formerly mafia territory, and back then when it was predominately white, their reactions and responses to Muslims were absolutely negative. However, as it became more integrated, reactions were increasingly positive. Nadia shared, “If a person has a friend that is Muslim, it completely changes their view about us.” She said, “I can do something like walk on the street, and I have this perception in my head that even to people walking around I could be their first and only interaction with a Muslim. So I have to make sure that I am behaving in an appropriate way or in a way that is open and receptive. Even doing simple things like smiling helps. I might be having a bad day, but I just can’t retreat. I have this thing because I do not know how people are going to respond if I am unfriendly, so I have to be really vigilant that way.” She said she has had to pleasantly deal with others on a regular basis to keep them from affirming negative connotations of Islam.

Bilal agreed with Ali that “non-Muslim teachers and administrators view all the students as the same. I do not see any difference.”

Najima reported the same point as Bilal: “I think now, ten years after 9/11, teachers have become more impartial and understanding of our religion. They see now that this is a very sensitive subject and they need to be prepared.”

Jamal considered teachers in the American school system to be well-educated in what they are teaching.” He said, “I think non-Muslim teachers and administrators think positively about Muslims.” The reason why teachers regard Muslims positively is because they know the truth. “They [teacher and administration, non-Muslims] know there are bad people and good people in every society and religion.” Jamal is sure that “others [non-Muslims] know that you cannot blame the whole community for something that one person has done. Therefore, teachers know this and do not have any problem with Muslim students.” He adds, “Teachers are teachers; they treat everybody equally. I had a very good experience because I was treated equally. I never did anything wrong, and I was an ‘A’ student.” He shared that even if he made a mistake, he always helped teachers by staying after class and helping them clean up the room or do other helpful tasks. Therefore, the teachers knew that he was a good person, which spurred their kindness towards him.

Ahmad agreed with Ali, Bilal, Najima, and Jamal. He spoke, out of his own experience, that he was never treated badly by non-Muslims. He said, “I have not experienced this sort of situation as a result of going to school.” When he went to college, he found “many professors who know more about Islam or else they know someone with a Muslim background.” He adds, “they probably they know more about Islam in this case.”

Basheer was in agreement with Jamal. He said, “As I understand, there is no difference in Muslims and non-Muslims. Teachers are just teachers, regardless of their religious background.” His teachers treated everyone equally. He said, “If you talk to

someone nicely, they will talk to you nicely, especially teachers and administrators. If you do not talk about religion, they will not talk about it either. I believe there isn't much need to talk about religion in the educational environment." According to his understanding, this is the same for non-Muslim students. "All students come to school to receive an education, and if you do not bother talking about religion, they will not either. Also, if you speak to them with kindness, they will respond the same. Therefore, I believe whether one is Muslim, Hindu, Christian, Jew, or any other religion, this should not affect their school experience and education."

Participants' Recommendations

The participants thought there are many misconceptions among Muslim and non-Muslims, and if somehow those misconceptions get resolved it will start a true process of integration among Muslim and non-Muslims.

Ali: In Ali's experience, "some common misperceptions about Muslims in US schools stem from the culture alone." He argued, "Schools gain their perceptions on Islam from America's perception and misconceptions of it, so that is the main issue affecting students, teachers, administrators, school boards, parents and so on." "The deck is stacked against you," he said. "Islam is at a disadvantage in the school system to begin with because of its place in American culture. Because of this, it is exceptionally hard to do any sort of outreach to educate people about Islam." Ali was especially concerned with the importance of "demystifying a lot of the misinformation out there," to "present an accurate picture as to what Islam is and is not." He elaborated on the variation of difficulty faced by Muslims nationwide, depending on what part of the country they live

and whether the area in question has a large Muslim population. His point here was that children in the school systems, in places like Chicago, NYC, Los Angeles, Houston, Atlanta or Detroit “would be more likely to have Islamic friends making them more acceptable to a positive view on Islam.” He then spoke of the way that this kind of personal connection to Islam “humanizes” the issues and stems from social connections. Furthermore, Ali wanted to stress, beyond the connection of Islam with American culture, the importance of these kinds of interactions, and how they will help American children in the school systems to accept “their otherness.” In his opinion, diversity in “race, religion, class, culture, or gender orientation” runs similarly as the diversifying factors of Islam, and the “media cloud” in America has been demonizing Islam for years. This has inevitably affected the way that children address the issue from the beginning.

Nadia believed that “there is, in fact, many misperceptions about Muslims and Islam in the American school system, and that the worst of these misperceptions are directed at women.” She adds, “The issue largely regarded America’s common misconception that women in Islam are hopelessly oppressed, especially in regard to their wearing of the Hijab.” Another similar stereotype she addressed was “Muslim men wearing a beard and its common linkage to thoughts of terrorism, or more extreme, that merely praying as a Muslim means devout fundamentalism.” Concerning this thought, Nadia pointed out “the irony in these misconceptions, in that the actual terrorists who attacked New York City in the 9/11 attacks were actually in bars the night before and had girls on the side.” The point that she is trying to make is that these men, who were indeed terrorists, were likely not as devout as they claimed; and therefore, the views of

devout Muslims as such people is ludicrous. On a more personal issue, Nadia discussed the fact that an even deeper common misconception among Americans is the idea that “he who is strong in faith is out to destroy America and is out to harm people and kill, or that killing is okay or in support of Islam, but that is not the case.” She then pointed out that if you were to research Islam and its doctrines, you would find that Islam does not sanction this “modern warfare”, because it causes the “destruction of people, land, and communities...this is not the Islamic way.” After a redirection in the question, the Participant went on to say that she thinks that Americans have a hard time realizing that Muslims are as diverse as devotees of any other religion; and therefore, you cannot generalize them based on a common misunderstanding. Just as she grew up without participating in activities against her faith, such as drinking or dating, others her age would not have had the same experience. Coming back to the topic of the school system, the Participant then referred the issue to the fact that she has personally counseled young Muslim students who are going through ridicule for abstaining from the norm. She has attempted to convey to them the importance of staying strong in their faith amidst ridicule from their American classmates who do not understand their traditions. She said she thought these kinds of social issues are faced more head-on in the school system, where social acceptance is more important than at other times in life. Before 9/11, there was another stereotype that also worked in her favor, because they saw her as South Asian, they pictured her as a studious child. She was said “I was lumped into the stereotype that all Asians are smart and do well in school.” That really worked for her, and also, she was very quiet in her middle school and high school years. So, she was always deemed as the

good, responsible kid. This always seemed to be her experience, to the point where a teacher said, “You got 80 points on your test; I must have missed something you got 90.” She recalls the only kind of rough experiences she had was with educators and advisors who were from a Jewish background who felt very threatened and were very vocal about their fears. Finally, Nadia concluded with the statement that she believes that “people do not know how to tolerate the discomfort of diversity and being different.”

Biblal stated merely that he believes, “most (or everyone) in American school systems understand that people in America, including Muslims, are not the same and that there are going to be those who deal with that poorly in all communities.”

Najima agreed with Ali, Nadia and Bilal that “absolutely” there are misconceptions about Muslims in the American school system and that she is more familiar with her own days in schools, which are long past. However, Najima states that in those times she felt that she was constantly “fighting a losing battle when it came to [her] religion and coexisting with the American lifestyle.” Also, she believes that the students around her were completely misinformed about Islam, and that at that age, as a student, she was not prepared to deal with the questions that would inevitably accompany her attempt to explain it to them.

Jamal also believed that “there are misconceptions in schools”, and cited specific examples of such cases, such as the time of Ramadan, where Americans believe that “Muslim students gorge themselves in the morning and at night to compensate for not eating during the hours of sunlight.” From his point-of-view, this is untrue, and it was an act of ignorance to think so. Another example Jamal cited was the issue of multiple

marriages, which is commonly misunderstood by Americans to be a throwaway fact that has no further depth to consider. He was adamant in his description of the way that there is more to this issue and that it's not the kind of act that any Muslim can do without consequence, as sometimes assumed by Americans.

Ahmad was unsure of the issue, citing only that “there are not prominent Islamic schools to do the kind of teaching necessary for understanding the religion”, and that “public schools don’t have the books or faculties equipped with the knowledge that would breach this gap in learning.” Also, Ahmad expressed a desire for every student to have access to books and classes to teach them more about Islam.

Basheer was optimistic about the issue of understanding of Islam in the school system, stating that “there are some common misconceptions about Muslims in America, but that as Pakistanis in America they have to accept that they are in a country that has not yet come around to being educated on the religion on a widespread basis.” He stated, “This is not Pakistan anymore, so you have to learn the way of American life and not try to force your wants onto Americans.” To sum it up, Basheer believes that if you are looking for a positive experience in America, you have to learn to think more like an American, which does not involve expecting every American to be educated in Islam.

Muslim Men vs. Muslim Women

The treatment that Muslim men receive is vastly different from Muslim women. Specifically, the men involved in the survey confessed that they have been treated somewhat normally. These men maintained their involvement in extra-circular activities, such as football, baseball, and soccer. Also, the male participants have grown to advocate

for the good treatment they received in the American school system, identifying some of the struggles they might have stumbled upon. However, it was pointed out and understood that most likely every student in middle school goes through phases where bullying or teasing comes in one form or another. Secondly, the participants discussed how shameful it is that this is the time period when a person is trying to find his or her identity and place in society. The Muslim traditional outfit or facial appearances give extra opportunities for bullies to mock those who look different or eat different food. However, Muslim men were less likely, overall, to be targeted by others if they were involved in acceptable social activities in school. Contradictorily, they were appreciated for the difference and diversity they brought in the group. More than Muslim men, Muslim women have reported being victimized by bullying because of their practice of wearing Hijab. Particularly, the girls are more likely than boys to report a bully (Li, 2006), and Duncan (1999, 2002, p.137) found that the results of bullying ended in girls leaving school. Overall, scholarly literature shows that 75% of adolescents have been bullied while attending school (Bulach, Penland Fulbright, & Williams, 2003; Peterson, 1999), and Palomares and Schilling (2001) consider bullying to be repeated and intentional cruel behavior.

Furthermore, this behavior can be learned as early as two years of age (Paul & Cillessen, 2003). Cillessen, Crick and Grotpeter (1995) indicate that a psychological or emotional bully is harder to prove and can lead to even greater psychological distress. For example, when girls can't prove that they are victimized, and the bully can deny it, "then the victim can feel as if they are going crazy" (Copeland, 2009, p. 31). Besag

(2006) provides an example to share how girls may internalize, feel ashamed, and take full responsibility for being subjected to bullying. Besag (2006) writes that the girls may think, “If I lost ten pounds, they would be nice to me and like me” or “if I just had more money for new clothes, I’d be popular and they wouldn’t pick on me” (p. 23). One of the two female participants mentioned her struggle that if she would have dressed like other American girls, the bullying would have stopped. The practice of wearing Hijab was identified as a traditional willful act of modesty, compared to the allegation posed by the American society. In New York City, one can see in certain parts where, whether you are a Muslim from Pakistan, India, the Middle East or Africa, many Muslim women wear Hijab. It is traditional, but also a sign of pride and morality. It has been criticized as a sign of oppression forced upon Muslim women. Many of the traditional and religious Muslims families prefer to continue the practice of Hijab, even in the most modern cities in the world. School teachers and administrators have noticed the value of Hijab to Muslims and are outspoken about it as a part of diversity in the classroom. However, Hijab continues to be reported as the prime reason for bullying and discrimination toward Muslim women in society and in the classroom.

Nadia: “People would try to pull my Hijab off and they would call me really ridiculous names like Gandhi, Mother Teresa, Crocodile Dundee, things just for the sake of saying it.”

Ali agreed with Nadia. He said, “Muslims are like any other religious group, so you can find devotees amongst the Jews, amongst the Christians, amongst Hindus, amongst Buddhists.” Another factor Ali mentioned was discrimination based on

appearances, such as Muslims with facial hair or women wearing the Hijab. In light of his analysis, he suggested that educators need to do a series of workshops or seminars on Islam 101. The school could call it cultural sensitivity training or cultural competency training for teachers. He concluded his answer by saying, “I am not even talking about getting into world events and political issues or foreign policy issues; I am talking about very simple cultural competency of Islam and Muslims for people who teach.”

Nadia believed, “there is, in fact, many misperceptions about Muslims and Islam in the American school system, and that the worst of these misperceptions are directed at women.” She stated, “the issue largely regarded America’s common misconception that women in Islam are hopelessly oppressed, especially in regard to their wearing of the Hijab.” Another similar stereotype she addressed was “Muslim men wearing a beard and its common linkage to thoughts of terrorism, or more extreme, that merely praying as a Muslim means devout fundamentalism.”

Perception of the Participants

The participants considered that the understanding of Islam holds the key to understanding Muslim men and women. They claim that if one knows about Islam, then he or she may be able to understand the concept of gender treatment in Islam. Therefore, the participants were focused on finding a way to encourage teachers and administrators to learn about Islam. The recommendation was made for all non-Muslim Americans. The participants agreed that the 9/11 tragedy has changed the views of teachers and administrators, including non-Muslim Americans about Muslims and Islam. Whether the

view was positively or negatively changed, it has provided a new understanding of Muslim men versus Muslim women.

Ali believed that many teachers and administrators have changed their views on Muslim students since 9/11, but some continue to hold to the same stereotypes. Calling it a “mixed bag,” he stated that some teachers are legitimately interested in educating themselves and their students and will, therefore, take the time to research the issues and portray that to the students. However, there are some teachers who are sticking to their old prejudices. Ali believes that there is a lot of great literature currently available that is helping teachers to become educated about Islam, but some teachers continue to make comments to their classrooms based on their misconceptions. To sum it up, she said, “The exposure is out there”; the issue seems to be whether teachers and administrators are accepting the challenge.

Nadia disagreed with Ali, saying, “The situation regarding teachers and administrators’ views on Islam have become increasingly negative since 9/11.” She believed, “on one hand, that this kind of exposure is inevitable considering the media saturation with negative views on Islam, but on the other hand,” she would blame the growth of this fact on the lack of a strong outcry against it. Citing Mayor Bloomberg as an exception to this, she mentioned his speech regarding Muslims in a respectful, tolerant light. She explained, however, that this has been the exception to the rule, as most teachers and administrators are being affected by the media and its dominantly negative view on Islam. She believes this, in turn, is having an effect on the kids they teach. To further this, Nadia expressed concern for Muslim students from foreign backgrounds that

are not able to get the support they need within their school systems, because the administration and teachers are ill-equipped for their needs.

Bilal was continually optimistic on the issue, stating that “everybody is not the same,” meaning that as some teachers and administrators are sure to have a negative view on Muslims since 9/11, certainly not all do. He states, “It is some people that are ruining the image of Muslim people, but just some, and for some, you cannot blame all.”

Najima was in agreement with Bilal. She said, “on the whole, everyone has become more understanding and less weary of Islam, and the same goes for teachers.”

Jamal believed that teachers and administrators, generally, have not changed their view on Islam, and that they believe their Muslim students are the same as their other students. His teachers, specifically, did not even raise the issue, unless it was to tell the students that it “wasn’t right to talk about someone else’s religion.” Jamal, overall, had a positive experience with teachers, and thus, believed that teachers are generally fair in their views, as treatment of Muslims.

Ahmad simply stated, “they [teachers and administrators] believe that every student and teacher holds their own opinions and ideas on how they view students, and the topic of how they view Muslims depends on each individual, and cannot be taken as a whole.

Basheer believed that there are no significant differences between teachers before and after 9/11 and that overall, they treat students equally. He believed that other schools are likely to hold true to his experience in school, and that in his experience, teachers were well-informed and unbiased on the issues.

Participants' Recommendations

The participants were divided on the Issue of whether the understanding of Islam and the treatment toward Muslims has gotten better or worse. Nevertheless, they agreed that there is a deep connection in the understanding of Islam and the understanding of the challenges and differences between Muslim men and Muslim women in American society.

Ali said, "I would venture that overall all the public perception of Islam and Muslims has become more negative amongst a lot educators out there, and in some way or another, it has been transmitted to their students. He said, "On some level, some people have done a great job. Generally, when I talk with people, it is not as bad as it used to be, but it is not good either." He suggested that it might depend on the school district, resources of that school, the type of students and teachers at the school, and other factors.

Nadia believed that before 9/11 any kind of racism or discrimination might have been due to shared ignorance or simply a lack of information. Particularly, you see someone who is different, without full understanding, they make you uncomfortable. Naturally, this becomes a problem. So, the American people drew their own conclusions, but since 9/11, it has become something to be feared. She said, "We went from maybe on the neutral level, to starting off on a negative 50." Therefore, now Muslims have to build up that positive experience. "Before, it was zero going up, and now, I have to go through the negative. There is a lot more work, a lot more walls to break down."

Jamal said, “There are some who changed their opinion about Muslims, but the majority did not.” However, he was very optimistic in that nothing can change the perception of Americans about Muslims, because they know that American Muslims are just like any other Americans.

Media and Literature

The Western media was criticized by every participant in the study. In recent decades, in New York City, Islam has become a hot topic. Every year since 9/11 something always triggers the anti-Islamic worldview, especially among New Yorkers. Last year alone, major tension was brought into the community because of two spontaneous incidents. One was the issue of the Group Zero Mosque and the other was the threat to burn the Qur’an. Both incidents received much publicity because of the media. Regardless of who was right or wrong, media coverage brought unprecedented confusion and unrest in the city. Since it was close to the ninth anniversary of the memorial of 9/11, it definitely brought fear into the city. In the arena of media propaganda against Muslims, the school system is not an exception. The media and literature have constantly contributed to the experiences of Muslim men and women in the city. Today, access to internet makes it easy for the school community to download current events, news, and issues without proceeding to act upon them. The school and administration’s initiative to inform the school community and talk about the current events is next to nothing. Negative images and short videos available on Google, Youtube, and many other outlets feed into the negative perception that the students develop about Islam. In the absence of proper opportunities to discuss these issues, there

is much room for bullies to act upon the available information according to their own limited understanding. Also, since their understanding of the Islamic world is solely based on media and literature, the picture of Islamic society and Muslims forms perceptions in young minds, shaping their attitude and treatment toward Muslims in American society.

Perception of the Participants

Najima said, “Islam is constantly in the media, and whether or not it’s for a good reason, it is at least being spread around and people are being exposed to it, and desensitized. They don’t fear it as much as they probably once did because it has become a very prominent part of their daily news.”

Jamal said, “Media does not tell the story of both sides.”

Ali wanted to stress, past the connection of Islam to American culture, the importance of these kinds of interactions and how they will help American children in the school systems to accept “the other” in “their otherness.” Diversity in “race, religion, class, culture, or gender orientation” runs similarly as the diversifying factors of Islam, and the “media cloud” in America has been demonizing Islam for years. This has inevitably affected the way that children address the issue from the beginning.

Nadia believed, “on one hand, that this kind of exposure is inevitable considering the media saturation with negative views on Islam, but on the other hand,” she would blame the growth of this fact on the lack of a strong outcry against these negative views.

Participants’ Recommendation

Nadia: Citing Mayor Bloomberg as an exception to this [that he took side of Muslim community on the issue of the Ground Zero Mosque construction], she mentioned his speech regarding Muslims in a respectful, tolerant light. She explained, “however, that this has been the exception to the rule, as most teachers and administrators are being affected by the media and its dominantly negative view on Islam, and that this in turn is having an effect on the kids they teach.” Therefore, media needs to talk about Islam in a positive manner.

Ali: Unfortunately, they [non-Muslim teachers and administrators] are products of the system, meaning that consumers with a lot of misinformation about Islam. Furthermore, he called it “a sort of media cloud out there.” He claimed that “consciously or sub-consciously they have developed certain attitudes.” He further states, “The academics [the written material on Islam that is used in the American school system] work has been Islamophobic on multiple levels such as broadcasting media, print media, and in cultural diffusion. It’s a sensitive topic to talk about religion in public schools and people who are professionals know where those lines are and they know exactly how one should and should not talk about religion.”

Muslim Initiative

The participants talked about the Muslim initiatives in the American school system. In the aftermath of 9/11 more Islamic centers, organizations, and mosques have come into existence than ever before. The 9/11 tragedy was also a wakeup call for the Muslim community. The anti-Muslim sentiments that were exposed were never seen before in the history of Islam in America. It had always been a curious subject, but it

became extremely important for Muslims to come out of their isolated communities and engage in dialogue with Muslims and non-Muslim Americans. American universities and colleges adopted Muslim scholars and workers to work as outreach coordinators in the community to promote positive expressions of Islam. The New York school system initiated new after-school programs to discuss Islam. Providing awareness and understanding of Islam became a major movement of Muslims. One of the well-known student organizations on campus, Muslim Student Association, became active in achieving rights for Muslims on campus and challenging Muslims and non-Muslims to receive training and learn about Islam. They also initiated MSA for high schools in New York. One of the purposes was to gain deeper understanding of Islam and Muslims. Many of the mosques have started private schools for Muslim students as well.

However, their major contribution was making mosques and Islamic centers available for open discussion for anyone who wanted to understand Islam. Muslim clubs in high schools were another Muslim initiative in the aftermath of 9/11. Apart from Muslim clubs, educators have periodically invited Muslim scholars to come and speak to their students about Islam to help them understand Islamic traditions. Although it was the school administration who invited Muslim scholars, it was channeled through Muslim initiative, in the spirit of educating students in high schools. As a Muslim initiative, many of the teachers were approached by Muslim nonprofit organizations for the opportunity to give a talk on Islam and Muslims to their students. They were also offered training through interfaith offices and many other Islamic organizations.

It is very important to note that the Muslim individuals, religious, and political organizations were focused on opening more doors for Muslims to integrate into American society without leaving their Islamic traditions. In addition, it was equally important that each of the schools within the study community embraced Muslim initiative and involvement as a means to improve the schooling experiences of Muslim students. The involvement of Muslims in the education system was viewed as positive and negative by the community and media but as a vital component of the society. Their ability to affect, change, and improve the lives of Muslim students in the American school system was remarkable.

Perception of the Participants

Ali as a Muslim Imam and outreach coordinator spoke in many place to teach them about Islam he said, “I went to local churches, elementary schools, and high schools.”

Bilal said, at his school “they had an Islamic society. Every Wednesday for two periods kids go in there; it is all the Muslim kids.”

Nadia reported, “I heard of people who are part of Muslim clubs at their schools and that could be very helpful today.”

Participants’ Recommendations

Ali said that he never felt that he was treated differently than the rest of his classmates. However, “for the present day school system, there should be professional Islamic organizations who come and teach Islam 101 to teachers and administrators.” He

mentioned some of the Islamic organizations who go to different schools and conduct workshops and seminars.

Nadia said, “I personally counseled young Muslim students that are going through ridicule for not participating in such activities.” She has been trying to convey to them “the importance of staying strong in their faith amidst ridicule from their American classmates that don’t understand the tradition.” Also, she would say that, “she thought these kind of social issues are faced more head-on in the school system, where social acceptance is more important than at many other times in life.” Finally, this participant concluded with the belief that “people do not know how to tolerate the discomfort of diversity and being different.”

Students Interaction

The Muslim men and women involved in this study found that in terms of restoring a positive image of Muslims students in their school, it was more effective if they interacted with non-Muslim students. Exposure to Muslim traditions and practices did raise questions, but those questions were out of curiosity and misunderstanding. However, the interaction and everyday life of Muslim students proved they are as American as non-Muslim Americans. The data showed that many of the students immediately stop teasing and ridiculing Muslim students when they were approached by teachers in an unbiased way. Also, because after the honest attempt of the teachers to restore trust amongst the classmates, the non-Muslims were able to see that Muslim students were not too different. Furthermore, the schools’ safe environments helped Muslim students act normally and interact with others. It improved the everyday school

experiences of the participants and also contributed to the knowledge of non-Muslim students. One of the major obstacles Muslim and non-Muslim students face is the appearance of Muslim Americans. Prior to September 11, this could have presented a minor issue, but post 9/11, the appearance of Pakistani or Indian Muslims has become a major issue. Many of the stereotypes and misconceptions exist, because there is not much interaction between Muslim and non-Muslim students. Lack of interaction generate Polarization within Muslim and non-Muslim students, where they identify themselves and others as “us vs. them.”

Perception of the Participants

Ali said, “I had a large bushy beard. In high school, this did not make any difference, it did not affect me in any negative way that I was aware of in high school or in college for that matter.” His beard grew in college, but he said, “College is a place where people are sort of trying out identities.” However, after 9/11, it changed. Pre-9/11, he said there was no real problem that he was aware of, but after, he noticed an obvious difference. Because of the image of the perpetrators of terrorism, Middle Eastern men with brown skin were looked as if they were “the other” because they had facial hair; and therefore, they looked like Taliban. Non-Muslims were making non-verbal assumptions about him when they saw him with a big bushy beard. These assumptions possibly changed some of their attitudes or behavior towards him, but he was aware of that.

Nadia had a different experience. She said, “...simply a transition from being called stupid names to being called a terrorist.”

Bilal contradicted Nadia by stating, “No I have not; they treated me the same. My appearance does not matter.”

Najima said, “I noticed a difference in airports. To this day, I get called out of line for extra security checks based on my appearance and my name. I don’t think this will change anytime soon, but I haven’t noticed any difference in the school setting.”

Jamal agreed with Ali and Bilal that “No one has any problem with how I look or what I wear.”

Ahmad was agreed with Jamal, Ali, and Bilal that his appearance was not any issue. He said, “No, no there are no misconceptions about that. It does not matter, they do not care about appearances.”

Basheer was agreed with Ali, Bilal, Jamal, and Ahmad that no it did not matter. He said, “I think everyone looks at me in the same way. It is about your mindset, how you see others. If others are nice to you, and you are nice to others, then you are the same. Your appearance does not matter; what matters is your attitude towards others.”

Participants’ Recommendations

All the participants were in agreement that interaction with other students removes the unspoken barriers.

Ali said, “I think there are two or three things.” The first was the concept of the education of multiculturalism in the school system. This education in multiculturalism promotes not being judgmental on the basis of people’s appearance. He said, “We are living in an increasingly diverse country.” Another factor is the idea that teachers need to

educate students on the fact that Muslims are just like everyone else. “Muslims are like any other religious group, so you can find devotees amongst the Jews, amongst the Christians, amongst Hindus, amongst Buddhists.” Another factor regarding refusing to discriminate based on appearances, such as Muslims with facial hair or women wearing the Hijab. In light of his analysis, he suggested that educators need to do a series of workshops or seminars on Islam 101. The school could call it cultural sensitivity training or cultural competency training for teachers. He concluded his answer by saying, “I am not even talking about getting into world events and political issues, foreign policy issues; I am talking about very simple cultural competency of Islam and Muslims for people who teach.”

Nadia suggested, “student interaction”

Najima said, “The focus needed to be on middle and high school. Universities are about diversity and learning and self-expression, and there is very little racism in those settings.” In middle school, “bullying is at an all-time high because at that age being different is a very bad thing.” She recommended, “More attention needs to be made to the middle school settings where people are constantly being bullied for being or looking different.”

Jamal was convinced that if students receive equal rights, regardless of their religion, ethnicity, or sexual orientation, most likely there would not be any issues. He said, “Equal rights, such as with religious holidays.” He said, “The Muslim Eid is not like Christmas, which comes every year on fixed days. Eid comes according to the moon and sometimes it is early, and other times it is late, but normally it falls close to the end of

the semester, and those are very difficult days because you have religious responsibilities, and you need to be in school for exams.” There should be holidays for Muslims, because not having holidays like other religions makes Muslim students look like second class students.

Basheer agreed with Nadia that “talking and getting to know people of other religions can help.” In his personal experience, he has not seen any need to teach educators, because they are very understanding and kind.

Minority Effect

It was noticed in the study that the participants were very excited to talk about other minority students in the class and had some hostility toward Caucasians. The reason was given that both minorities share similar experiences at many levels. When another minority, that is African Americans, whether Muslim or not, were considered, they were found to be close to the traditions of Islam. There are certain sets of values in both communities that the participants found were the same, but in a broad spectrum, it was the emotional understanding that both communities go through hardships because they are different. Also, African American students were considered religious like Muslims regardless of their different beliefs, workshop style, and the Scriptures. Therefore, their sense of depending on God and treating others with kindness came as a positive experience. It was also noted that, among the participants, there was a clear sense of hostility against Jewish teachers: they are biased and teach incorrect information about Islamic culture and Muslims. Whether the participants as a minority were treated better or were more comfortable being friends with the other minority groups indicated

that the minority effect was part of the positive experiences. However, Critical Race Theory and Social Development Theory would interpret Minority effect as a negative element in the classroom, which could potentially lead to frustration and aggression.

Nadia: “The most positive experience I had then was with the African American community,”

Nadia: “They [African Americans] were non-Muslim, but they were exposed to Muslims in their own kind of communities. So they were the ones I talked to on the first day, and I was just staring at the crowd, and I did not know where to go. It was a completely different culture, but you know they welcomed me, and it was really, really sweet, and they were my friends for a really long time as well.”

Perception of the Participants

Nadia recalled her positive experiences, “the times when I was invited to speak about her religion, as mentioned earlier. I was selected to be part of a small group of students.” Some other positive experiences included a time when she was fasting, and she was excused from gym; therefore, the teachers were being sensitive to her culture. Secondly, she shared a particular experience she had in the 8th grade. She said, “I made reference earlier to a popular teacher in school and that was a significantly positive experience in school for me.”

She also talked about her experience with African American students in school; she thought that they had a lot of shared experiences along the lines of racism and problems with acceptance with the majority. She said, “We, as the minority, have to work harder to prove ourselves, to prove that we are competent.”

Participants' Recommendations

Bilal said, "If you go to school and work, you will inevitably have a positive experience. If you learn something, it is not only positive at the time, but in the future it would be positive too." He continued, "Whatever you learn in school is positive."

Nadia shared, "I heard of people who are part of Muslim clubs at their schools and that could be very helpful today."

Basheer said, "I had people in my class who were Christians, Hindus, Jews, and Muslims," so he does not think there was any difference. He adds, "All the students were the same in his experience. Some may have different opinions about others in the school, but that is their personal opinion." He, personally, never saw any signs of different treatment. Some may assume, "You are Muslim, but this is a Christian country. But in my mind, everyone is the same here." He said, "Christian or Muslim, all are Americans."

Research and Guiding Questions

The participants have answered the research question "What is the lived experience of Muslim Pakistani and Indian students in their New York school system experience?" by answering the guiding questions.

Guiding Questions

The major research question was followed by a few guiding questions to seek detailed information about the lived experience of Muslim Pakistani and Indian students in their New York school system experience. What are the most prominent negative experiences that the participants had and are having in the New York school system? What

are the most prominent positive experiences that the participants had and are having in the New York school system? What is the motivation denominator that has kept the participants pursuing their education in the New York school system to become better citizens of America? How can these positive experiences be replicated in schools to promote peace and harmony among students? How can these negative experiences be overcome and what are the implications for schools, policy makers, and future researchers as pertains to encouraging Muslim students to become part of the school?

The participants shared their positive and negative experiences, but also acknowledged why they continued their education in the American school system. They also provided some of the steps that educators should take in order to increase the positive experiences of the Muslim Pakistani and Indian students in the school system.

The first and critically important change that must occur in the existing structures in the American school system is to embrace the idea of multicultural education in the schools. Lowe (2009) challenges the current concept of multicultural education in following words:

The criticism has been directed at the current concept of multicultural education.

The multicultural paradigm encourages assimilation through the reduction of prejudice. However, multicultural education programs have been trivialized to a celebration of folktales and food, nothing substantial. More importantly, multiculturalism is useless without a radical change in the status quo. It should not be solely about education and acceptance, but reform and equality for all races.

(Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995; Lowe, 2009, p. 23)

Anyon's (1985) study discusses the issue of multicultural education that the social class, race, education, and educational reform have to begin with social reformation. Lowe (2009) said, "Without liberating the oppressed groups, the school structure itself, reflecting the structure of our society, is a powerful, limiting force. However, teachers are in a position to create, or recreate, society through the practices within the classroom" (p. 23). This makes teachers responsible for taking the initiative. The participants repeatedly mentioned about their teachers and the treatment they received from them. To the participants, the most important people who could make a positive or negative difference in the life of students are the teachers. Lowe (2009) writes, "According to Wendy Luttrell (1996) public schools are the central place where individuals create a sense of themselves as members of the 'somebodies' or the 'nobodies'" (p. 25). The school experience, whether it was fully positive or partially negative, affected the participants. Thus, it shaped their current identities. For instance, Nadia had negative experiences because of the Hijab. Although she considered her treatment a form of bullying, she also decided to defend other Muslim young girls from bullying by becoming a social worker. This also encouraged her decision to become a professional counselor, in order to give Muslim students psychological help.

Although it appears that teachers and administrators should take the initiative to promote positive experiences in the school and do everything in their power to reduce the negative experiences of the students, only a few take their position seriously. For instance, the policy makers have to promote multiculturalism in the society. The more people that accept the idea of multiculturalism, the less negative experiences will take

place in the life of Muslim Pakistani and Indian students in the American school system, in the aftermath of 9/11. Gillborn (2005) asserts that “critical scholars can raise new questions, challenge so-called ‘commonsense’ and disrupt the assumptions that currently shape education (in policy and practice)” (p. 497). In the following section each guiding question is discussed briefly with the intention to provide a more precise guide for the reader to follow and understand the discussion in Chapter five. The brief answers for the five guiding questions included direct quotes from the participants in light of their personal experience. Where it was needed, quotes or references from the theoretical framework of the study that consists of total five interconnected theories, The Theory of Frustration-Aggression, Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs, Social Development Theory, Critical Race Theory and Theory of Polarization., and the conceptual framework of the study, as suggested by van Mann (1990) as “Lifeworld” that is lived space (spatiality), lived body (corporeality), lived time (temporality), and lived human relation (relationally or community), were incorporated with the basic methodological structure of research. Van Manen (1990) suggested a basic methodological structure of a dynamic interplay of six research activities: a) turning to a phenomenon which seriously interests us and commits us to the world; b) investigating experience as we live it rather than as we conceptualize it; c) reflecting on the essential themes which characterize the phenomenon; d) describing the phenomenon through the art of writing and rewriting; e) maintaining a strong and oriented pedagogical relation to the phenomenon; and f) balancing the research context by considering parts and the whole (van Manen, 1990, pp. 31-32).

What are the most prominent negative experiences that the participants had and are having in American school system?

In the research many of the negative experiences mentioned by the participants took place outside of the school premises. Although the most prominent negative experiences were rare in the personal lives of the participants, they elaborated stories about the experiences of others that they have heard or read. **Ali:** “You heard incidents of Muslims being discriminated against, you know mosques are...having death threats and being attacked and Muslims are being harassed and whatnot.” Regardless of whether the experience of the participants was direct or indirect, it certainly impacted their “Lifeworld.”, “Lived Other” (relationally) is the lived relation in “Lifeworld”, or how one perceives or presents oneself to others. If someone hears or reads about someone else, though it is an indirect presentation of that person, it will form a physical impression of them, “which later may get confirmed, or negated when we find out, to our surprise, that the person looks very different from the way we expected” (van Manen, 1990, p. 105). Van Manen (1990) emphasized that reading and writing are essential parts of lived space. He said, “Reading has its own modality of lived space and may be understood by exploring the various qualities and aspects of lived space” (p. 103). He said a similar process is required for writing. Nevertheless, whether the negative experiences were heard, read, or written they are an essential part of the “Lifeworld” and must be discussed to obtain in-depth information about the lived experience of Muslim Pakistani and Indian students in their New York school system experience.

Some of the participants commented that the treatment they [as Muslim minority groups or individuals] have received in the aftermath of 9/11 was negative. It included discrimination, prejudice and bullying. The participants were confident that the prime reason for negativity against Muslims in America is misperceptions about Islam and misconceptions of Muslims in the American school system. All the participants were agreed that there are misperceptions and misconceptions about Islam and Muslims.

Ali: “Some common misperceptions about Muslims in US schools stem from the culture alone. Schools gain their perceptions on Islam from America’s perception and misconceptions of it, so that is the main issue affecting students, teachers, administrators, school boards, parents, and so on.”

Nadia: “In fact there are many misperceptions about Muslims and Islam in the American school system, and the worst of these misperceptions are directed at women.”

Najima: Stated that “absolutely” there are misconceptions about Muslims in the American school system and she is more familiar with her own days in schools, which occurred many years ago. However, the participant states that in those times she felt that she was constantly “fighting a losing battle when it came to [her] religion and coexisting with the American lifestyle.” She believes that the students around her were completely misinformed about Islam, and that at that age, as a student, she wasn’t prepared to deal with the questions that would inevitably accompany her attempting to explain it to them.

Jamal: “There are misconceptions in schools,” he said, and he cited specific examples of such cases, such as the time of Ramadan, where Americans believe that Muslim students gorge themselves in the morning and at night to compensate for not

eating during the hours of sunlight. From his view this is untrue, and it was ignorant to think so. Another example he cited was the issue of multiple marriages, which is commonly misunderstood by Americans to be a throwaway fact that has no further depth to consider.

Basheer: “There are some common misconceptions about Muslims in America.”

Bilal: He believed that most in the American school system understand that people in America, including Muslims, are different and that there are going to be those who deal with that poorly in all communities.

What are the most prominent positive experiences that the participants had and are having in American school system?

The literature review showed that there is intensive racism, discrimination, and prejudice against Muslims in the American society, but the data negated the notion that Muslim students in the American school system are victims of the Critical Race Theory. Polarization (the Theory of Polarization) was true in some cases, but in most cases, the mindset of “us vs. them” was not there. This was primarily because of the positive experiences Muslim Pakistani and Indian students received in the American school system. The Social Development Theory seems to be true in the lives of most of the participants, particularly, Ali, Bilal, Jamal, Ahmad and Basheer and helped them to avoid the development of aggressive behavior (The Theory of Frustration and Aggression).

Ali said, “You know, I would be happy to say that there are a lot more positive experiences than negative.” He gave an example: “I was aware at a relatively early age of my differences. My teachers didn’t make a big deal out of it in a bad way at all.” He

said that he would be very happy to say that looking back he really has had no bad experiences. He could not recall any experience from his life where he was discriminated against during elementary school, junior high school, or high school. Obviously, this was before the horrific nature of what happened in 9/11. He was in graduate school when 9/11 happened. He went to school, and his friends appreciated the fact that he was different. “It was nothing like how others say because there was nothing negative for me. My being Muslim did not really come up at all.”

Nadia: “The most positive experience I had then was with the African American community.” She said, “they were non-Muslim, but they were exposed to Muslims in their own kind of communities. So they were the ones I talked to on the first day, and I was just staring at the crowd, and I did not know where to go. It was a completely different culture, but you know they welcomed me, and it was really, really sweet, and they were my friends for a really long time as well.”

Bilal: If you go to school and work, you will inevitably have a positive experience. If you learn something, it is not only positive at the time, but in the future it would be positive too. Whatever you learn in school is positive. Also, they tell you about drugs, positive things about life, business, everything. They are always very helpful. They help you a lot, and they are always there for you. You just have to go to the right person.

Najima: “I learned more than I could have imagined by moving here.” She said, “the mentality here is very open-minded”, and she believed it has helped her to grow into a culturally sensitive person. She has become especially attuned to other cultures and

worldly news. She said, “I am still very attached to Pakistan and I always will be, but I also feel that America is my home now.”

Jamal: His whole school experience was positive, and no one treated him differently. Teachers, the principal, counselors, and students were nice to him, mostly because he was nice. He said, “When one knows that you are a nice person, they treat you well regardless of your religion.”

Ahmad: He had no problems in school at all. He said, “one thing in this country is the tremendous opportunity. They have books; they have a lot of teachers; they will help you as much as possible.” He said if you want some help from other teachers they will help you and personally, he thinks they helped him a lot. He said that because he was disabled, he was in special education, and then went to Montgomery, Alabama. He went to that school for two years and then came back and went to Tilden High School in Brooklyn, New York. Even there, all the teachers helped him in every way possible.

Basheer: At school everyone was very helpful.

Nadia recalled the times when she was invited to speak about her religion, as mentioned earlier. She was selected to be part of a small group of students. Some other positive experiences included when she was fasting, and she got excused from gym, so the teachers were being sensitive to that. She shared a particular experience she had in the 8th grade.

What is the motivating denominator that has kept the participants pursuing their education in the American school system to become better citizens of America?

The literature review showed that there is intensive racism, discrimination, and prejudice against Muslims in the American society, but the data negated the notion that Muslim students in the American school system are victims of the Critical Race Theory. Polarization (the Theory of Polarization) was true in some cases, but in most cases the mindset of “us vs. them” was not there. It was more a sense of being different than being treated differently.

Ali: “...the sense of walking with one foot in this world and one foot in that world.”

Nadia: “I knew I was kind of different. I didn’t eat out, and I didn’t eat school lunches or whatnot.” This was primarily because of the positive experience Muslim Pakistani and Indian students received in the American school system. The Social Development Theory and Maslow's Hierarchy of Human Needs seems to be true in the lives of most of the participants, particularly, Ali, Bilal, Jamal, Ahmad and Basheer, and helped them to avoid the development of aggressive behavior (The Theory of Frustration and Aggression). The positive experiences of “Lifeworld,” that is lived space (spatiality), lived body (corporeality), lived time (temporality), and lived human relation (relationally or community), in the American school system became the driving force by which they continued their studies and became good citizens of America who are proud to be American Muslims.

Ali said, “You know, I would be happy to say they are a lot more positive than negative.”

Nadia said, “I either had positive experiences with people or neutral, not the other way around.”

Bilal said, “If you go to school and work, everything is positive.”

Najima acknowledged that the school experience was positive, overall, because she said, “I learned more than I could have imagined by moving here.”

Jamal said, “The whole school experience was a positive experience.”

Ahmad said that all his experiences in the school were positive: “One thing in this county is opportunity you know. They have books, they have a lot of teachers and they will help you, they will.”

Basheer considered his experience positive because “at school everyone is very helpful.” All the participants considered the misconceptions, and misperceptions of Islam and Muslims in America to be the cause of negative feelings among Muslim and non-Muslims in the American school system.

Nadia believed that before 9/11, any kind of racism or discrimination might have been due to shared ignorance or just not knowing.

Ali: “Some common misperceptions about Muslims in US schools stem from the culture alone.” He also said that diversity in “race, religion, class, culture, or gender orientation” runs similarly as the diversifying factors of Islam.

How can these positive experiences be replicated in schools to promote peace and harmony among students?

Positive experiences can only be replicated through individual and collective efforts of all the members of the school community. They must take part in making the school environment safer and better. This includes the student body and their parents, the community in which the school exists, the teachers, the administrators, the policy makers, the school counselors, and the local and federal government authorities, including the law makers and government officials.

Ali suggested that it might depend on the school district, the resources of that school, the students who attend that school, the type of teachers at that school, and other factors.

Bilal agreed with Ali that “yes they [teachers and administrators] can. They can have lessons and classes teaching that everybody is the same.” He also mentioned, “everybody is not the same,” meaning that as some teachers and administrators are sure to have a negative view on Muslims since 9/11, certainly not all do. “It is some people that are ruining the image of Muslim people, but just some, and for some, you cannot blame all.”

Nadia said, “For the most part, I think a lot of this depends mostly on people’s personal experiences with Muslims” and she suggests more interaction between Muslims and non-Muslim students.

Ali said, “I was approached by two social studies teachers at Homer High School in Homer, New York” to come and talk about Islam and Muslims in America.

Nadia said, “I did this in my classes [talking about her belief and practices]. When I was a junior and senior, one of my other history teachers invited me to come

speak to his freshmen and sophomore class when they were doing a module on the Indian and Pakistani region.”

How can these negative experiences be overcome, and what are the implications for schools, policy makers, and future researchers, pertaining to encouraging Muslim students to become part of the school?

As it is mentioned in the first question, the source of the negative experiences is the misconceptions about Islam and misperceptions about American Muslims. These misconceptions and misperceptions exist among both Muslims and non-Muslims toward each other in the American school system. This will be discussed in detail in the following chapter. Negative experiences can be overcome by promoting and increasing positive experiences. The more positive experiences Muslim Pakistani and Indian students in the American school system encounter, the better chances they have to become integrated into the American society. As it is mentioned in the previous question, positive experiences can only be replicated if individually and collectively, all the members of the school community take part in making the school environment safer and better. This process includes the student body and their parents, the community in which the school exists, the teachers, the administrators, the policy makers, the school counselors, and the local and federal government authorities including the law makers and government officials. That applies to reducing and eventually eliminating the negative experiences that Muslim students are having. Getting everyone involved in the process can encourage Muslims to become a stronger part of the school community.

Nadia: “It [getting involved] becomes a very powerful tool because I am there, and I get to challenge misconceptions.”

Najima: Islam is constantly in the media, and whether or not it is for a good reason, it is at least being spread around and people are being exposed to it and desensitized. They don’t fear it as much as they probably once did because it has become a very prominent part of their daily news.

Ali: Calling it a “mixed bag,” he stated that some teachers are legitimately interested in educating themselves and their students, and will, therefore, take the time to research the issues and portray that to the students, but there are some teachers who are sticking to their old prejudices all the same. To sum it up, he states, “The exposure is out there”; the issue seems to be whether or not teachers and administrators are accepting the challenge.

Nadia: She believed that the situation, regarding teachers and administrators’ views on Islam, has become increasingly negative since 9/11. She believed, on one hand, that this kind of exposure is inevitable, considering the media saturation with negative views on Islam, but on the other hand, she would blame the growth of this fact on the lack of a strong outcry against it. Citing Mayor Bloomberg as an exception to this, she mentioned his speech regarding Muslims in a respectful, tolerant light. She explained, however, that this has been the exception to the rule, as most teachers and administrators are being affected by the media and its dominantly negative view on Islam, and that this, in turn, is having an effect on the kids they teach. To further this, the participant expressed concern for Muslim students from foreign backgrounds that are not able to get

the support that they need within their school systems because the administration and teachers are ill-equipped for their needs.

Jamal: Teachers and administrators generally have not changed their view on Islam [after 9/11], and that they believe that their Muslim students are the same as any other students they have. His teachers, specifically, did not even raise the issue unless it was to tell the students that it “wasn’t right to talk about someone else’s religion.” This participant, overall, had a positive experience with teachers, and thus, believed that teachers are generally fair in their views on the treatment of Muslims.

Basheer: Believes that as Pakistanis in America, they have to accept that they are in a country that has not yet come around to being educated about religions on a widespread basis. He states, “This is not Pakistan, so you have to learn the way of American life and not try to force your will onto Americans.” To sum it up, he believes that if you are looking for a positive experience in America, you have to learn to think more like an American, which doesn’t involve expecting every American to be educated in Islam.

Summary

Chapter four presented the stories of the participants and the findings suggested that most of the Pakistani and Indian young adults had more positive than negative experiences. They felt they were treated equally and their appearances were not the main issue in pre 9/11 and in the post 9/11 during their school years. They received substantial support from their teachers and administrators.

The literature review showed that there is intensive racism, discrimination, and prejudice against Muslims in the American society, but the data negated the notion that Muslim students in the American school system are victims of the Critical Race Theory. The polarization (the Theory of Polarization) was true in some cases, but in most cases the mindset of “us vs. them” was not there. This was primarily because of the positive experience that Muslim Pakistani and Indian students received in the American school system. The Social Development Theory and Maslow's Hierarchy of Human Needs seems to be true in the lives of most of the participants, particularly, Ali, Bilal, Jamal, Ahmad and Basheer, and helped them to avoid the development of aggressive behavior (The Theory of Frustration and Aggression). The positive experiences of “Lifeworld,” that is lived space (spatiality), lived body (corporeality), lived time (temporality), and lived human relation (relationally or community), in the American school system became the driving force by which the participants continued their studies and became good citizens of America who are proud to be American Muslims.

Ali said, “You know, I would be happy to say they are a lot more positive than negative experiences.”

Nadia said, “I either had positive experiences with people or neutral, not the other way around.”

Bilal said, “If you go to school and work, everything is positive.”

Najima acknowledged that the school experience was overall positive, because she said, “I learned more than I could have imagined by moving here.”

Jamal said, “The whole school experience was a positive one.”

Ahmad said that all his experiences in school were positive. “One thing in this county is opportunity you know. They have books, they have a lot of teachers and they will help you, they will.”

Basheer considered his experience positive because “at school everyone is very helpful.”

However, the female gender reported more negative experiences than male gender. In terms of what changes can make the school experience of Muslim Pakistani and Indian students in the aftermath of 9/11 better.

Nadia: “For the most part, I think a lot of this depends mostly on people’s personal experiences with Muslims.” Two participants, Ali and Nadia, who worked for Muslim religious and political organizations and were more vibrant than anyone else, suggested a number of steps that will be discussed in Chapter five. All the participants testified there were two main reasons why they had positive experiences: (1) They treated others better and were active at school; and (2) Teachers were great with them and did not let them feel that they were the “others.” The findings also indicated that the positive experiences were solely dependent on the individuals, how they reacted toward the society, or how much they were willing to be open to American society. A more detailed summary and a discussion of the findings are presented in the next chapter.

CHAPTER FIVE: SUMMARY AND DISCUSSION

Introduction

In this final chapter, as an aid to the reader, the researcher has restated the research problem, guiding questions, reviewed the methodology, and summarized the study findings. Moreover, he has provided implications for future research and practice. The purpose of this study was to identify the perceptions of Muslim Pakistani and Indian students about the treatment they have received in the American school system, in the aftermath of 9/11. Using individual student interviews and additional follow-up interviews, the researcher was able to elicit responses from the participants. This hermeneutical phenomenological inquiry revealed the attitudes and perceptions Muslim students from Pakistan and India have towards the various functions and practices of the American school system.

In Chapter four, the analysis of data provided a detailed descriptive summary of the various responses of the participants regarding their everyday experience in the American school system, and the outcomes from the analysis of data identified seven common themes that represent the perceptions of the participants: (a) Teachers and Administrators, (b) Muslim and Non-Muslim Students, (c) Muslim Men vs. Muslim Women. (d) Media and Literature, (e) Muslim Initiative, (f) Students' Interaction, (g) Minority Effect. In this final chapter, the above mentioned common themes, as a result of the outcomes of the analysis of data, are discussed in further detail, where it is needed,

and examples of student data is provided to support the discussion. Furthermore, this chapter will discuss the common themes of Chapter five and breakdown of the themes to provide recommendations for school teachers, administrators, policy makers, the school community, and school counselors. Finally, the chapter will conclude with recommendations for further research and comments on the implication and limitations of the study. It will also discuss some of the ways that law makers, American society, and the government could play a vital role to strengthen the American school system and provide a safe school environment with excellent education.

Restatement of Problem

The overarching purpose of this study was to investigate the experiences of Muslim Pakistani and Indian students in the American school system. This study described the challenges of Muslim young adults from Pakistan and India in the post-9/11 American school system. The experiences and challenges of these young adults were difficult to quantify, because the phenomena was internal. Therefore, hermeneutical phenomenology was employed. This research was intended to become the represent Muslims by considering their everyday challenges. It contributes to the educational process of teachers and administrators, by providing insight for how to deal with cross cultural differences, discrimination, and the mindset of those who suffer from discrimination. It also can help school counselors to evaluate the psychological and emotional stress these students suffer. Specifically, the study explored the lived experience of Muslims from Pakistan and India in the American school system in the aftermath of 9/11 and documented the positive and negative experiences they had in the

American school system. Through their positive experiences, teachers and school administrators will know what to promote in the school system; and through their negative experiences, teachers and school administrators will know what to discourage in the school system, in order to prevent negative experiences from happening repeatedly.

Thus, the purpose of this study was to collect the stories of Muslim Pakistani and Indian students who have attended high school here in America.

Review of the Methodology

As stated in Chapter three, this study was to give voice to the lived experiences of Muslim Pakistani and Indian students in their New York school system experience. This dissertation reported the findings of a hermeneutical phenomenology in the American school system. The researcher wanted to explore the everyday school experiences of the involved participants in the aftermath of 9/11: what they went through as Muslim students, what were their fears, and what brought them joy, energy, determination, and persistence, which allowed them to continue pursuing their education in the American school system. Furthermore, the research sought the successes and obstacles they had to face in the process of continuing their education. However, in order to express exactly how they felt and what kind of experiences they had, they needed words. Quantitative design would not have helped since Quantitative design deals with numbers not detailed stories. Everyday experiences could only be described in details through using a narrative method so that the participants would have the opportunity to express themselves fully. Their stories were significant to them, as well as to the research, but

these stories needed to be heard with their own perspective, in the context they lived, talked, and shared.

In a study where the focus was the voice of the participants, which ultimately brought forth the recommendations and suggestions for school teachers, administrators, school counselors, and policy makers, it became imperative to use a research design that could accurately give voice to the participants. Therefore, the qualitative method: hermeneutical phenomenology was used. Having Pakistani background and knowledge of the demographics of New York City, the researcher chose the participants based upon their background as Muslim Pakistani or Indian young adults who have attended American schools. In order to increase the finding's validity, the researcher began collecting data by contacting Muslims Pakistani and Indian young adults, who were in high school before 9/11, followed by contacting those who attended high school in the aftermath of 9/11. All the participants were from different walks of life; some were very committed Muslims, and others were simply following the religion of their parents. However, all of them were active Muslims and claimed to be the faithful Muslims. The study also included female participants. In one way or another, all the participants were involved in their communities; they were active members of both the American society and the Muslim community. A demographic survey was used in the study, which is available in Chapter three. It was used as a qualification questionnaire, because the participants had to be Muslims of Pakistani or Indian descent who has attended American schools at some point in their life. Also, they had to be interested in participating in the research. An e-mail was sent to Muslim clubs and gatherings on campuses with the

information about the study to find interested participants. The researcher also walked in the Muslim neighborhoods of New York City to recruit the participants. To increase the validity of the findings and generalization, a consent form was printed and used as a tool to discuss the purpose, benefits, risks, and confidentiality of the study. Also, the researcher went into the neighborhood and found interested participants, who filled out their demographic survey and scheduled an interview. One of the participants, a male who attended high school in America before 9/11, is now working as a Muslim chaplain in a well-known educational institution; two run their own business in New York City. A female participant currently works as a social worker. Also, three of the participants are still in school, and two are juniors in a local college.

The researcher scheduled two individual, semi-structured, open ended interviews with each of the seven participants. Each interview took approximately one hour. However, the second round of the interviews was usually shorter and was focused on three things: Give the transcript of the interviews to the participants and receive their comments. Clarify if the participant had any question or corrections. Ask follow-up questions.

In this kind of study, the data collecting is discontinued when data saturation is achieved (Journal of Clinical Nursing, 2006). The journal states that “sample size might be determined by reaching the point of ‘data saturation.’” Specifically for hermeneutical phenomenology the journal states the following:

Phenomenology. This exemption is because ‘rich’ data are sought from a limited number of people where the data set is treated as a whole, often interpreted

hermeneutically. Phenomenology is about possible meanings of experiences and often encompasses existential issues for which people may have many variations. The results are a tentative guide for practice and mostly for an empathy building affect. (Journal of Clinical Nursing, October, 2006, para. 9).

The data saturation occurred with five participants, but an additional two participants were interviewed to ensure the data saturation. There were over 150 pages of data from the interviews, observations, and hand written notes. Finally, the researcher analyzed and categorized the data to identify emergent themes in all the interviews. The findings are discussed in the next section.

Summary of the Findings

The literature review in Chapter two showed that there is intensive racism, discrimination, and prejudice against Muslims in the American society, but the data negated the notion that Muslim students in the American school system are victims of the Critical Race Theory. Polarization (the Theory of Polarization) was true in some cases, but in most cases the mindset of “us vs. them” just was not there. This was primarily because of the positive experience that Muslim Pakistani and Indian students received in the American school system. The Social Development Theory and Maslow's Hierarchy of Human Needs seems to be true in the lives of most of the participants, particularly Ali, Bilal, Jamal, Ahmad, and Basheer, and helped them to avoid the development of aggressive behavior (The Theory of Frustration and Aggression). Furthermore, the positive experiences of “Lifeworld,” that is lived space (spatiality), lived body

(corporeality), lived time (temporality), and lived human relation (relationally or community), in the American school system became the driving force through which they continued their studies and became good citizens of America who are proud to be American Muslims. First, the researcher provided background information on the Muslim Pakistani and Indian community in the United States of America, how Americans view Muslims in American society, and the treatment Muslim students receive in the American school system, including the history of the group in the United States, and some of the stereotypes about Muslims from Pakistan and India. Furthermore, this section discussed some of the activities that Muslims are involved with in the American school system. Second, the findings included the examination of a contrast that exists between non-Muslims and Muslims and how they perceive America, including the common perceptions about Muslims in America. Also, this section discussed some of the basic reasons why Muslims' perception of America and the perception of Americans about Muslims in America differ. Through critical analysis of the data received in the form of interviews, guidelines were suggested for the American school system to improve Muslims students' learning experience, student lives, and involvement in school community.

Next, in the light of the examination of the positive and negative experiences of the participants mentioned in Chapter four, the researcher reported common themes emerging through multiple interviews with participants. The participants perceive and appreciate the current initiative of the American school system throughout the country, particularly New York City, and highly populated Muslim areas of the country, to

integrate Muslims students into the American school system. In most of the cases, there was no major complaint against the school system. However, the participants mentioned more could be done to improve the image of the Muslim community, not particularly in school but in the society. They had more complaints about society, and the blame was deposited on the Western media. They also expressed concern that most of the teachers are only concerned with their daily responsibilities and do not see the need to address the issue of diversity in the classroom. Bullying is a serious problem in schools, but derogatory comments about religious affiliation should also be considered a sensitive issue. This chapter discussed whether the problems Muslims face in the American school system in the aftermath of 9/11 is part of bullying or is simply discrimination. As said in Chapter two, the Muslim immigrant population in America is small and exceedingly diverse. Therefore, the experiences of Pakistani and Indian Muslims in the American school system were different from other Muslims living in America. The researcher was convinced that the ethnic groups are “defined less by the features their members have in common than they are by the social boundaries which distinguish them from the others” (Bradford, 2008). The participants put stress on the necessity of more involvement of ethnic communities on campus, sensitivity towards their freedom to wear clothing according to their culture and tradition, and in some cases, according to their religious beliefs. Particularly, the women who practice Islam wanted to wear hijab, regardless of the bullying and mistreatment from their classmates. Following that, this section reports the findings that addressed the research’s guiding questions that helped the study answer the research question: “What is the lived experience of Muslim Pakistani

and Indian students in their New York school system experience?”What are the most prominent negative experiences that the participants had and are having in the New York school system?What are the most prominent positive experiences that the participants had and are having in the New York school system?What is the motivation denominator that has kept the participants pursuing their education in the New York school system to become better citizens of America? How can these positive experiences be replicated in schools to promote peace and harmony among students?How can these negative experiences be overcome and what are the implications for schools, policy makers, and future researchers as pertains to encouraging Muslim students to become part of the school?

Furthermore, in this section, in the light of the responses from the above mentioned research guiding questions, the study has summed up the research’s guiding questions into three questions and provided suggestions and recommendations according to the summed up questions:1. What were the experiences of Muslim young adults from Pakistan and India in the aftermath of 9/11 as they have continued their education in the American school system?2. What could the stories of their experiences tell educational researchers, policy-makers, teachers, school administrators and counselors about the purposes, obstacles, and successes of some of the programs they have gone through which may have helped these young adults to finish high school and even go for higher education during the aftermath of 9/11?3. What steps could the American school system take in this post-9/11 New York City to remove identified barriers and pull diverse community (e.g. race, gender, religion) of a classroom together to improve the

educational environment of a school? The participants were encouraged to feel free to talk about their experiences before 9/11 and after 9/11. They were given assurance that their names or contact information would not be shared and would be kept secret. They shared their own early life schooling experiences, and 90% of the participants considered their overall school experience very neutral. There was a constant theme of positive experiences throughout.

Ali said, “You know, I would be happy to say that they are a lot more positive than negative experiences.”

Nadia said, “I either had positive experiences with people or neutral, not the other way around.”

Bilal said, “If you go to school and work, everything is positive.”

Najima acknowledged that the school experience was overall positive because she said, “I learned more than I could have imagined by moving here.”

Jamal said, “The whole school experience was a positive experience.”

Ahmad said that all his experiences in school were positive: “One thing in this county is opportunity you know. They have books; they have a lot of teachers; they will help you, they will.”

Basheer considered his experience to be positive because “at school everyone is very helpful.” They found the American school system less complicated and much easier to cope with compared to the school systems in Pakistan or India. The researcher also reported their stories of their successes and hardships as minority students who are

locally and globally associated with a religion used to justify many of the recent terrorist attacks throughout the world, specifically in the West. The researcher then compared their negative experiences with positive experiences, studying their vocal tones and facial expressions. He found that several of the participants were happy and excited when they were sharing their positive experience. Also, the researcher felt that they have kept all of their positive memories very safe, so that the negative experiences may not influence those memories. As they shared some of the positive experiences, the researcher took note to compare the facial gestures, hand movements, and voice pitch of each person. Furthermore, the researcher found a desire among participants to remain in the United States of America more than in any other country in the world.

There was much hope among participants for a bright future in the United States of America. For example, two of them have already dedicated their lives to serve as advocates for the Muslim community in educational institutions in North America. The data from the interviews with participants showed that there was a sense of responsibility to improve the quality of life and school experiences among administrators and teachers in the American school system. The researcher intended to provide educators and researchers a fresh look at the education system. There have been so many researches about the negative experiences of the Muslim community in the United States of America, yet the number of Muslims immigrants has been rising since 9/11. Therefore, the study was focused specifically on the positive experiences of Muslim Pakistanis and Indian immigrants. Also, the study found that the positive experiences of Muslim Pakistanis and Indian immigrants in the United States could be the only rational

explanation for the rapid increase in Muslim population in the aftermath of 9/11. Next, the study was also an effort to unveil critical issues of discrimination and prejudice against Muslims in the American school system, but ironically, all the participants agreed that they would rather be in America than Pakistan, India, or any other Islamic country. It was found that the discrimination and prejudice against Muslims is not as serious as it was assumed or declared in recent publications. This chapter presents particular reasons, as they were described by the participants, why they would rather be in the United States than any Islamic country or even any other country in the world.

Finally, the researcher also reported the strategies to address the issues that were brought up by the participants as negative experiences. The strategies are discussed in this chapter with interwoven direct comments of the participants to improve the school environment. Also, that the American school system may become more effective in engaging Muslim students in various activities, on and off campus, and not assume that because of their appearances, they need to be given special treatment or different from the rest of student body. The study showed that the major negative experiences took place amongst the female participants. Two of the male participants also mentioned in their talks that discrimination and prejudice is not common among male Muslims, but it occurs on a regular basis against female Muslims.

Throughout the study, the participants were polarized in their expressions. Borum (2010) identifies this polarization as one of the prime reasons for terrorism ideology. He defines polarization as “the essence of which an ‘us vs. them’ mindset, or what some would regard to as in-group-out-group conflict” (p.7). They were open to talk about their

experiences in school but not in the context of before and after 9/11. Also, they were very comfortable talking about American society, but when it came time to talk about Islam, they used words and statements very carefully. The struggle to maintain respect for religion, as it is strongly practiced by Muslims in Pakistan and India, was vivid. The conflicting identity as a Muslim and as an American seemed to be the greatest challenge of all the participants. Many of them would rather have two different identities than embracing Islam fully or become fully American. According to Borum (2010), such behavior and conflict is due to “Absolutist.” He defines: “The beliefs are regarded as truth in the absolute sense, sometimes supported by sacred authority. This squelches questioning, critical thinking, and dissent. It also adds moral authority to framing us vs. them as a competition between good and bad (or evil)” (p.7).

According to Borum (2010) research polarization and absolutist are two out of four common themes for ideologies that support terrorism. The other two are as following:

Threat-Oriented: External threat causes in-groups to cohere. Good leaders know this intuitively, if not from reading social psychological research. They persistently remind adherents that the “us” is at risk from the “them.” Because the “us” is seen as being good or right in the absolute sense, this works not only to promote internal cohesion but external opposition.

Hateful: Hate energizes violent action. It allows principled opposition to impel direct action. It also facilitates various mechanisms of moral disengagement – such as dehumanization – which erode the social and psychological barriers to engaging in

violence that one believes is —justified (an important point, since many more people endorse the justification for extremist violence than actually commit such acts) (p. 7).

The younger the participant's age, the more appreciative he or she was for the freedom and life in America. As told to the researcher, there were not too many objections or stories that could be considered negative experiences. Two out of seven participants attended high school before 9/11; although they were born in American and went to school here. As they grew, they disassociated themselves from being Muslim American to a Muslim and an American. One of the two participants expressed a deep gratitude for the experience he had in high school. Furthermore, he could not recall any negative experiences throughout the school, and not even after 9/11. It was not in school, but in society, where he faced non-verbal derogatory remarks. However, he was still less comfortable talking about religion as though it was a very sensitive area of discussion. He did not express the sensitivity of the religion but through his gestures and action it was clear. For example, he was very careful while talking about Islam; his gestures and speech changed. The following answer to a question contains mainly "emm" and "ahhh":

...emm, ha..sure em..I think one of the ...sort of ..most..aaa..in my mind..aaa...one of the best examples that illustrates are that...ahhh...I grew up ...again, my family is very moderate in terms of practicing religion. I didn't grow up in a very conservative and ragged household, ahh... my parents were more sort of Pakistani or south Asian in their cultural orientation .and the way they ran house, they were explicitly Muslims I was...I didn't grow up obsessed with haram and halal, that the dos and the donots forbidden and

permissible and all that...emm...I drew to that phase...I will talk about later...where I got..myself caught into much later in [head: verbal missing] that kind of mentality up until the age of 15 I grew up it was not really all that much of a difference. (Ali, Participant One)

It was certainly hard to make a sentence out of this statement. However, it shows the thought process when the participant talked about Islam. The emphasis was “I didn’t grow up in a very conservative and ragged household.” The same kinds of statements were provided by some of the other participants who refused to associate their family with any type of conservative or fundamental Muslims. Furthermore, repetition of such emphasis raised the question of why all the participants stated that they were from a non-conservative Muslim family. The best explanation involves the constant threat to be misunderstood and picked up by a government official for countless hours of investigation. As a minority who has been constantly watched by the National Security Agency, it is hard to let anyone guess or misunderstand a statement; therefore, each participant was extra careful talking about Islam. Also, they did not want to be disrespectful to their religion either.

Discussion of Findings

This section of the chapter discusses some of the findings of the study as these were briefly mentioned in the above section of the chapter. The participants identified some of the common themes throughout their interviews. These themes were mentioned in Chapter four, but in this section, these themes will be discussed in greater detail according to the researcher’s understanding of the data.

Researcher's Reflections

The findings of this study indicated many of the misconceptions about Muslims, but it also revealed the assumed misunderstandings about Muslims. The researcher found that the previously available literature on Muslims in America has left a chasm between the truth and parallel truth. Most of these writings and research intentionally focused on the negative experiences of Muslims in America in the aftermath of 9/11. Therefore, the outcomes, results, and recommendations of most of the previous studies were targeted on the assumption that every Muslim in America is a victim of obvious stereotypes. Therefore, the researcher conducted the study with an open mind and found that much of the scholarly work on Muslims in America is done in the aftermath of 9/11, and the frustrations of many of the adult Muslims in America were revealed in the study. Although many of these researchers went in to collect data with an open mind, they were not able to redirect the participants to share about their positive experiences and seemed to influence the study negatively. Thus, they failed to answer why these Muslim immigrants chose to live in America, regardless of all the stereotypes, prejudice, and mistreatment. Furthermore, the previously available literature is socio-political or religious in nature. However, it seemed to the researcher that those Muslims who tend to be more outgoing and comfortable with the American way of life find their experiences were very positive. They immediately become part of the school community, and they do not consider themselves victims of any prejudice in the aftermath of 9/11 and also before the tragedy. In fact, they were sympathetic to the emotions of Americans and claimed to understand the inevitable frustration and anger toward the Muslim, Arab, or South Asian

looking population in American. On the other hand, those Muslims who tried to stick with their Muslim identity, traditions, civilization, and society within American society found it rather complicated and had a rough time surviving in the American school system.

Nevertheless, such proportions of the Muslim population are very limited. The study found that this group of people intentionally isolated themselves from the rest of school community to prove their loyalty to the religion which was nothing more than satisfying their own desire to be different and yet acceptable. The researcher found it very interesting that the first set of people were not hostile; they were proud to be Muslims and also proud to be Americans. In their daily lived experiences, they did not use words like “us and them,” “we and they” or others. There was a sense of community and one nation. To these Muslims, there was no country better than America, and the government’s action to watch out for extreme Muslims was justifiable under the country’s national security. However, the second set of people was hostile toward their classmates, including Muslim classmates, as they were described as secret Muslims. This is because they did not publicly demonstrate through their practices that they were Muslim, which according to the first set of people was personal. In essence, religious beliefs are a personal matter and not for public display. The contrast between the two groups indicated a missing connection within the Muslim community in America that divides moderate Muslims from less moderate or conservative Muslims. Also, the second set of people was prone to judge everyone around them, including administration, parents, media, government policies, circumstances, teachers, counselors, and classmates. They

were looking for people and things to blame for their personal frustrations. Also, they were critical, but emotional, and felt the need to support and backup every comment and complaint they made with another argument to justify their own conscience. In their conversations, there was a sense of desire to be accepted in society, but somehow they were forcing themselves to be deprived of certain experiences that the first set of Muslims students considered to be positive experiences.

Although the research has reported many positive experiences, it could not underestimate the potential danger that can be deposited by the negative experiences. It is not the positive experiences that turns one against his/her family, city, or country, but it is those small negative experiences that pile up over time, are triggered by an isolated incident ,and eventually sets them on a journey that ends up bringing misery on the nation.

Teachers and Administrators

Teachers and Administrators of the American school system play a vital role in the development process of a child, which is directly related to the Social Development Theory. There is always room for improvement, and most of the teachers and administrators are aware of the fact that, culturally, Muslim students are different. In recent years, the terrorist activities in the Islamic world, and in the West, including 9/11 attacks on the US soil, the London train bomb, the Russian airport suicide attack, and a number of other attacks by Muslims, have raised suspicions about the religious affiliation of South Asian looking Americans. Thus, the school classrooms are no exception. However, teachers and administrators are not to promote religion in school, whether it's

Christianity, Judaism, or Islam. They are simply to teach basic moral values that demand mutual respect for each other. This respect includes their sexual orientation and religious practices. This study reported that the New York school system, especially in Muslim populated areas, provides a prayer facility for Muslim students to utilize. For instance, Participant Three reported that they have an Islamic society in his school. He states that every Wednesday, for “two periods kids go in there it’s all the Muslim kids and they give you a room and they tell you things. It’s just like a gathering, a Muslim gathering and you go. At the end of the year they have a big party.” He adds, “It’s cool...they give you a room and everything at Midwood high school.”

However, these arrangements were not made for other religions and Muslim students consider it a good gesture. Although such special treatment shows the efforts on behalf of the administrators to integrate Muslim students in the American school system, it also puts those Muslim students who do not follow all the practices of Islam in a difficult situation, and they receive criticism for not being practicing Muslim students. In many cases, they are pressured by their peers to demonstrate their loyalty to Islam by joining worship activities. As much as they resent it, it is always better to be a good Muslim.

Some of the teachers and administrators are so sensitive to Islamic culture and practices that they go to the other extreme, indirectly becoming promoters of Islam and generators of assumptions. At the same time, there are those teachers and administrators who are simply unable to recognize the need to be more sensitive to Muslim students on campus. Teachers and administrators should educate themselves about the religions of

the world, but they do not need to indulge in the process of promoting any religion.

In recent years, many schools in America have invited Muslim speakers from local mosques or agencies to give a talk on Islam for the purpose of integrating Muslims in school and to provide understanding of Islam. In that effort, the school community has become very tolerant of Islam but also a bit confused about the teachings they have received at the school-sponsored talks and the news they have been receiving throughout the world. The study recommends addressing the confusion.

School clubs. As an effort by schools for the integration of Muslim students in the school and to encourage the Muslim community and Muslim student initiative, many schools have Muslim school clubs that meet on campus. The purpose is to provide a place for Muslim fellowship and to talk about Islam. The study showed that these clubs are run by Muslim Students Association chapters in high schools. MSA was established in 1961 as a network to connect Muslims of different ethnic and national background across the United States of America. Between the 1960s and 1970s, MSA grew so fast, that in the 1980s, the leaders founded an umbrella organization Islamic Society of North America. ISNA is the largest Muslim organization in the United States. The function of both MSA and ISNA can be described as social, religious, and political. According to Bradford (2008),

In addition to these umbrella organizations, a number of smaller, more focused groups also began to appear at this time thanks to a growing number of educated and entrepreneurial Muslims who became increasingly convinced of the need to participate in the political process. Motivated by a desire to protect

American Muslims from discrimination, advance public awareness of Islam and influence foreign policy, these elites formed a number of political action committees and local leagues of voters in the 1980s. ISNA even established its own political action committee in 1988 in response to these new organizations. (p. 228)

The researcher argued for the supervision of the clubs and their club material. The existence of the club for social and religious activities could be beneficial, but for political purposes, it could be harmful in the long run. Therefore, the young adult Muslims need to be redirected to limit themselves only to receiving education and not promoting political agendas of MSA, or other organizations like Council on American-Islamic Relations, American Muslim Alliance, Muslim American Society, The Islamic Circle of North America, etc.

Muslim and Non-Muslim Students/ Muslim Men vs. Muslim Women

The Theory of Polarization, or “us vs. them,” provides the basis for the themes of “Muslim vs. non-Muslim students” and “Muslim men vs. Muslim women.” The study found that there are misperceptions among Muslim and Non-Muslims students, and also about gender treatment in Islam. The study found that there are misperceptions among Muslim and Non-Muslims students, existing primarily because of a lack of communication, and willingness to acknowledge that there is a problem with both Muslim and Non-Muslim students in the American school system. All the participants were in agreement that there are misperceptions about Islam and Muslims. **Ali:** “Some common misperceptions about Muslims in US schools stem from the culture alone.

Schools gain their perceptions of Islam from America's perception and misconceptions of it, so that is the main issue affecting students, teachers, administrators, school boards, parents and so on."

Nadia: "In fact there are many misperceptions about Muslims and Islam in the American school system, and the worst of these misperceptions are directed at women."

Najima: Said that "there are "absolutely" misconceptions about Muslims in the American school system," and that she is more familiar with her own days in school, which are long gone. However, the participant states that in those times she felt that she was constantly "fighting a losing battle when it came to [her] religion and coexisting with the American lifestyle." She believes that the students around her were completely misinformed about Islam, and that as students at that age, she wasn't prepared to deal with the questions that would inevitably accompany her attempting to explain it to them.

Jamal: "There are misconceptions in schools," and he cited specific examples of such cases, such as the time of Ramadan, where Americans believe that Muslim students gorge themselves in the morning and at night to compensate for not eating during the hours of sunlight. From his view this is untrue, and it was ignorance to think so. Another example he cited was the issue of multiple marriages, which is commonly misunderstood by Americans to be a throwaway fact that has no further depth to consider.

Basheer: "There are some common misconceptions about Muslims in America."

Bilal: He believed that most (or everyone) in the American school systems understand that people in America, including Muslims, are not the same and that there are

going to be those who deal with that poorly in all communities. This section will discuss some of the issue and provide a few recommendations.

How Muslims view the America school system. The study found a common denominator, which could be considered as a clue to why the Muslim American community, including newly arrived Muslim immigrants, continued to live and develop businesses, families, and neighborhoods in the United States of America. This is because America remains true to the promise of freedom, democracy, good education, and prosperity. Statements, such as, “I would rather be here than any other country in the world”, which was made by participants three, five, six, and seven,;even participant 1 said he would never move to any Islamic country because he is too Americanized. This proved America is the land of opportunity and promises. It also showed that regardless of the uprising wave of anti-American protests across the Islamic culture and deep feelings of Muslim resentment against American policies at home, for the sake of security measures, there is still hope. Most Muslim American students, who have kept themselves away from any political Islamic group, were less frustrated with the American school system and were more understanding of American culture and society. It was the understanding of the researcher that many of the Muslims, who have lived in pre-9/11 America and have attended the American school system, were less likely to hold a positive opinion about the post-9/11 school system. However, they did not have any concrete reason, other than the assumptions about the treatment Muslim students were receiving in the aftermath of 9/11, which is solely based on their personal assessment of the post- 9/11 American society. Their assessment is, if there are anti-Islamic feelings in

American society it must be the same in the American school system, because school is a part of American society. Such assumptions exist because of the experiences Muslims have in the Islamic world where schools, politics, and the governments are subject to religious teachings, and society enforces Islamic practices and doctrines in the schools. Therefore, schools in the Islamic world act in accordance with the sentiments and demands of the society.

Almost every participant agreed that their experience in the American school system was a somewhat pleasant experience. Chapter four included a number of quotes from the participants regarding their experience in the American school system. For example, as it is mentioned previously Ali said, “You know, I would be happy to say they are a lot more positive than negative.” Secondly, Nadia said, “I either had positive experiences with people or neutral, not the other way around.” Furthermore, Bilal said, “If you go to school and work, everything is positive.” Additionally, Najima acknowledged that the school experience was over all positive; she said, “I learned more than I could have imagined by moving here.” Also, Jamal said, “The whole school experience was a positive experience.” Ahmad said that all his experiences in the school were positive: “One thing in this county is opportunity you know. They have books; they have a lot of teachers; they will help you; they will.” Finally, Basheer considered his experience positive because “at school everyone is very helpful.”

The only exception would be those Muslim students who chose not to participate in any school activity because of the religious practices or restriction, and perhaps those of the female gender because of their appearance. However, the researcher argues on the

basis of the experiences of the participants in this study that it might be a simple case of using the available excuses to get out of gym class or other school encouraged extracurricular activities.

Assumptions about Muslims in America. The contributions of the studies done in the aftermath of 9/11 have certainly brought to light many of the issues Muslims in America were facing in post-9/11 America. However, in an attempt to elaborate the stories of Muslims who were victims of the immediate reaction of the 9/11 tragedy in America, most of the research did not tell the story of those Muslims who were not victims of any prejudice, discrimination, or physical attacks. The lack of literature produced many assumptions; the most significant of all is that Muslim Americans are different from other Americans; thus, they should be treated differently. In the study, most of the participants considered it offensive when people try to treat them as special cases. Theoretically, Muslims in America would like to be treated as normal people, nothing more or less than an average American. Although some may prefer not to eat forbidden food, most of them do not care about Haram or Halal (Haram is religiously forbidden food and Halal is religiously acceptable diet). This is America and, of course, many of them wanted to have an American lifestyle. Many of the participants respected the religion and the religion practices, but they always wanted to live like an American. The special treatment forced them to meet up to the requirements of a good Muslim. It is essential in American culture to be sensitive of others' religions and cultures, but it would be the extreme side of being sensitive would be being oversensitive under the assumption that all the members of a certain religion and culture are the same. The second biggest

assumption is that all the Muslims have been made fun of and were victims of derogatory comments or bad treatment. The researcher found it interesting in his study that only one person was a victim of such comments and that participant attended the school before 9/11, which nullifies that the treatment of Muslims students has gotten worse in the aftermath of 9/11. Furthermore, the participant herself acknowledges that these were “stupid” comments without any meaning behind them. That identifies the comment as bullying, which is still a growing issue in American school system. However, the discrimination is an issue that most of the participants faced, not particularly at school, but outside the school in a market place or subway and most of the time it was non-verbal. This study concludes that the assumptions about Muslims in America have produced oversensitivity in the American school system.

Media and Literature

This section will discuss one of the common themes in media and literature, as it was emerged from the data analysis. The researcher will discuss Media and Literature separately to provide precise recommendation.

Media. The participants agreed that the image of Islam, portrayed by the media, is what has changed the perception of American people toward Islam. In recent years, it has been somewhat divided into two schools of thought. To those who see Islam as a threat to American culture, civilization and security are always active in highlighting all the news from the Islamic world regarding social justice, human rights, and political unrest. However, those who are hoping to integrate American society with Islamic society reject all the allegations on the basis of one statement that Islam is a religion of

peace, and those Muslims who are active in terrorism throughout the world are not following the right Islam. The first group emphasizes the history and theology of Islam, and how political Islam has contributed to terrorism, but the second group rejects these notions. An online source, Jihad Watch (2011), reported that on CNN on February 9, 2011, Janet Napolitano, Homeland Security Secretary told members of Congress in reference to terrorism that the terrorist organizations have connections to the United States. This source adds, “There is an increased reliance on recruiting Westerners into terrorist organizations” (Jihad Watch, 2011, p. 1). Furthermore, she also expressed her concern for the difficulty that national security agencies face to track them down because they are not an organized group. According to her report, these threats are not coming from Al-Qaeda but Hezbollah in Yemen. Situations where the security agency does not know who to stop, especially after the arrest of the underwear bomber in December 2010, also puts young Muslims under suspicions. Ultimately, Napolitano did not use the word Islam, Islamic terrorist, or Muslims fundamentalist. Nevertheless, constant verbal threats to America and protests in Islamic countries against America, including burning the American flag on Arab, Middle Eastern, and South Asian televisions remain the major sources of Muslims’ negative perception of the American. Also, the involvement of Pakistan in many terrorist attacks places Pakistan and Indian Muslims in a bad light. The participants also acknowledged that the schools do not have control over media.

Literature. The available literature about Islam and Muslims in America lacks the positive part of the story. Since many of the studies were published by the Muslim political organizations, such as ISNA, the studies are focused on the negativity toward

Muslims, which makes many of the Muslim students feel victimized as a community, and not as individuals. Although all but one of the participants has had only positive experiences, they understand and agree that Muslims are victims of prejudice and discrimination on the basis of their appearances and religious affiliation.

Student Interaction

The researcher found the interaction between Muslim and non-Muslim students very significant for the purpose of integration, peace, and harmony in the school system, and eventually in society. Generally, it would help the two parties to understand each other. For instance, Participant Two reported in the aftermath of 9/11 that she did not face any attack, but she was warned by her community people to stay alert, because there are people who may try to hurt her. She has never been afraid of non-Muslim people at work or in the neighborhood, but after that, she was always very scared and it definitely changed her perception about non-Muslim American's treatment toward Muslim Americans. Although it never happened to her, the stereotype among Muslim communities about non-Muslims evidently changed the perception of this young Muslim individual. Another major stereotype among the Muslim community is that if you are a Muslim, the only true friends you will have and should trust are other Muslims. Ultimately, this mistrust will lead to more misunderstandings and misperceptions about the other members of the American society.

Minority Effect

Another stereotype among Muslim Americans found during this study is that since Muslims are minorities, the only people who may accept them outside of the

Muslim community are other minorities. However, the positive side of this stereotype is that the African-Americans teachers, administrators, and classmates could play a vital role in making the school experience even more positive for Muslim students. From personal experience, the researcher could share instances that a member of a minority group can go through:

Loyalty. As a member of a minority group, one must have to identify his or her loyalty. Specifically, Muslim Pakistani and Indian young adults are very loyal to their families and traditions. However, the choice between Islam and America seems a bit confusing, because American society encourages some of the social norms that are forbidden in Islamic society. Those young adults, who want to stay away from any social practice that contradicts their beliefs, choose to isolate themselves; thus, they become a misunderstood figure in the classroom.

The other side of the argument is that, theologically, Islam differentiates every Muslim on this planet as Ummah: a community of Muslim believers. The Qur'anic text calls those who believe in Allah and follow Prophet Muhammad's religion, Islam believers. Therefore, Ummah are supposed to be loyal to Islam, Allah, Prophet Muhammad, and each other as a Muslim community; this excludes non-Muslims. It shows the confusion a Muslim goes through when it comes to loyalty to Ummah vs. America.

Fear. The second most important factor in the lives of the members of a minority group is the fear of the majority group or groups. The researcher did not sense any fear among the participants; they simply seemed to be very happy to be American Muslims.

Enemies. Consciously and subconsciously, the minority groups identify circumstances, or a people group, as enemies. The participants did not identify anyone as enemies, except one participant who consider a Jewish teacher hostile towards her. She was also one of the two female participants who reported prejudice in the American school system.

Insecurity. The inferiority that a minority group feels generates insecurities. The researcher sensed that some of the participants faced insecurity being American Muslims. It is hard for them to practice their religion as Americans. Therefore, they found themselves to be more Muslim than American.

Theoretical Implications

There exists a huge chasm in the available research literature on Muslims in America in the aftermath of 9/11, which directly represents the positive experiences of the Muslim community in America, specifically young adults in the American school system. Most of the Muslim population consists of young adults; therefore, their voices are the most significant channel to finding out what teachers, administrators, and counselors could do to improve the school environment for Muslim Pakistani and Indian young adults. If society looks at the Muslim Americans as a part of American society and does not treat them like a minority community in schools, the chances are that after one or two generations, Muslims will be a fully integrated part of the American society, without any resistance from anti-Islamic sentiments that exist in America. The special treatment highlights the group as a minority and different, and it also stimulates anti-

Islam sentiments and fear about Islam taking over the free and democratic American society.

This study can be situated among the existing literature as a positive guideline for school administrators, teachers, counselors, social workers, and community members to impact the American school system and more importantly the lives of the ever increasing population of Muslim young adults. It could also be used to remove some of the obstacles that Muslim and non-Muslim members of the school community face in everyday life, because both sides have their own assumptions and perceptions about the other group. The removal of existing misunderstandings and the stereotypes among both groups can pave the path for better, healthy, and innovative experiences for Muslim Pakistani and Indian students in their New York school system experience.

Misunderstanding

Bradford (2008) sums up his studies in a very profound and practical manner. He states:

Mutual distrust and misunderstanding have clearly grown since 9/11, and there are a wide range of topics on which both groups must work to understand the other's perspectives. Regardless of the specific topics about which they disagree, however, both groups must engage in similar tasks to advance the difficult work of improving dialogue and understanding; both must resist comforting stereotypes about the other, question what they think they know about them and what this is based upon, and try to understand how they must appear in the others' eyes. If sufficient numbers of Muslims and non-Muslims in America

take these steps and make a sincere effort to better understand one another, I see little to prevent Muslim immigrants from integrating successfully and establishing themselves and their faith as part of the lasting fabric of American society. (p. 441).

Unfortunately, most of the Muslim religious organizations are more focused on the political aspects of Islam, than simply observing the religious beliefs and keeping the religion separate from the state. The understanding of the researcher is that it is historically and theologically difficult to leave political Islam out of the picture, but that might be the only solution and the first step towards integration with American society without forsaking Islamic beliefs and practices. One of the best ways to initiate this step is through making sure that the Muslim American community understands that in the United States Constitution, religion and state are separate entities. Furthermore, the religious institution, including Mosques and Islamic centers are neither allowed to be involved in political debates, nor encourage the attendees to vote for a particular party. This process will give Muslim politicians freedom and Muslim religious leaders to encourage their congregations to practice their religion.

The non-Muslim American society should understand that it is hard for Muslims to abandon a significant part of their religion, which would require more time and patience than the group may have anticipated. Throughout the Islamic world, religion is a state-sponsored entity; therefore, many of the Islamic countries call themselves an Islamic republic. On the other hand, Muslims need to realize that the misunderstandings about American Muslims is not merely a fear, a result of Islamophobia, or personal

perception, but it is out of the necessity of guarding the American nation against potential threats posed by Islamist extremism, which continues to be true even ten years after the 9/11 tragedy. Additionally, this drive for national security has resulted in scrutinizing many Muslims since 9/11 that may or may not fit the profile of radical Muslims. It is true that most of the American Muslims may not feel any sense of connection to Islamist extremists but in the case of Muslim Pakistani and Indian, the war in Afghanistan and on-going insurgence in Pakistan against the West and NATO forces on the ground compel the authorities to watch the Muslim Pakistani and Indian community to avoid any possible terrorist attack on United States soil. Besides, when the non-Muslims American society hears about what is done by Pakistani Taliban, and the recent suicide attacks in Pakistan and India, make them even more cautious. Thus, they turn their focus to the Muslim Pakistan and Indian population nearest to them for an explanation. According to Bradford (2008), “They focus on Islam and the Muslims nearest them for an explanation. This is a natural and likely unavoidable instinct, but one that must be resisted” (p. 435).

Finally, both non-Muslim Americans and American Muslims misunderstand each other on the basis of what they see on television or read in newspapers. Muslims assume that every tragedy in the Islamic world or act of terrorism abroad will bring post- 9/11 discrimination against them and worsen the situation. Therefore, many of the Muslims in America remain isolated from the rest of society, and become very defensive in their attitude toward non-Muslims. Also, non-Muslim Americans put all the Muslims in the same category and jump to conclusions rather quickly.

Specifically, in the American school system, teachers, administrators, counselors, members of the school community, and policy makers could analyze both sides and bring both groups together to work and remove some of these misunderstandings.

Miscommunication

Another area where this study may help to improve the school system is in existing miscommunication. The researcher found it very interesting that weak communication among teachers, administrators, members of the school community, policy makers, and parents is a substantial cause of most of the misconceptions and misunderstandings about Muslims in the school system. In turn, the lack of understanding between the non-Muslim American and Muslim American primarily exist because of the miscommunication. Either both groups avoid talking to each other or have never been given the opportunity to talk out their differences.

There is a major miscommunication among Muslims and constant denial within the American Muslim population concerning the problem posed by Muslim extremism. Although it is not fair at any level to associate moderate and peaceful American Muslims with the radical Muslim community, the non-Muslim scholars point out that the problem is rooted in the theological and political Islam. Furthermore, many of the Muslim and non-Muslim scholars have proved that Islam cannot and will not co-exist with the Western way of life; theologically, the two societies just cannot survive together. Bradford (2008) writes:

One of the most common causes for skepticism of American Muslims which I have encountered is the belief that they never expressed appropriate grief

over September 11th. This is sometimes posed as a question: why is it that American Muslims never apologized for the September 11th attacks? The Muslims I have spoken with tend to express extreme consternation at this question, explaining both that the Muslim community has expressed regret over the attacks many times, and that they shouldn't have to apologize for them in the first place because they weren't responsible (p. 439).

The Muslim Americans have denied the association between radical teachings of Islam and the radical actions of Muslim extremists. There has never been any apology for the attacks against the West in the name of Islam. The Leaders of Islamic countries and the Muslim Americans have simply condemned such actions but none of them have ever acknowledged that Islamic theology supports such attacks and as Ummah they are also responsible for the attacks. Contradictorily, Muslim leaders have been criticizing the American foreign policy and use the policy to justify the horrendous actions of radical Muslim groups.

Generally, non-Muslim Americans should communicate more effectively what they think or believe about Muslim Americans and Islam. It will help Muslim Americans to address the core issues non-Muslim Americans may have faced since 9/11. However, one of the complicated truths that America is clear about is separation of religion and state, which is the most misunderstood, and miscommunicated topics between Muslim Americans and non-Muslim American society. Also, Muslims see every attack led by the United States against any Muslim country as an attack on Islam. Muslims hold religion over everything, and they see the state official's authority as God

given authority. Therefore, for non- Muslim Americans, it is absurd for someone to attempt to kill Americans because of the American foreign policy toward a certain country. There is a need to communicate the difference between the West and religion vs. the East and religion. In order to co-exist with one another, both groups need exercise more effective communication. Also, they should be open about the grievances and concerns of their communities, but ultimately look at the bigger picture of what would really benefit the nation. The United States provides full freedom to practice Islam; therefore, even in the American school system, Muslims are given separate facilities if they want to pray.

Assumptions

The study showed that when someone fails to communicate any important issue, such miscommunication turns into misunderstanding and eventually encourages outlandish assumptions on the basis of limited information. The researcher observed in the study that both non-Muslim Americans and Muslim Americans have constantly left room for assumptions and later accused the other group of assuming and misunderstanding. For example, one of the female participants complained about the assumption that when non-Muslim Americans see her wearing hijab, they assume she is oppressed, among other things. However, the issue she raised was that they do not treat her like other Americans; specifically, they assume that she would not shake hands because she is practicing Muslim. When the researcher met her for an interview she was in her hijab, and he shook her hand, which she appreciated and discussed in latter portions of the interview. The problem is presented on how will one know whether a

Muslim American wearing hijab will shake your hand. It is hard to know because traditionally the purpose of the hijab is to avoid unnecessary displaying of body, including prohibition of physical touch. Obviously, for a strange man, it is a sign not to shake the hand of a woman in hijab. In recent years, one of the popular teachings the West has received in terms of Islamic tradition and understanding is that women do not touch Muslim men except their spouse, father, or brothers. Bradford (2008) indicates the confusion in this regards, "...whether or not it's appropriate to shake a woman's hand or whether or not Muslims must pray during the day, as Muslims disagree with one another on each of these topics" (p. 440).

This is also applicable in the American school system. If Muslim Americans do not communicate what they do and do not believe, it would be hard for non-Muslim students to understand how to react toward them. According to most of the participants, non-Muslim students never tried to do anything to blatantly offend Muslim students.

Recommendations for Practice

This study cannot provide a basis for making a research supported practice decision because this study is only the first step toward opening new avenues for discussion with both groups, non-Muslim Americans and Muslim Americans, specifically Pakistani and Indian Muslims in America in the aftermath of 9/11. However, in the light of what the participants suggested and experienced at the American school system, the study has already suggested a number of strategies for the American society and the Muslim community in the above section to integrate Muslim and non-Muslim communities. It would have significant effect on the American school system.

Here are a few more strategies for school teachers, administrators, and counselors:

- School teachers, administrators, counselors, members of the schools community, parents, and the policy makers need to treat all the religions equally, including Islam, not more or less than the students of other faiths.
- School leadership must focus on recruiting, hiring, and retaining experienced faculty and staff members, possibly from minority groups, particularly for social studies.
- School administrators should be actively involved in Muslim communities to seek collaboration with Muslims in the neighborhood instead of organized religion and political Muslim groups who ask to come and give talks on Islam.
- School leadership should rely on the local Muslim community when it comes to dealing with discrimination issues; letting the community become part of school decision making policy can help to avoid some of the potential hazards in the future.
- School leadership should collaborate with other schools that are successfully integrating Muslim Pakistani and Indian students and learn from their experiences and practices to promote peace and harmony in school. The teachers and counselors could also do that on an individual basis.
- School teachers and administrators should avoid promoting any sect or branch of Islam, so that the other Muslim students are not pressured to accept beliefs that they are not taught at home.

- School teachers and administrators should let the Muslim students to be active leaders of the Muslim clubs on campus, but the school leadership should appoint a faculty member as a constant supervisor, preferably a minority personal who is not a Muslim.
- School leadership should invite Muslim and non-Muslim parents to come and have open discussions or panel discussions. It will help to clear the air and let all the assumptions be correctly communicated and answered.
- School teachers, administrators, the policy makers should spend more time hearing about the experiences of minorities at school. There should be a special monthly report on positive experiences of the Muslim students that in light of those positive experiences, school administration could continue improving their programs and strategies.
- School counselors should encourage the students to talk about their positive experiences.
- School leadership should provide seminars and workshops for teachers on understanding Islamic culture and the religion of Islam.
- School leadership should seek to balance such religious seminars and workshops for teachers by inviting the representatives from other religions to come and give a talk so that members of the school community may not feel different or special.
- School teachers, administrators, and counselors should avoid unnecessary comments on Islam. If they do not know the answer of something related to Islam, they should

simply say so. The policy makers must understand the importance of genuine and honest dialogue between Muslims American and non-Muslim Americans.

Recommendations for Further Research

This qualitative research study explored the attitudes and perceptions of the Pakistani and Indian Muslims through their everyday experiences at school, and it is the understanding of the researcher that additional research is needed to explore more about the Pakistani and Indian Muslims in the American school system, college, and their lives outside the educational setting. Also, the similar study could be conducted with other Muslim groups from Arab, the Middle Eastern, Asian, and African Muslims. Another similar study could be conducted among Pakistani and Indian Muslims to find their perception of American treatment in the aftermath of 9/11 on the basis of their sects in Islam.

This study was also limited to the urban setting. Naturally the results would change if conducted in rural areas of America; therefore, there is a desperate need to have additional studies in several different areas according to their historical patterns, including the history of the group, people in American, social, and economical patterns, what area of the country they live in, and what type of work they do for a living. Cultural patterns include studying the culture of the group and how their internal community culture is different from the American culture. Also, how a group reacts and functions locally, regionally, and internationally. Also, additional research needs to examine the behavior of Pakistani and Indian Muslims toward other Muslims in the American school system. This research study intended to provide a general overview of the positive and

negative experiences Muslim Pakistani and Indian students are having in the American school system; but the focus of the research was to look for the positive experiences more than the negative. Exploring at-risk Muslims students, special needs Muslim students, gifted Muslim student, and economically disadvantaged students or a specific gender or other ethnic Muslims is recommended.

Recommendations for Policy Makers, Law Makers, and the School System

Policy makers must take bold initiatives to provide and protect the rights of the people of America. If America is safe, it will remain a safe haven for many Muslim Pakistani and Indians who are seeking the American dream. Furthermore, the media and the critics must understand their responsibility as the members and institutions of the country. Recently, Rep. Peter King, the New York Republican and also the chairman of homeland committee, has called a congressional hearing on Islamic radicalism in America in reference to what Homeland Security Secretary Janet Napolitano said: “One of the most striking elements of today’s threat picture is that plots to attack America increasingly involve American residents and citizens” (Johnson, USA Today, 2011, para. 3).

Johnson (2011) reports that Napolitano said, “We are now operating under the assumption-based on the latest intelligence and recent arrests-that individuals prepared to carry out terrorist attacks and acts of violence might be in the United States, and they could carry out acts of violence with little or no warning” (para. 3). On this type of intelligence reports, every American should be participating to defend the country against terrorist threats regardless of their race, gender, socio-economical status, and political

opinion. Don Borelli, a former FBI counterterrorism official who helped in uncovering the plot to bomb the New York subway in 2009 by Najibullah Zazi (a Muslim) said, “I don’t think she’s overreacting here” (Johnson, 2011, p. 12). Although, the member of Congress, King has stated repeatedly that most of the Muslim Americans are peaceful Muslims. However, King rejected the attempt by Obama administration of generalization of the hearing on terrorism. According to Sullivan (2011), Obama administration tried to “frame the debate around radicalization in general, without singling out Muslims,” and Mr. King said, “That’s just political correctness, since al-Qaida is the main threat to the U.S” (Sullivan, 2011, p. 3). According to Stanley (2011), in the hearing “Republicans accused Democrats of sacrificing security and common sense to political correctness...Democrats accused Republicans of singling out Muslims and of discounting non-Muslim acts of terrorism, including hate crimes by white supremacists” (para. 6).

Nevertheless, Republicans and Democrats acknowledge that the radical Islamists are constant threat to America. The United Jerusalem Foundation conducted a study to examine whether the congressional hearing “Radicalization of Muslim Americans” is biased toward Muslim American or if it is true that most of the violent extremists who have been arrested since 9/11 are Muslims. The study reports the following:

...The Investigative Project on Terrorism recently did an analysis of all terrorism convictions based on statistics released by the Justice Department. These stats show that more than 80% of all convictions tied to international terrorist groups and homegrown terrorism since 9/11 involve defendants driven by a radical Islamist agenda. Though Muslims represent less than 1% of the American

population, they constitute defendants in 186 of the 228 cases the Justice Department lists. The figures confirm that there is a disproportionate problem of Islamic militancy and terrorism among the American Muslim population. (The United Jerusalem Foundation, "Week in Review," March, 10, 2011, para. 3).

An article published by The United Jerusalem Foundation blamed Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR), the Islamic Society of North America (ISNA), and the Muslim American Society (MAS) for creating panic in America, concerning the congressional hearings led by congressman Rep. King that "these hearings will lead to 'hate crimes' against Muslims" (para. 5). Furthermore, the article states:

Groups such as these [CAIR, ISNA, and MAS] routinely play the "Islamophobia" card, and get attention for doing so in the mainstream media, in order to silence criticism of Islamic radicalism. In fact, these very same groups, just like the Obama administration, categorically refuse to even use the term "radical Islam" in order to excise the term from the American vernacular. (The United Jerusalem Foundation, "Week in Review," March, 10, 2011, para. 6).

The political agendas of Muslim organizations and the conflict between the major political parties in America could create unrest in the country among Muslims and non-Muslims, particularly in the American school system, where Muslim students are young and struggling to find their identities. Their search for identity and their need to belong makes them vulnerable for recruitment for militant ideology. Borum (2010) writes:

Rather than being simple causes, these vulnerabilities may be leveraged as possible sources of motivation or as mechanisms for acquiring or hardening one's

militant ideology. Three commonly occurring vulnerabilities are: (1) perceived injustice/humiliation; (2) need for identity; and (3) need for belonging (Borum, 2010, p. 4).

Therefore,

- The lawmakers must come together to determine the approach they want to take in order to protect the country and find a way to involve the Muslim leadership in the process so that no one feel left out.
- The Western media must stay impartial and hold both sides accountable.
- The society must learn to be tolerant toward each other and be united to defend the country against any domestic or international attack. Without any fear of political correctness, the citizen of America should able to talk about all the issue including “Islam Radicalization in America.”
- Muslim and non-Muslim Americans must initiate a genuine dialogue to uproot the homegrown terrorism.
- Furthermore, the policy makers must treat all the citizens equally and fairly. The school teachers and administrators must not show favoritism and must stay neutral in terms of less or more sensitivity toward any religion.
- The school teachers and administrators must involve the community members from all religions to promote religious tolerance.
- They also must practice multiculturalism in the school system.

- Lastly, school counselors must understand what Muslim students go through in their everyday lives both at school and at home.
- They must learn how to be culturally sensitive toward Muslim Pakistani and Indian students.

Limitations

There were some issues related to previous bad experiences that participants were not able to share. Generally, it is forbidden for Muslim women to talk to men. So, it was hard to have a long, open-ended interview with the female participants. Additionally, the researcher was not able to receive the fullness of information from Muslim young adults since it is religiously and culturally forbidden to reveal many details of their personal life, particularly information about Islam. Under any circumstances, Muslims will not share some theologically complicated issues for two reasons: 1) no Muslim can claim to know Islam fully and 2) each sect has a different interpretation of the text. Pakistani and Indian young adults who are in high schools now were not allowed to talk to any strangers, especially about their personal experience in relation to 9/11.

However, all the young adults who are attending school today were open to talk but were not able to sign the consent form; signing any document is not their decision. When they were asked to take the consent form home and show it to their parents, they never returned or called back. Over twenty young adults who had the qualification needed for the study and who were at first willing to be interviewed, were unable to participate in the interviews after speaking with their parents about the issue.

Muslims students in America who are or were affiliated with Islamic religious and

political organizations in North America such as MSA, CAIR, ISNA, ICNA, MAS, particularly MSA, were limited to certain sets of answers. They were more interested in talking about civil rights for Muslim Americans, rather than their personal experiences.

MSA was established by members of the Muslim Brotherhood in January of 1963 at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign. The MSA has chapters on nearly 600 colleges campuses in the United States of America. The participants connected to MSA were very outspoken about their faith. They spoke out against foreign policy and the war on terror while defending Islamic teaching about Jihad. The influence of MSA in the lives of Ali and Nadia encouraged them to defend Islam and critique America. The MSA West Conference UCLA (2011) stated the pledge of allegiance that provides the basis for the limitation of the study:

Allah is our objective
The Prophet is our leader
Qur'an is our law
Jihad is our way
Dying in the way of Allah is our highest hope

Lived Body (corporeality): This is the phenomenological fact that “we are always bodily in the world” (van Manen, 1990, p.103). Van Manen (1990) explained, “In our physical or bodily presence we both reveal something about ourselves and we always conceal something at the same time, not necessarily consciously or deliberately, but rather in spite of ourselves” (p. 103).

Therefore, it was necessary to assume that the participants would have concealed something unintentionally. To get the best information about their lived experiences,

more questions were asked and in some cases the interviewee went back to the previously mentioned experience to add something valuable. Finally, a popular but controversial theological concept, the Islamic idea of Al-Taqiyya, where a Muslim is believed to be allowed to hide the truth and speak lies in order to defend and spread Islam may have limited the research. MacKenzie (2007) writes:

The word "Taqiyya" literally means: "Concealing, precaution, guarding." It is employed in disguising one's beliefs, intentions, convictions, ideas, feelings, opinions or strategies. In practical terms it is manifested as dissimulation, lying, deceiving, vexing and confounding with the intention of deflecting attention, foiling or pre-emptive blocking. It is currently employed in fending off and neutralizing any criticism of Islam or Muslims. (para. 3).

Conclusion

The truth about the Pakistani and Indian students in the American school system is very clear. Regardless of the negative experiences in the school, they continue to be interested in American life and schooling. Talking about positive experiences is helpful for the school system, students, and also for the society. It helps to overcome the negative feelings and focus on the positive side of the story. When school teachers, administrators, counselors, members of the school community, and the policy makers' focus on the positive experiences of the group it helps them to integrate into American society with fewer complications.

Reinforcement of positive experiences of Pakistani and Indian Muslims in the American school system could also influence the media. When there is more news about

positive experiences the media would not have a choice but to be less focused on negativity and more focused on positivity. It will certainly change the perception of common Americans about the Muslim community, which will potentially generate more positive experiences among the Muslim community in the American school system.

Muslim Pakistani and Indian students in the New York school system need to be taken neither more seriously, than the students from other ethnic or religious groups. This will reduce the chance of some taking advantage of special treatment and raising new issues in the school system. Also, it would help to avoid any controversial situations in the school system. A policy to treat all students equally could be the best policy; otherwise, tomorrow, other groups' basis on sexual orientation or religious affiliation will complain about discrimination and prejudice.

Finally, the American school system needs to continue to offer excellent education with the mindset that good education can produce a better future for Americans. The American school system needs to be sensitive about the minority communities in the school, but it is equally important to avoid over sensitivity which might generate assumptions.

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APPENDIX I

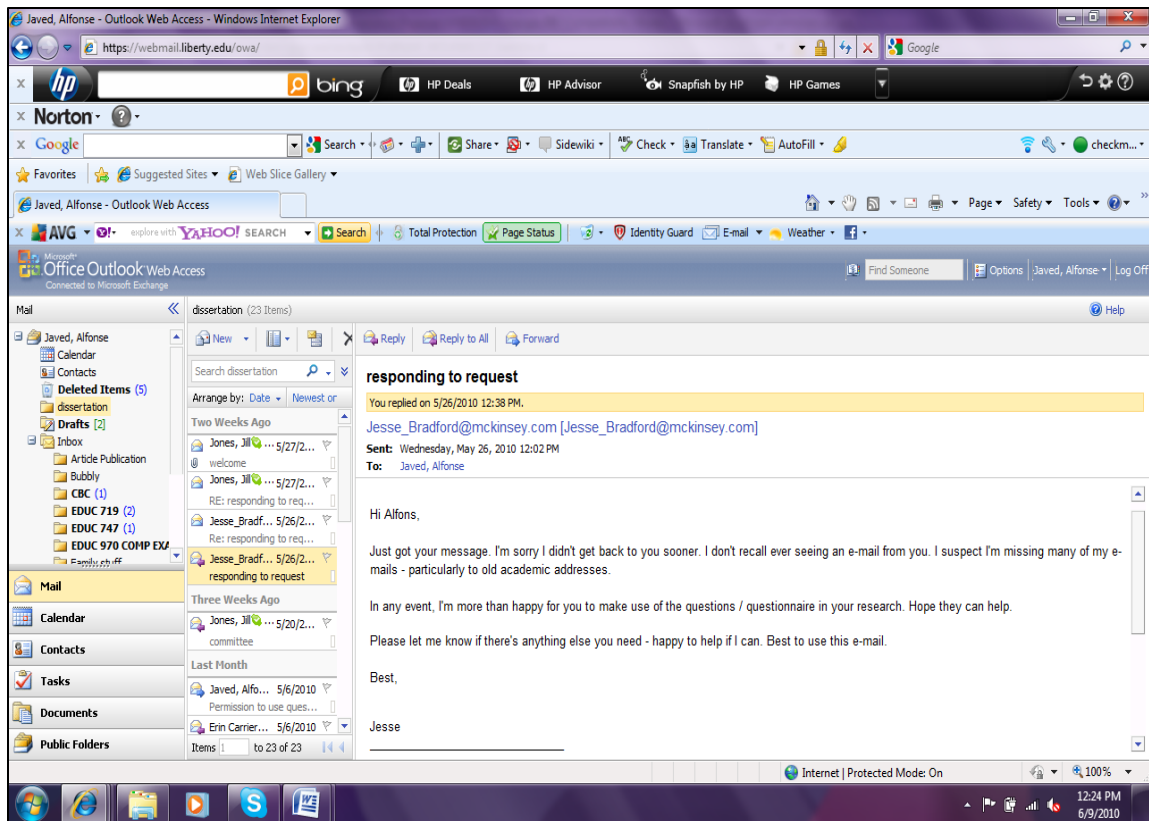
Interview No. 1

1. Tell me about your experiences as a student in American school system?
2. Tell me about the time before September 11th when you experienced a sense of conflict between being Muslim and being American in school? Could you give me an example.
3. Has there been an example since September 11th when as a student you experienced a sense of conflict between being Muslim and being American?
4. Do you think most educators in America know about Islam?
5. What are some of the ideas you have that you think it is to teach them about Islam?
6. Tell me how you imagine most non-Muslim teachers, administrators view Muslims.
7. Do you think there are common misperceptions about Muslims in the US schools?
8. Do you think a lot of non-Muslim teachers and administrators have changed their views on Muslims students since September 11th?
9. How do you think these views have changed?
10. Tell me about some positive experience you had in the school in the United States of America.

11. Have you ever felt that your appearance have affected the way the teachers and administrators have treated you in post September 11th and pre-9/11; have you noticed any differences?
12. What are some of the ideas that how we can educate them that they treat you better.
13. Are there particular programs in New York school system that you think contributed to make your school experience better.

APPENDIX II

Permission to use Bradford (2008) Questions/data



Hi Alfonse,

Thanks and sorry again for the delay. Glad you found me! Good luck and all the best,

Jesse

----- Original Message -----

From: "Javed, Alfonse" [ajaved@liberty.edu]

Sent: 05/26/2010 12:38 PM AST

To: Jesse Bradford

Cc: "Jones, Jill Anne" <jajones9@liberty.edu>

Subject: RE: responding to request

Thank you so much for your e-mail. You would not believe how happy I am that you responded back. Yes you are right my previous e-mails were sent by Jessica Mettson from Harvard through your Harvard e-mail address. I hope when you come to the States I will get chance to meet you in person. I am absolutely impressed by your work.

Thank God I did not give up. Thank you again for your willingness to help me.

Pastor Alfonse Javed

Staff at Hephzibah House

51 West 75 Street

New York, NY 10023-2001

(212) 787-6150

Cell no. 610-551-4352

From: Jesse_Bradford@mckinsey.com [Jesse_Bradford@mckinsey.com]

Sent: Wednesday, May 26, 2010 12:02 PM

To: Javed, Alfonse

Subject: responding to request

Hi Alfons,

Just got your message. I'm sorry I didn't get back to you sooner. I don't recall ever seeing an e-mail from you. I suspect I'm missing many of my e-mails - particularly to old academic addresses.

In any event, I'm more than happy for you to make use of the questions / questionnaire in your research. Hope they can help.

Please let me know if there's anything else you need - happy to help if I can. Best to use this e-mail.

Best,

Jesse

Jesse Bradford, Ph.D.

McKinsey & Company

No. 1 Jermyn Street

London, UK SW1Y 4UH

44 (0)782 502-9206 (m)

Jesse_Bradford@mckinsey.com

+=====+
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This email is confidential and may be privileged. If you have received it in error, please notify us immediately and then delete it. Please do not copy it, disclose its contents or use it for any purpose.

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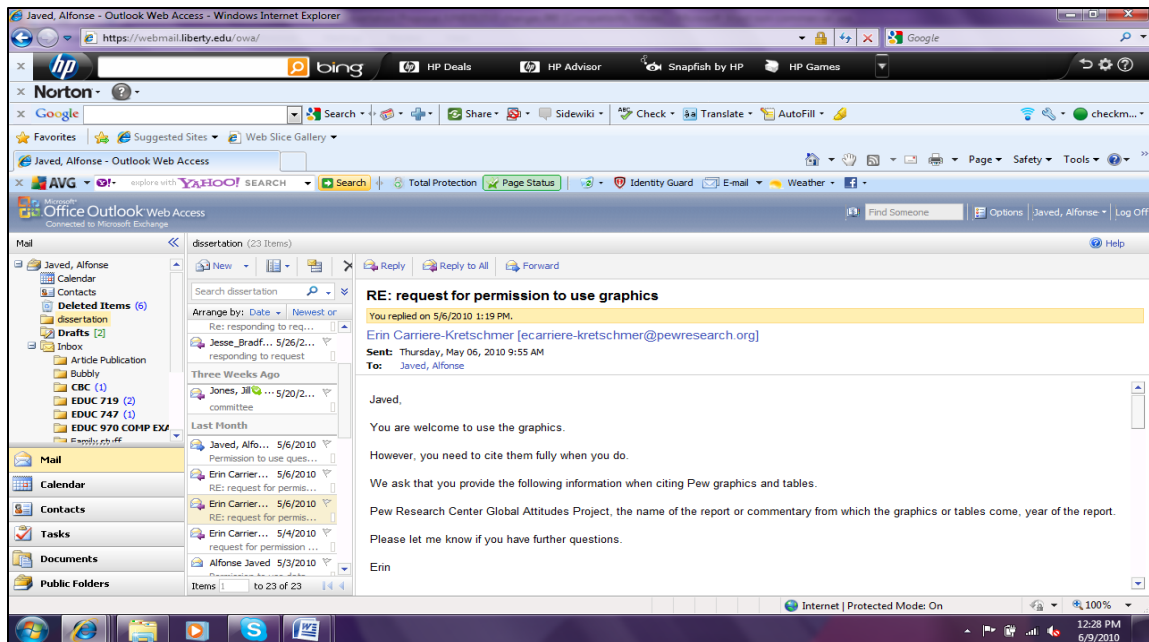
This email is confidential and may be privileged. If you have received it in error, please notify us immediately and then delete it. Please do not copy it, disclose its contents or use it for any purpose.

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APPENDIX III

Permission to use data graphs of Pew Research Center Global Attitudes Project



Javed,

You are welcome to use the graphics.

However, you need to cite them fully when you do.

We ask that you provide the following information when citing Pew graphics and tables.

Pew Research Center Global Attitudes Project, the name of the report or commentary from which the graphics or tables come, year of the report.

Please let me know if you have further questions.

Erin

From: Javed, Alfonso [<mailto:ajaved@liberty.edu>]

Sent: Wed 5/5/2010 12:24 AM

To: Erin Carriere-Kretschmer

Subject: RE: request for permission to use graphics

To: gallupnews@gallup.com

From Alfonse Javed (ajaved@liberty.edu)/alfonsejaved@yahoo.com

Date: 5/3/2010

Subject: Permission to use data graphs: Islamic Extremism: Common Concern for Muslim and Western Publics
Support for Terror Wanes Among Muslim Publics

Dear Dr. Carriere-Kretschme,

Thank you so much for your kind and quick response. I am student at Liberty University a Christian evangelical graduate school in Lynchburg, VA. I am impressed with Pew Research work and trying to use some of the data for my dissertation. I am interested in using a few graphs. According to Liberty University Institutional Review Board in order to use the graphs even with proper acknowledgement and giving full credit to Gallup research center I need an e-mail (written permission) from you as a written permission document. If you have any question please let me know. I am planning to defend my dissertation proposal by the end of this week. Please find my detail contact information below my signatures. The following is the details:

Islamic Extremism: Common Concern for Muslim and Western Publics

Support for Terror Wanes Among Muslim Publics

Released: 07.14.05

Under Summary of Findings

figure 1. Islamic Extremism a Threat to Your Country?

figure 2. Support for suicide bombing decline

Pastor Alfonse Javed
Staff at Hephzibah House
51 West 75 Street
New York, NY 10023-2001
(212) 787-6150
Cell no. 610-551-4352

From: Erin Carriere-Kretschmer [ecarriere-kretschmer@pewresearch.org]

Sent: Tuesday, May 04, 2010 2:25 PM

To: Javed, Alfonse

Cc: Jacob Poushter

Subject: request for permission to use graphics

Dear Mr. Javed,

I just received a message that you apparently called last night and left a message on our voicemail requesting permission to use some of our data and graphics.

If you would, please confirm that you are seeking such information and permission and specify what it is you are looking for.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Regards,

Erin

Erin Carriere-Kretschmer, Ph.D.

Senior Research Associate

Global Attitudes Project

Pew Research Center

1615 L Street, NW, Suite 700

Washington, DC 20036-5610

Tel: 202.419.4365

Email: ecarriere-kreschmer@pewresearch.

APPENDIX IV
CONSENT FORM

Muslim Pakistani and Indian students in American School System in the aftermath of
9/11

Alfonse Javed
Liberty University
School of Education

You are invited to be in a research study of Muslim Pakistani and Indian students in American School System in the aftermath of 9/11. You were selected as a possible participant because your demographics meet the requirement of the study. We ask that you read this form and ask any questions you may have before agreeing to be in the study.

This study is being conducted by: Alfonse Javed, Liberty University, School of Education

Background Information

The purpose of this study is:

To explore the experiences of a Muslim Pakistani and Indian students in American School System in the aftermath of 9/11 in an effort to help Teachers, school Administrators, Policy Makers and Counselors to understand how they can over come the prejudice against Muslims in NYC school system. The study will examine the participants' goals and purposes for being involved in schools, will produce responses that will be used to identify the difficulties and successes of the participants, will suggest possible strategies to overcome the difficulties, and will add to the research literature on dealing with religious prejudice in American school system.

Procedures:

If you agree to be in this study, you would be asked to do the following things:

- First, the participants will be interviewed by the primary researcher. There would be two rounds of interviews and depending on your availability that when you can meet the researcher. The location for the interview will be close to your school. For confidentiality reasons the researcher will reserve a private room at your school or at the local public library with glass door that people can see both the researcher and the participants and yet no interference. There would be a sign on the door stating "Interview in session, please don't disturb." The private room could be reserved at your school or at the local public library with the researcher and the your present. The interviews will be digitally recorded. The researcher will make a

note of his running thoughts, also the discussion. The researcher also will create a printed written record of the interview responses.

Risks and Benefits of being in the Study

The study has several risks:

The risks associated with this study are minimal and no more than encountered in everyday life. There could be psychological stress when examining the difficult issues of race, religion and diversity.

The benefits to participation are:

The direct benefits to the participants will be the opportunity to share experiences and knowledge about their experience in American school system. The study will provide participants with another way to positively affect schooling and to feel valued, respected, and knowledgeable.

This project will positively affect schools, different groups within schools, and ultimately society. By collecting information that can be used to increase community involvement in schooling, schools and future researchers will have more knowledge with which to develop strategies to better serve all students and help them to reach their full potential by reduce and eventually eliminating prejudice on base of religion and ethnicity.

Confidentiality:

The records of this study will be kept private. In any sort of report we might publish, we will not include any information that will make it possible to identify a subject. Research records will be stored securely and only researchers will be allowed to see those records. To review the questions and add content validity three people will be assisting the primary researcher throughout the research. Two out of the three have been serving as missionaries in New York City for almost forty years. Lois Eldred is the director of Hephzibah House a ministry in New York City and Lauren is a staff at Hephzibah House. Lois Eldred has been a friend to a Muslim person in NYC for years and understands Muslims' struggles in the aftermath of 9/11. Third person is Jason Casper who has worked in an advertisement company run by Muslims. These three people may have limited access to all the records but they would not have the key for the file cabinet's lock or the password for the computer. Limited access means they will access to the data only when I will allow them and once they provide their feedback the researcher will lock the data back in the cabinet.

The confidentiality of the demographics of the participants will be stored and protected separate from interview data. The primary researcher will also use pseudonyms (false names) and codes for identifying information. No information will be shared beyond the persons necessary to the study (researcher, committee members, necessary school officials, participants), unless there is a threat of bodily harm to self or others as required by law.

The information collected, including identifying information, interview responses, any written records of the interview responses, digital recordings, observation notes and researcher's notes will be stored in a secure location for a minimum of three years and a maximum of four years at which time the information will be destroyed. The information will be stored separately from identifying information. There is the possibility that within four years the data will be used for future publication and/or as part of a larger study.

Voluntary Nature of the Study:

Participation in this study is voluntary. Your decision whether or not to participate will not affect your current or future relations with Liberty University. If you decide to participate, you are free to not answer any question or withdraw at any time without affecting those relationships.

Referral Information for Professional psychologist/ clinical counselor

In the event a participant experienced psychological distress during or following the survey. The participants are advised to contact Islamic Center New York University 371 Sixth Avenue New York, NY 10014 phone no. 212.998.4712 e-mail. mk610@nyu.edu. You can read more about professional mental and social help visit http://icnyu.org/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=58&Itemid=112 and schedule a meeting, it is free.

Contacts and Questions:

The researcher conducting this study is: Alfonse Javed. You may ask any questions you have now. If you have questions later, **you are encouraged** to contact him at 610-551-4352, ajaved@liberty.edu or alfonsejaved@yahoo.com. The student will be working under the direction of Dr. Chick Holland, 434-592-4275, cholland@liberty.edu. If you have any questions or concerns regarding this study and would like to talk to someone other than the researcher(s), **you are encouraged** to contact the Institutional Review Board, Dr. Fernando Garzon, Chair, 1971 University Blvd, Suite 1582, Lynchburg, VA 24502 or email at fgarzon@liberty.edu.

You will be given a copy of this information to keep for your records.

Statement of Consent:

I have read the above information. I have asked questions and have received answers. I consent to participate in the study.

Signature: _____

Date: _____

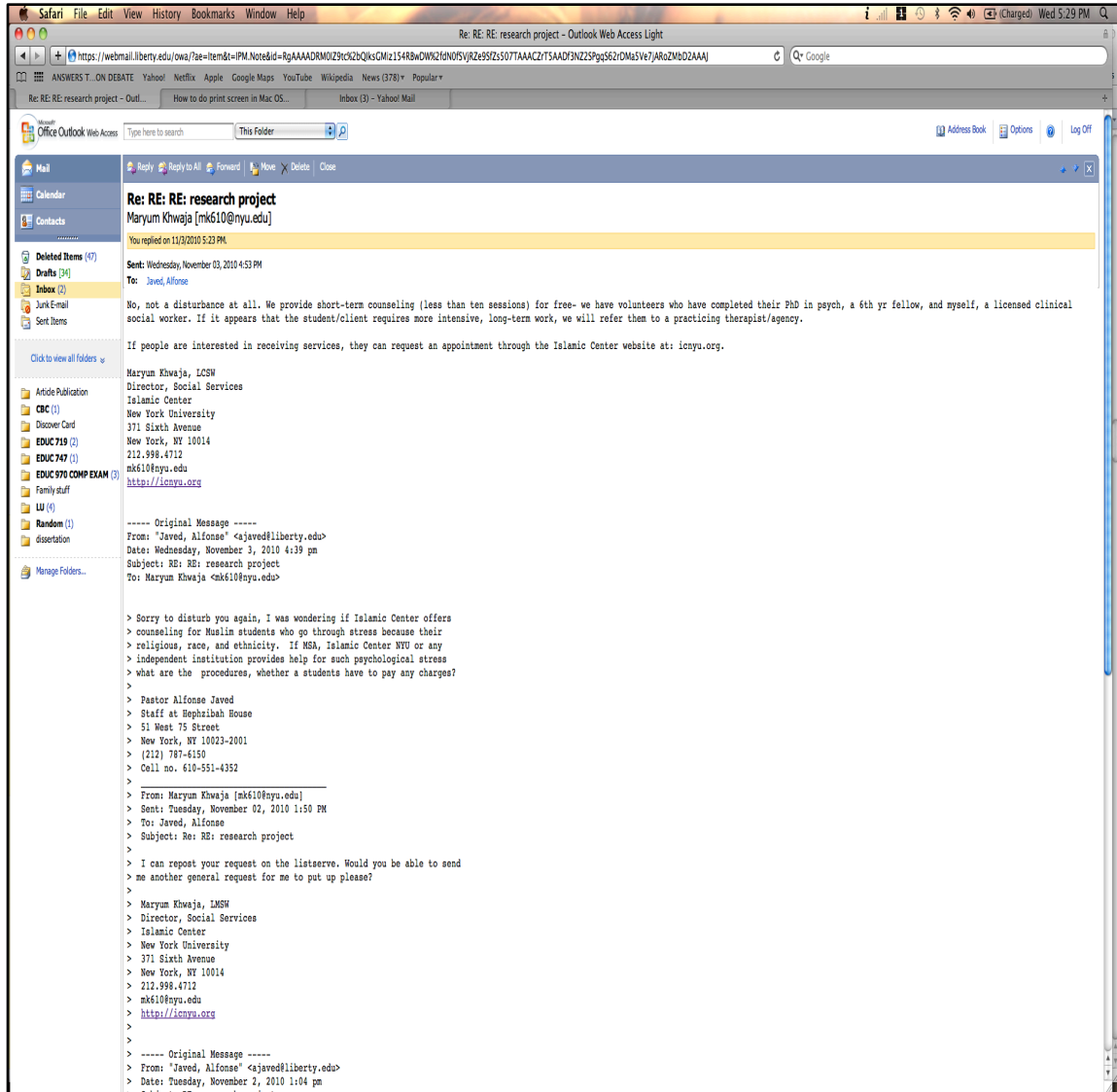
Signature of Investigator: _____

Date: _____

documents as well to the Liberty University Institutional Review Board, Campus North Suite 1582, 1971 University Blvd., Lynchburg, VA 24502.

APPENDIX V

Referral in the event of a participant encounter psychological stress during or after the interview



Safari File Edit View History Bookmarks Window Help Islamic Center at NYU - Available Services

http://icnyu.org/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=58&Itemid=112

What Community Should Feel Like

Home About Programs Alumni Students Calendar Donate Speakers Bureau

Available Services

SHARE THIS: [Icons]


The Islamic Center at NYU's Social Services program works closely with New York University's Mental Health and Social Work Department at the Student Health Center. This collaboration has allowed for the creation of a cross-referral system to best meet the students' needs. Services provided through the mental health center include:

- short-term individual counseling
- group therapy
- crisis response services
- short-term pharmacological treatments/short-term case management services

Supportive services provided by the Islamic Center Social Services include:

- individual counseling
- career counseling
- pre-marriage/marriage counseling
- family stressors/conflict

ICNYU Podcasts



Upcoming Events

11.04.2010	Zuhr Prayer
	The Islamic Center's Prayer...
11.04.2010	Introductory Arabic
	Introductory Arabic Class ...
11.04.2010	Asr Prayer
	The Islamic Center's Prayer...
11.04.2010	Maghrib Prayer
	The Islamic Center's Prayer...
11.04.2010	Thursday Iftar
	The Islamic Center invites ...

◀BACK

APPENDIX VI

Approval from Institutional Review Board

From: IRB, IRB
Sent: Monday, January 17, 2011 9:52 AM
To: Javed, Alfonse
Cc: Holland, Clarence Chick; IRB, IRB; Garzon, Fernando
Subject: IRB Approval 1021.011411: Muslim Pakistani and Indian Students in American School System in the Aftermath of 9/11

Good Morning Alfonse,

We are pleased to inform you that your above study has been approved by the Liberty IRB. This approval is extended to you for one year. If data collection proceeds past one year, or if you make changes in the methodology as it pertains to human subjects, you must submit an appropriate update form to the IRB. Attached you'll find the forms for those cases.

Thank you for your cooperation with the IRB and we wish you well with your research project. We will be glad to send you a written memo from the Liberty IRB, as needed, upon request.

Sincerely,

Fernando Garzon, Psy.D.
IRB Chair
Associate Professor
Liberty University
1971 University Blvd.
Lynchburg, VA 24502
(434) 592-4054

Table 1

Table 1			
<i>Islamic Extremism a Threat to Your Country?</i>			
	Yes*	No	DK
Morocco	73	18	9=100
Pakistan	52	27	21=100
Turkey	47	34	19=100
Indonesia	45	50	5=100
Lebanon	26	66	8=100
<i>Christians</i>	<i>53</i>	<i>42</i>	<i>5=100</i>
<i>Muslims</i>	<i>4</i>	<i>35</i>	<i>11=100</i>
Jordan	10	87	3=100
<p><i>Note.</i> Adapted from “Pew Research Center Global Attitudes Project, <i>Islamic Extremism: Common Concern for Muslim and Western Publics.</i>” Support for Terror Wanes Among Muslim Publics reported on 07.14.05.</p>			

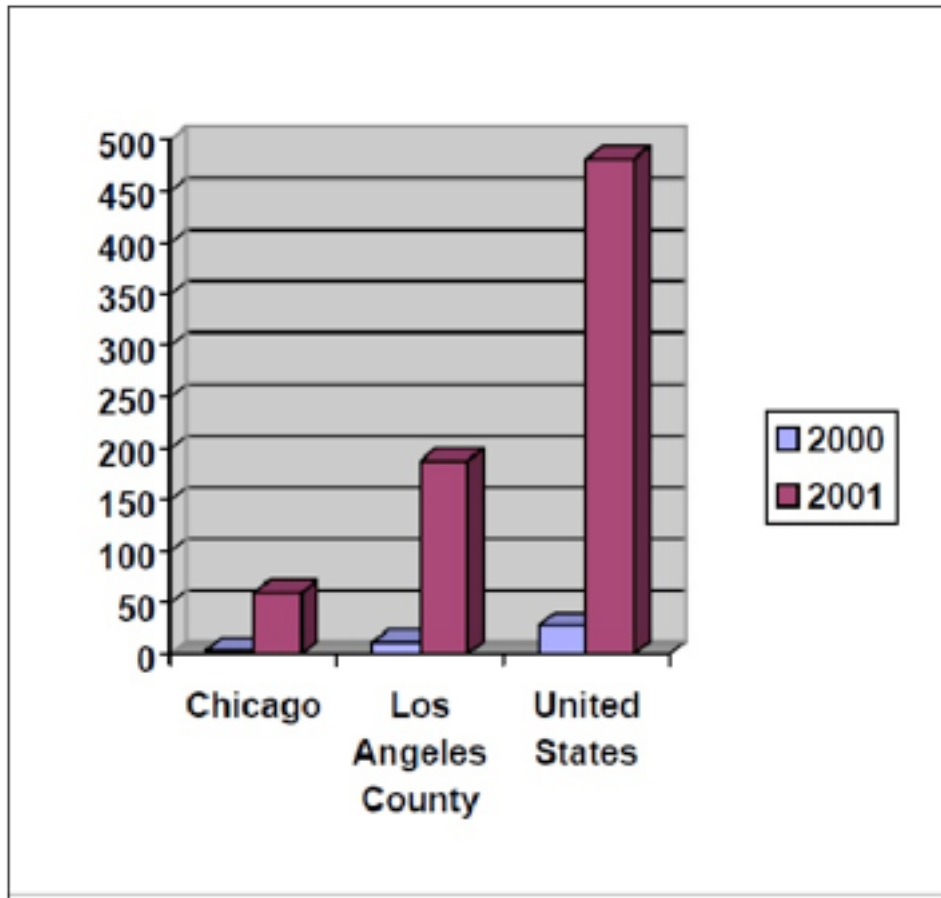
Table 2

Table 2				
<i>Support for suicide bombing declines: Violence against civilians justified</i>				
	Often/Sometimes %	Rarely %	Never %	DK %
Jorden	57	31	11	1=100
Summer 2002	43	22	26	8=99
Lebanon	39	19	33	10=101
Summer 2002	73	9	12	6=100
Pakistan	25	19	46	21=100
March 2004	41	8	35	17=101
Summer 2002	33	5	38	23=99
Indonesia	15	18	66	1=100
Summer 2002	27	16	54	3=100
Turkey	14	6	66	13=100
March 2004	15	9	67	9=100
Summer 2002	13	7	64	14=98
Morocco	13	5	79	3=100
March 2004	40	15	38	8=101
<i>Note.</i> Adapted from “Pew Research Center Global Attitudes Project, <i>Islamic Extremism: Common Concern for Muslim and Western Publics.</i> ” Support for Terror Wanes Among Muslim Publics reported on 07.14.05.				

Figure 1

Figure 1

Anti-Muslim or Anti-Arab hate crime during the years 2000 and 2001

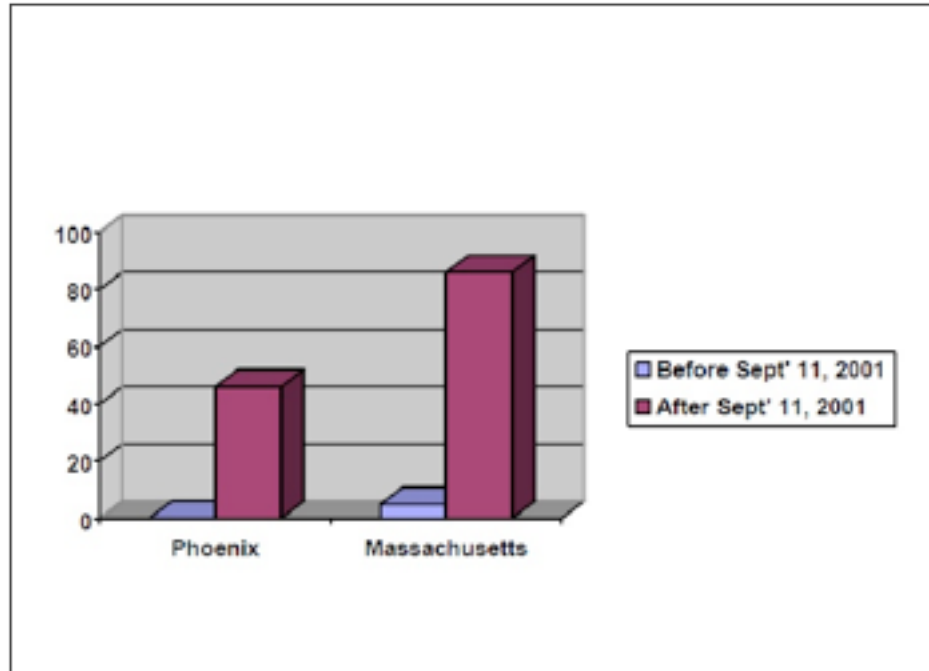


Note. Adapted from “*The September 11 Backlash.*” Human Rights Watch, 2006.

Figure 2

Figure 2

Anti-Arab and Muslim crimes during 2001 and before and after september 11, 2001.



Note. Adapted from “*The September 11 Backlash.*” Human Rights Watch, 2006.

