

Youth, Community and Education

A study on Australian Muslim Youth

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DECLARATION

I, Seyed Alavi Sherifdeen, declare that the EdD thesis entitled Youth, Community and Education A study on Australian Muslim Youth is no more than 60,000 words in length including quotes and exclusive of tables, figures, appendices, bibliography, references and footnotes. This thesis contains no material that has been submitted previously, in whole or in part, for the award of any other academic degree or diploma. Except where otherwise indicated, this thesis is my own work.

Signed

Date

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DEDICATION

To my beloved father, a dedicated teacher Seyed Abdus Samad Alim Seyed Sherifdeen who was my initial inspiring role model and the one who ignited the urge of serving and educating the community in my heart. His life -till the last breath of his life for those perceived too disadvantaged to be educated- remains my permanent reminder to serve the community;

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And finally to everyone who are committed in educating the poor in transformative ways and supporting the oppressed.

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ABSTRACT

This study investigated notions of identity, education and expectations of Australian born Muslim youth from Sunni Muslim migrant communities in Melbourne. The selected group included Australian Born Muslim Youth (ABMY) who believed in core Islamic beliefs and who embedded religious teachings in their daily lives. Data was collected in two stages. Initially 150 Questionnaires were distributed to ABMY, 39 were completed and returned. 10 ABMY, 5 parents and 5 community leaders were also interviewed. Factors shaping the identity of ABMY and their religious education, expectations of their parents have been investigated. Data collected indicated that ABMY preferred to be identified as ‘Australian Muslims’. They learn about religion from a variety of sources including study circles, printed materials and online resources. Parents expected their children to learn and follow their religious teachings. Community members expected ABMY to interact and contribute to their religion and the greater society. All ABMY involved in this study saw their future as challenging and hopeful. As a result their sense of Australian identity remained solid amid challenges they face.

CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

There are people who belong to more than one world, speak more than one language (literally and metaphorically), inhabit more than one identity, have more than one home; who have learned to negotiate and translate between cultures, and who, because they are irrevocably the product of several interlocking histories and cultures, have learned to live with, and indeed to speak from, difference. They speak from the 'in-between' of different cultures. (Hall, 1996, p. 2)

Worldwide realities that result in globalisation, conflicts, war, politics, terrorist events, rapid development of technology and other factors have relocated or displaced many people all over the world. Travelling to distant places and living there temporarily, permanently or migration to another country is no longer considered rare events in anyone's life. According to Real Instituto Elcano, from 1960 to 2005 the number of international immigrants has increased from 75 million to 191 million (Sandell, 2007). Australia has inevitably become one of the chosen migration destinations for many people across the world. After the Second World War, the country welcomed more than six million migrants.

Nearly one in four Australians were born overseas (Ruddock, 2003). According to official Australian statistics by The Department of Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs, from the years 2005-6 till 2009-10, 789,704 people have reached Australian shores. They come from all over the world. For the years 2010-11 another 168,700 migrants are due to land upon Australian shores (Department of Immigration and Citizenship, n.d). Migrants to Australia include

different ethnic and religious groups from many parts of the world. (Department of Immigration and Citizenship. 2010)

Muslims are also among the many people who have migrated and continue to migrate to Australia, they migrate for various reasons. It has been argued that official numbers of Muslim migrations are not reflected in census data or statistics and their numbers are higher than what is reported by census.¹ In addition, there also are debates within the Muslim community about the validity of the census data collected as not all Muslims declare their religious affiliation while completing census. However, according to the 2006 Australian census, there were 340,394 Muslims which amounts to 1.7 per cent of the total Australian population. While Christianity is the major religion in Australia, Islam is the third largest religion after Buddhism. The Muslim community is not a single homogeneous community. It includes people from more than 120 different countries (DFAT, 2008), who come from various ethnic groups, cultures and languages. The current Australian Muslim community includes 36.5 per cent of Australian born, second and third generation Muslims, which is the single largest group of the Australian Muslim population. Out of this, almost half are under 24 years old (Matthews, 2007; Saeed, 2003, p. 2).

While commenting on Australian Muslim community, Wise & Ali (2008, p.11) point out its diversity pattern, as follows:

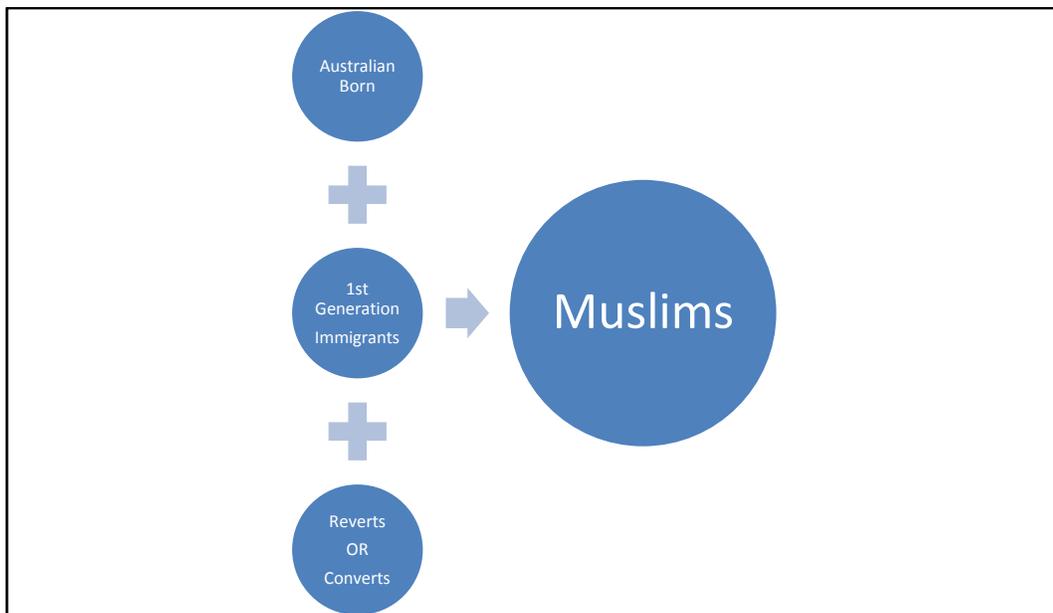
Contrary to popular discourse, Muslims-Australians are a heterogeneous community. Muslim communities in Australia come from a range of theological traditions and encompass different cultural, sectarian, linguistic, and ethnic values. This means that Muslims in Australia practice their cultures according to the cultural traditions of their individual countries and in some cases according to different ethnic traditions within these national cultural traditions. The religious and cultural diversity of Muslim-Australians has its origins in the post-World War

¹ Taken from <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/muslimnetmelbourne/message/3824>.

II national mass immigration program initiated by the Australian government to recruit immigrants for national development.

As shown in Figure 1, the current Australian Muslim community is comprised of three main subgroups: first generation immigrants who migrated to Australia, Australian born Muslims and new Muslims – who are called either reverts or converts. They are the new Muslims who have accepted Islam as their new religion. It is unfortunate that no accurate official numbers of new Muslims were available when this research was conducted.

FIGURE 1: MUSLIMS OF AUSTRALIA



Of the total Muslim population, youth who are 29 years or under make up 58.6 per cent of the total Muslim population. According to Department of Immigration and Citizenship, this is largely because most are Australian born second generation Muslims. Out of Australian born Muslims, 81 per cent are under the age of 25. (Department of Immigration and Citizenship, n.d) Hence the proportion of youth in

the Muslim community is very high. This is the main reason why Muslim youth issues need to be addressed in the context of broader Muslim community issues.

Hasan (2009), based on his research on Australian Muslims, has listed the composition of Australian Muslim population based on their countries of origin. This is shown in Table 1. According to Hasan and featuring in this order in term of size after Australian born Muslims, immigrants from Lebanon, Turkey, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Iraq, Bosnia make up the Australian Muslim Population.²

TABLE 1 MUSLIMS IN AUSTRALIA BY COUNTRY OF BIRTH

Country of birth	Australian Muslims (%)
Australia	38
Lebanon	9
Turkey	7
Afghanistan	5
Pakistan	4
Bangladesh	4
Iraq	3
Bosnia-Herzegovina	2
Iran, Fiji, India	2 each

Source: ABS, 2006 census, Special Tabulations

As this study deals with issues of the Muslim community, it is paramount to understand the long Islamic history of Australia. In order for Australian society to be inclusive of Muslim faith, it is important to firstly acknowledge their migration history.

Muslim settlements of Australia started as early as the sixteenth century – before European settlement. Macassan fishermen, who were trading with Aboriginals, were the first Islamic visitors. In the early nineteenth century the arrival of Afghan camel drivers marked a significant increase in Muslim migration

² based on Australian 2006 census data.

to Australia. This semi-permanent Muslim population came in the 1800s and they played a significant role in transportations to inland areas. Later, in 19th and 20th centuries, Muslims were recruited from Dutch and British colonies in Southeast Asia to work in the pearling industry. The Muslim community established their first mosque in Marree in Northern South Australia in 1861 followed by the construction of the major mosque built in Adelaide in 1890. However actual migration started in the mid-twentieth century, following World War II. As quoted by Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) 'Between 1947 and 1971 the Muslim population increased from 2704 to 22 311, as European Muslims, mainly Cypriot Turks, sought a new life in Australia. Lebanese migrants, many of whom were Muslims, began arriving in larger numbers after (DFAT, 2008). Thus Muslim migration process and population started to grow. This has meant a shift from a migrant community into a local Australian community. Currently the number of Australian youth of 29 years or under now outnumber the rest of the Muslim population (Saeed, 2009). Coming years will testify how this will impact on the Muslim community and on the Australian population at large.

Muslim migrant communities in Australia, like other communities, have their own religion, values and traditions. They have established mosques and other welfare associations to cater for their religious and social needs. The Muslim population resides in all main cities in Australia. However, according to the 2006 census, their main concentration is in Sydney and Melbourne. Based on this census, Sydney had 160,648 Muslims, while Melbourne had 104,185 Muslims. The third largest Muslim concentration was found in Perth where 21,676 Muslims were living. Of the Muslims in the remaining capital cities, Brisbane had 14,104, Adelaide had 9,952, Canberra had 4,523 and Darwin and Hobart had less than 654 and 601, respectively (Matthews, 2007).

Out of this non-homogeneous Muslim community, there are two main Muslim groups: the *Sunnis* and the *Shiaas*. Within these groups there are many sub-groups based on views they may support and follow from the way they interpret the

primary sources of Islam: the *Quran* and the Sayings of Prophet Muhammad, which is called *Hadith*. *Hadith* has been compiled by many scholars and, after the *Quran*, is considered to be one of the primary sources of Islam.

It is natural to expect a community with diverse ethnic origins to be influenced by a number of factors that shape notions of identity, belonging and current realities.

Context

Current Realities

The reasons for migration of Muslims to Australia vary from person to person; it ranges from employment of camel riders, skilled migrants seeking better prospects, to attaining refugee or asylum seeker status. These diverse groups are reflected in the various combination of the Australian Muslim community, which is comprised of multi-ethnic and mono-religious groups. Migrants travel from different parts of the world and arrive with different cultural backgrounds, religious faiths and cultural values. It is a fact that the Australian culture, a culture typically aligned with Western cultural values, differs vastly from the Muslim culture associated with other nations (Palmer & Gallab, 2001). When they reach a country like Australia, they need to learn how to sustain themselves and build new lives within new social and cultural environments. As a result, Muslim migrants arriving in Australia have typically needed to go through different stages of adjustment in order to settle in.

While the first generation of Muslim migrants and refugees went through the complex process of settling into an Australian life, their offspring, second and third generation Muslims, found a very different situation from that experienced by their parents. Perceptions, ideologies and even the thinking styles of their children born and brought up in Australia, are unlikely to be the same as their own. This is also tied to notions of identity, religion and other values. The generation gap within the

Muslim community, created between parents and ABMY, therefore needs to be considered. It plays a significant role in cultural encounters between ABMY, parents and local Muslim communities.

Geographical locations, as well as geopolitical and social environments, also contribute to the formation of Muslim identity. In this process some adjustments are needed between the society and migrants as Lacey (2008) notes: “it is inevitable in this process that the host society changes as well as the migrants”. Thatcher and Zhu (2006) explain that “external situational or contextual factors may influence behaviours and activities that, in turn, shape self-perceptions. Alteration in habitual routines may introduce new elements that enrich, expand and alter an identity ” (p.1077).

There are many cultural, religious and traditional differences between Muslims living in Muslim majority countries and those living as minorities in non-Muslim countries. The conditions of minority populations, and the problems they face, are totally different from those experienced by majority’s ethnic and religious living across global continents. The situation of Muslims living in the West is much different from those Muslims living as majority or minority groups in Asia or Africa. Some of these differences pointed out by Gallis et.al (2005):

Muslim populations in each country differ widely, with a preponderance of south Asians in Britain, North Africans in France, and Turks in Germany, but each country also has a range of ethnic groups and languages represented in its overall Muslim population. These populations have different historical and cultural backgrounds, may follow different strains of Islam, or, as in Germany, may be largely secular (p. crs 2).

Muslims in the West are a new addition to the Western world. Their Muslim identity in the West has its own characteristics and complexities: they form new, unique combinations and the Muslim identity in the West is a widely debated area among researchers (Yasmeen, 2008). Often they are questioned on identity, assimilation and integration. In Australia, there are varied identities that surface in relation to ABMY: Australian, Muslim Australian, Australian Muslim, and others. When questioned as to whether they are Australian or Muslim, some ABMY find it

very difficult to give a one-word answer as they already have roots in many cultures, languages and ethnic origins. Locked in definitions of either Muslim or Australian identities are problematic and pose a threat to Australian identification as a multicultural nation that is tolerant of difference.

Recent events related to terrorism such as the September 11 (2001) bombings of the World Trade Centre in New York, the Bali bombings (October, 2002) and the London bombings (July, 2005), have made Islam and Muslims a focus in the media. In these terrorist events such as the London train bombings (2005), British born Muslim youth were accused of the plot. In Australia terrorism related arrests (Yasmine, 2007) of Muslim youth have been reported. The involvement or suspected role of Western born Muslim youth in terrorism related activities has raised many concerns for local government and law enforcement authorities. As a result, the focus on Muslim youth has increased. Further, hostility against ABMY using isolated events to portray the Muslim community in the West as misfits, has been noted in many instances by authors and politicians (Bolt, 2005; Taylor, 2011). Terrorism related events have created a paradigm of suspicion towards Muslims. As Imtoul (2006, p.2) described 'each of these events, because the "enemy" has been constructed as Muslim, has resulted in a wave of open hostility and negativity towards all Muslims'. This applies to the Australian context as well.

Questions that arise are how do negative events, reports and circumstances affect the formation of identity of ABMY? What stand will ABMY take while they are experiencing these occurrences in their lives? These are some of the questions this study tries to investigate. It must be acknowledged that there have been many projects initiated to understand Muslim issues and educate public about it. These are funded privately and or by the Australian government. Wise & Ali (2008) have listed some of these initiatives.

Identity

There are a number of definitions of 'identity'. It has been noted that religion, language, country of residence, race, ethnicity, class and other factors contribute to its formation. As Latham (2006, p. 67), suggests:

identities are made up of values, beliefs and goals. In brief, identities are who we are. Gender, race, class, culture and sexuality also inform who we are and how we are positioned in the world.

When any particular factor or factors influence identity formation more strongly than others, it becomes the deciding factor on the kind of vision that follows. It must be noted that identity is an evolving process of becoming rather than simply being (Dillon, 1999) and it can shift over time due to personal and other changes (Nagel, 2005).

Migration to a different country often contributes to shaping the identity of the particular group and their subsequent generations. While many people carry static identities, there are others who carry many identities, speak different languages and live among many ethnic-cultural environments. As Hall (1996) asserts, there are people who belong to many worlds. Factors like language, physical location or culture cannot be singled out to determine one's identity, as there are people who share many of these factors. Often these identities have time limitations and from time to time it may emerge different forms. A person who claims a particular identity may change it later when a different situation or environment is found (Burke, 2006; Gregg, 2007)

There is more than one universal definition of identity for Muslims. As Findlow (2000) notes, 'there is a wide diversity of identity constructs in the Muslim world, and within Arab-Muslim world...modern Muslim identity has tended to be based on narrowly defined images' (p.1). Some Muslim religious scholars like Maududi (1974) argue that a Muslims' identity is based on their religion rather than their race, language or the region they come from. According to him there is no value for

any race, colour or language as far as Islamic identity is concerned. An individual of Islamic faith therefore may have multiple other values, however; religious identity supersedes the rest. Islamic identity is often defined by appearance, dress codes and food eaten. Often all those born to Muslim parents are taken as Muslims. However, it must be understood that not all those born in Muslim families may not necessarily identify themselves as Muslims and practice its traditions. Chapter 2 has detail discussion on Muslim identity as applied to ABMY.

The role of the religion and how it functions as a social identity and a belief system is undeniable. This has been pointed out by Ysseldyk et.al (2011, p.60) ‘Consideration of religion’s dual function as a social identity and a belief system may facilitate greater understanding of the variability in its importance across individuals and groups.’ Other religious identities go further than social identities of many individuals as it has been pointed out “preeminence of religious identification over other social identities in the lives of many individuals” (Ysseldyk et.al 2011, p.60).

Saeed and Akbarzadeh (2001, p.5) explain how the younger generation of Australian Muslims manage their identity with religious and national values.

In the Australian context Muslims, especially second and third generation Muslims, are adding a new layer to their identity. They are developing a certain bond with Australia which, in most cases, is not at the expense of their Islamic and ethnic heritage. Their Australianness complements and puts into perspective their Muslim identity and their ethnic traditions. The result may be a hybrid Islamic Identity based on commitment to the secular norms of Australian society and Islamic/ethnic traditions.

This explanation of how hybrid identities of second and third generation Muslims are formed. It needs to be acknowledged that in order to understand identity issues of second and consequent generation of Muslims of Australia, these factors should be taken into account.

Religiosity

Since the focus of this study is only on religious Muslim youth, it is important to understand the meaning of religiosity within a Muslim context.

In general, the role of religion or religious teachings plays a vital role within any community as pointed out by Dummit (2004):

The role of religion in the production of identity is not just a question of significant philosophical or theological importance but is one that possesses intriguing political, economic, and social implications as well.

Even though the role of religion varies between religions and people, for Islamic scholars like Maududi (1974) Islam is not only a religion but also a complete code of life. If this is the case it is expected that religion will play a major role in the lives of Muslims and ABMY. That is why it is necessary to look at the role of religion and whether it has any particular role in the lives of ABMY in shaping their identities.

Religiosity is a multi-dimensional concept which has many definitions. It becomes more complicated when anyone attempts to scale it. Gordon, Faulkner, & Warland (1976, p. 866) highlight that 'Most researchers have concluded that religion cannot be conceived as a single, all-encompassing phenomenon'. They have summarised selected studies carried out using multidimensional measures of religiosity. The number of dimensions in all of these studies varies from a minimum of three to a maximum of ten; however, belief, experience and rituals are common dimensions listed in majority of these studies. Their findings derive from studies based on the Western Judeo-Christian tradition.

From an Islamic point of view, dimensions of measurability of religiosity have been indicated in one of the sayings of Prophet Muhammad. Prophet Muhammad has defined the basic Islamic terms: *Islam*, *Iman* and *Ihsan*.³

³ Translations taken from Ibrahim, E. & Davies, D. (1976). An-Nawawis Forty Hadith, Beirut: Dar Al-Koran Al-Kareem.

Islam: ‘Islam is that you should testify that there is no deity save Allah and that Muhammad is His Messenger, that you should perform Salat (ritual prayer), pay the zakah, fast during Ramadan, and perform Hajj (pilgrimage) to the House (the Ka’bah at Makkah), if you can find a way to it (or find the means for making the journey to it).’

Iman (Belief): ‘It is that you believe in Allah and His angels and His Books and His Messengers and in the Last Day, and in fate (qadar), both in its good and in its evil aspects.’

Ihsan: ‘It is that you should serve Allah as though you could see Him, for though you cannot see Him yet He sees you.’

These three areas: *Islam*, *Iman* and *Ihsan* outline the major dimensions of Islam. Prophet Muhammad has precisely defined it; hence measuring the religiosity of Muslims need to include all of these three values.

The five pillars of Islam as indicated by prophet Muhammad, include faith, five time daily prayers, fasting in the Islamic month of Ramadan, charity-giving to the poor yearly; pilgrimage-to Makkah once in a life time. The belief (*Iman*) includes six articles: belief in God, Angels, revelations, messengers (including David, Moses and Jesus), the last day and the fate. There are also clear instructions on what are considered the major prohibitions and crimes in Islam (Al-Qaradawi, 1960; Hammudah, 1998). The third part, *Ihsan*, is the one which is invisible and cannot be measured by another human being, i.e., it deals with the intentions of the individual with God.

Religiosity or religiousness must be based on the above guidelines, which is a very complicated area to be scaled. This is because religiosity is often viewed as a part of an individual’s consciousness and practices and is linked with the relationship between human beings and God, which is impossible to be tested accurately by another human being. Having a Muslim name or being born in to a Muslim family is not a criterion to judge someone’s religiosity or affiliation to

Islam. It is not possible to measure the Islamic religiosity as Athar (2000) pointed out;

One cannot judge Islam by looking at those individuals who have a Muslim name but in their actions, they are not living or behaving as Muslims. The extent of being a Muslim can be according to the degree to which one is submitting to the will of God, in his beliefs and his actions.

Athar (2000) explains that ‘Muslim‘ means one who submits to the will of God. This is achieved by declaring that ‘there is no God except one God and Muhammad is the messenger of God’. In a broader sense, ‘anyone who willingly submits to the will of God is a Muslim. Submission to God is further explained by Athar (2000) who stated;

All the prophets preceding the prophet Muhammad are considered Muslims. The *Quran* specifically mentions Abraham who lived long before Moses and Christ that, he “he was not a Jew or a Christian but a Muslim” because, he had submitted to the will of God. Thus there are Muslims who are not submitting at all to the will of God and there are Muslims who are doing their best to live an Islamic life.

According to the Islamic point of view, Muslims should submit themselves to the will of God. Further, the life from birth to death is considered as worshiping time for God as prescribed in the *Quran* (Adh-Dhariyat 51:56): ‘And I (Allâh) created not the *jinn*s and humans except they should worship Me (Alone)’. Islam has not differentiated worship from the normal routine of life, but expects that all life, including family social and political is based on the divine guidance as prescribed from the *Quran* and *Hadeeth* (sayings of Prophet Muhammad).

Religious observation varies from person to person. Some may be more active while others may be less. Many attempt to assess religiosity of individuals based on their visible religious observation. However, it must be acknowledged that judging people religiosity may not be absolutely accurate in Islam, in fact it can be

dangerous. The Islamic principal of *Ihsan*, which is the inner feeling of any individual towards God and sincerity, cannot be measured by any other human being other than the same person. If an individual states that s/he is a very religious person and the person's visible attitudes and behaviours are not contradicting the religious guidelines then this can be taken as an indication of the person's religiosity as it has been defined in this study. Even in Australian context Muslims can be classified into four categories as in the figure 2 based on their understanding of religion and their commitments for its message. It is not unusual to find categories of Muslims within Australian community based on their religiosity.

After the background and the context of the study with the definition of major terms (identity and religiosity) explained, it is necessary to present how the topic was chosen for this study.

Choice of the Topic

I have been involved with Melbourne's Muslim community as a youth worker and teacher during the period 1998-2002, and have built up a relationship of trust during this time. My experience with the Australian Muslim community, especially with Muslim youth as a youth worker and educator, assisted me to better understand the mindset and views of ABMY. Diverse ethnic communities have many different traditions and cultural values. My personal experiences in Australia, initially as an international student then as an immigrant to Australia also assisted me to differentiate cultural differences between communities and what role they play in relation to identities and religious values of ABMY. My undergraduate studies in Arabic and Islamic culture greatly assisted me in comprehending the fine but sharp difference between cultural and religious values, and the confusions that surround them.

My passion with this topic evolved from my initial interactions with ABMY in 1995. I had strong faith that this study would add value to the lives of ABMY, in

particular, and the Australian community in general. Being a country that supports and encourages multiculturalism, any studies in Australia of ethnic communities – especially those associated with youth values – would be a welcome contribution to ongoing efforts to create harmony and mutual understanding between diverse religious, cultural and ethnic communities.

I also believed this body of research would make a significant contribution to researchers and educators for further research and developments of concepts. Under the current political and social setup in Australia, few people have the opportunity to collect data and to undertake research like mine. My familiarity with this group of people over an extended period of time greatly assisted me in carrying out this research.

Objectives and Research Questions

Objectives

The Muslim community is comprised of a significant percentage of younger generation Muslims; this generation is growing. Of the wider young Australian Muslim population, this group of practicing Muslims may be small in numbers, but they are an active core within the Australian Muslim community. Even though Muslim community institutions such as schools and mosques are run by community groups or leaders, it is the ABMY who dominate the use of mosques, prayer rooms and community facilities. Youth activities, youth conferences, workshops, lectures, summer camps and many other activities are initiated, run and managed by this group of people.

Due to effects of globalization and the heterogeneity of the Australian Muslim community, the Muslim community -and especially ABMY –face a set of uniquely different situations in relation to values and identity. Amongst the wider Australian community, their actual views and factors shaping their identity need to be

identified. Identity and background, and issues related to this silent strong group- the group of Muslim youth within the wider Australian Born Muslim Youth- have not yet been defined nor have they been investigated. Undefined or vaguely understood notions of the identity of ABMY, and other related issues, create difficulties for outsiders to comprehend.

Australian policy makers, educators and government officials others need to comprehend the complex situation of determining how to deal effectively with issues related to ABMY in terms of their current and future existence and their role in making a positive contribution to Australia. Very careful approach is required as identity issues, religious beliefs and ideologies among broader Islamic community and the young generation in from different ethnic origins have its variations.

The Australian government has taken many initiatives towards understanding needs of the community, especially the needs of Australian youth. The Minister for youth, the Hon Kate Ellis MP launched a national youth strategy⁴ on 14th April 2010 to assist young Australians to take charge of their lives. This strategy highlighted eight priority areas for the government (Ellis, 2010). Shaping youth's future through education, supporting them within their families, empowering them to take an active part in their communities are some of the priorities related to this study.

The broad focus of this study is to investigate this complicated and vaguely understood area of Muslim identity. Notions of identity of ABMY are the primary focus of this study which will be studied along with issues related to their daily encounters in Australia. The study will further investigate ABMY in relation to their understandings, learning and commitments to their religion. Further expectations of parents and community from ABMY and intergenerational gaps of identity, being a Muslim in Australia will also be discussed.

⁴ <http://www.youth.gov.au/media/Pages/NationalYouthStrategy.aspx>

Participants

The ABMY involved in this study include only Sunni Australian Born Muslim Youth, for whom one, or both parents were born overseas and who immigrated to Australia. These ABMY are currently living in the Melbourne metropolitan area in the state of Victoria. Victoria is a state where over 30 per cent of Australian Muslims live (Matthews, 2007). Melbourne was selected as one of the major cities where Muslims live in large numbers and in which the immigrants' forbears originated from different parts of the world.

It is essential to define the term 'Muslim' and how it is used in this study. There are many definitions given to the term 'Muslim', depending on the groups of people doing the defining. In this study the term Muslim has been defined specifically as any person who declares the basic Islamic beliefs and practices its commands in their daily lives. In this study ABMY are defined as all those young people between the age of 18 to 30 who believe in the basic Islamic doctrine of one God and that his last messenger is Muhammad PBUH, and who practice basic religious rituals such as praying five times a day and fasting in Ramadan.

In addition to this definition participants involved in this study will align themselves as not being involved publically in acts which are prohibited in Islam such as drinking alcohol, gambling or engaging in any sexual relationships out of wedlock. In this study, the definition does not extend beyond these public appearances and acts of ABMY; it is not involved in testing their religiosity in their private lives.

Rationale

Understanding the minds and thinking of this ABMY generation is necessary for the creation of policy or developments which include them. Hence it is crucial to have their input into any policy making process. This study focuses on this particular group – the ABMY; however, in doing this, it also provides information about the influence of family, environment and current events in the formation of

identity construction. This study attempts to find out the ways in which their faith links to their identity, family, community and the wider social context.

This study is timely as the focus on Muslim youth born in the West has been intensified by the events of September 11 (2001) in the US, bomb blasts in Bali (2002), Cronulla riots in Sydney (2005), Mumbai attacks in India (2008) and other terrorist events. This study intends to contribute to the efforts in Australia to understand this entity. This research will also benefit researchers, community leaders, and social workers. Although there are efforts made to study ABMY, no specific studies have been carried out on practicing ABMY to date.

The following quotes give a clear message that belonging to any religious faith should be based on the free will of every human being. Article 18 of The Universal Declaration of Human Rights of UN states:

Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion; this right includes freedom to change his religion or belief, and freedom, either alone or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief in teaching, practice, worship and observance.⁵

Section 116 in Chapter 5 of Australian constitution states:

The Commonwealth shall not make any law for establishing any religion, or for imposing any religious observance, or for prohibiting the free exercise of any religion, and no religious test shall be required as a qualification for any office or public trust under the Commonwealth.⁶

The UN's Universal Declaration of Human Rights clearly indicates that everyone has full freedom of religion, as does the second quote, which shows how the Australian constitution supports the free exercise of religion. It is desirable that

⁵ <http://www.un.org/en/documents/udhr/index.shtml>

⁶ <http://www.aph.gov.au/senate/general/constitution/chapter5.htm>

everyone should feel comfortable to practice their religious faiths and experience it freely without any restrictions.

Muslim youth in the West of Melbourne have not been given an enormous amount of media attention until recently. The Muslim community has been through experiences similar to other migrant communities when they reached Australian shores. However global terrorist attacks followed by the war on terror actions by the US, UK, Australia and India has radically sparked focus on the Muslim community in general and raised many questions. These themes have hit headlines and often become themes for public comments as Akbarzadeh (2006) has rightly pointed out:

The question of Muslim integration into the broader society, the social implications of multiculturalism and the security threat posed by home-grown extremists are themes that keep popping up in public commentary on Muslims and Islam.

As this study was initiated shortly after the major terrorist attack on September 11, 2001 in the US and consequent attacks in UK and Bali in Indonesia there were lots of media attention which linked Muslims due to alleged involvement of few Muslims in these attacks. Some politicians also used this as an excuse to take anti Muslim stand. In Australia there are still few politicians⁷ expressing clear anti-Islamic/Muslim statements and media reports them. Chapter 2 provides details of these anti Muslim stands.

As stated earlier the Australian Muslim community is not a single homogeneous community: it is comprised of many ethnic communities and sections. Hence it is natural to find many sections, groups and different ideologies among Muslims.

Out of the total Muslim community, the potent force is its religious youth who are active within the community, regular in their daily prayers and other religious

⁷ <http://www.theage.com.au/national/abbott-rejects-mps-islam-remark-20110218-1azwi.html>

obligations. Future leaders of the Muslim community probably would come from those ABMY who identify themselves as Muslims and committed to practice their religion in their daily lives. Therefore, it is very important that policy makers and educators – in particular – need to understand the background of identity, perceptions and expectations of this type ABMY; only then will any initiatives with ABMY produce fruitful results.

Without knowing the ABMY – their voices and perceptions about their identity and sense of belonging – it is difficult to make policies and regulations that will meet their needs. Do they live as average Australians or do they live in isolation? These are a few questions which arise. How the community looks at them and what the community wants from these local groups of youth will also be examined. This study attempts to investigate ABMY's views on these matters.

This study is timely as many questions regarding ABMY remain unanswered. Media, reports and others are confused with undefined terms of Muslims and Islam which is often described as 'Radical Islam'⁸ or 'Radical Muslims'⁹, 'Muslim extremism'¹⁰, 'Muslim terrorists'¹¹, '*wahhabies*'¹² and so on.

In order to balance the gender and to ensure women's voices are also heard, this study includes views of males and female members of ABMY. Most of the reports or studies carried out in the past on Muslim youth have dealt with anyone who claims to be Muslim. This study, however, was carried out in a unique setting where only practicing Australian Born Muslim youth, who identified themselves as Muslims, were selected. Hence, the data collected is very specific and contains only first-hand information.

⁸ <http://www.4bc.com.au/blogs/michael-smith-blog/radical-islam/20091105-hzf8.html>

⁹ <http://www.dailytelegraph.com.au/news/opinion/preaching-death-and-dishonour/story-e6frezz0-111112852957>

¹⁰ <http://www.treasurer.gov.au/DisplayDocs.aspx?pageID=&doc=transcripts/2005/124.htm&min=phc>

¹¹ <http://www.australian-news.com.au/terrorists.htm>,

http://www.dfat.gov.au/publications/terrorism/transnational_terrorism.pdf

¹² <http://www.theaustralian.com.au/news/nation/muslims-warn-on-radicals-splinter/story-e6frg6nf-111112576424>

Finally, this study presents reflections of parents of ABMY who are migrants as well as the expectations of the community leaders about ABMY. By providing a snapshot of parent reflections, the data collected from all parties was able to highlight the inter-generation gap between ABMY and their parents. This study also provides reflection of the Australian Muslim and mainstream community leaders which sheds light on their views regarding ABMY.

Research Questions

The following research questions will guide this study.

1. What notions do ABMY have regarding their identity?
 - a. What does being Muslim mean to them?
 - b. What are the impacts of the contemporary Australian society on their construction of perceptions of identity?
 - c. What are the impacts of the local Muslim community on construction of perceptions of identity?
 - d. What are the impacts of the parents on construction of perceptions of identity?
 - e. What are the impacts of the family and friends on construction of perceptions of identity?
2. What is the understanding of Islam of ABMY?
 - a. What do they mean by Islam?
 - b. What are their sources of Islamic knowledge?
 - c. How much time do they commit to practicing Islam?
 - d. Who educates them in terms of religion?
3. How do others (e.g., parents and community members) contribute to the construction of identity of ABMY?
 - a. What do parents expect from ABMY?
 - b. What do community leaders expect from ABMY?

Research Setting

The scope of this study is limited to ABMY who currently live in the part of Melbourne Metropolitan Area (West), Victoria, Australia. Twelve ABMY between the ages of 18 and 30 were selected as samples for ABMY for the purpose of this research. As explained earlier, they were chosen, on the basis that one or both of their parents had migrated to Australia and each particular youth was born and brought up in Melbourne, Australia. Sometimes they were identified as second generation. The second generation in this study has been defined as defined in the study of Khoo, McDonald and Giorgas (2002): ‘as persons born in Australia with one or both parents born in an overseas country’ (p. iv). Finally, ABMY involved in this research needed to not only believe in the basic beliefs of Islam but also practise the Islamic religion in their daily lives. Furthermore, this group of participants was chosen because were seen to be at the dawn of independent thinking and lifestyle. For this reason, I believed the group to be the best group to investigate their interpretation of identity. Studies conducted in Europe and the United States support this view that this age group shows strong signs of a re-formation of Islamic identities (Cesari, 2004; Schmidt, 2004).

The research was carried out in four stages. ABMY, their parents community leaders were interviewed in order to determine their views on ABMY. Data was collected from interviews with the groups identified above and analysed. The recommendations and conclusions derived from this analysis are presented in this thesis.

Significance of the Research

In the post September 11 era, the importance of research about the Muslim community has been highlighted; especially, the need for research about ABMY has been desperately felt. There were few initiatives from the government and

welfare organizations (Wise and Ali, 2008, pp. 143-212). Due to the growing populations many more are needed. The Australian government and organisations such as the Equal Opportunity Commissions have initiated many projects involving the Muslim community such as a Muslim reference group, leadership and mentoring skills for young Muslims, the Isma ('listen') -project and others (DFAT, 2008); however, there is a scarcity of Australian empirical research on ABMY. There is little research on Muslim youth in Australia (McGavin, 2008; Marshallsay, 2007); there is hardly any research specifically on ABMY that identifies them as Muslims or focuses on their religious practices. It is hoped that this research will fill this gap and make a contribution to addressing this deficit.

Contribution to Knowledge

This research will benefit interested researchers and planners of community development initiatives or programs. It will also be a source of reference for anyone interested in finding solutions for social, cultural, linguistic, religious, educational or other challenges young Muslim individuals face. Data findings of this study will eventually contribute to ongoing efforts for the creation of healthy multicultural communities that promote in peace and harmony. The outcomes of the research and recommendations will be made available to governmental and non-governmental agencies, which could eventually support policy formulations, educational programs and even reviews of current legislation.

Summary

This chapter has introduced the background, history of Muslims in Australia, the rationale of this study and its context. Chapter Two provides a review of literature related to the topic. It addresses mainly areas of identity, Muslim identity, and Muslim youth in the West and Australian Born Muslim Youth (ABMY).

Chapter Three describes the methodology adapted to do this research which covers research setting, design, data collection and analysis.

Chapter Four provides the results of data analysis from the survey while chapter five presents the data analysis of in-depth interviews with ABMY.

Chapter six presents data analysis of interviews with parents of ABMY and community leaders. This has two major sections. The first section presents data analysis on expectations of parents and community leaders and the second section presents on intergenerational gaps between ABMY and their parents.

Chapter seven presents the reflections, limitations and recommendations for the future.

CHAPTER TWO

Literature Review

Introduction

Even though minority Muslim communities have lived in many parts of the world, accumulations of Muslim migrants and the emergence of new Muslim generations are now visible in contemporary Western societies. Indeed, Muslim communities have established themselves as entities within other established communities. For these established communities, having an Islamic presence has led to a shift in the ways in which Muslim people are viewed by the West. This notion is supported by Nielson (1999), who describes the evolution of Muslim settlements in Europe in the following way:

It is now a new generation since Western Europeans began to notice that there were Muslim communities settling in our cities. The day of the temporary migrant worker had been replaced by the establishment of families in a process which was clearly going to be permanent. The first mosque started appearing and we began to pay attention. As we looked behind the superficial developments we discovered that there had been Muslims in Western Europe for a long time (p. xi).

While keeping the words of Nielson in mind we need to remember sentiments articulated by Bhatti (2006) when she reflects on the migrant worker in a globalised context as ‘both a resource and a challenge’ (p. 135). Furthermore, according to Mutalib (2005, p .68) ‘the global rise of Islam and events such as the September 11 attacks in the US only add to the problem for Muslim minorities worldwide’. An enhanced Muslim presence in the West has meant a transformation of how Muslims are perceived both globally and locally, from terms such as ‘migrant worker’, ‘overseas worker’ or ‘migrant settler with a migrant family’ to ‘second

generation children of Muslim origin', often used to indicate children born to migrant parents from many parts of the world. These latter terms affirm a greater acceptance of Muslim young people and their role in contributing to and making up the local community settings. The shift in nomenclature from 'Immigrant' to being recognised as 'European' or accepted as citizens in the West is significant and testifies to the transformational processes of Muslim communities in the West.

Despite a willingness of Western communities to accommodate Muslims, migration brings with it complex and challenging issues. These issues are manifested in differences of opinion tied to culture, religion, ideology, dress codes and values. These issues become more complicated when they concern the second or later generation of immigrants. As Ramadan (1999b, p. 2) points out, 'For those who have been brought up in Europe the question becomes even more complex' because second generation children are caught between two cultures with differing points of being and living in the world. Other studies carried out in among Arabic-speaking youth in South-western Sydney also support the complex process of ethnic identity formation (Noble, G., Poynting, S. & Tabar, P. (1999).

The same applies to many Australian born Muslim young people who are caught between two or more cultures and different ways of knowing. For these young people many questions about their identity formation arise. Do they identify as Muslims? Do they identify as Australian, or Australian Muslims or something else? These questions are also influenced by the Australian lifestyle and its impact upon notions of social, cultural and religious identity. These situations are common for second generation children in the West. There have been only a few studies (McGavin, 2008; Marshallsay, 2007) carried out specifically on Muslim youth in Australia; these studies are tied to this very theme.

Identity in the era of globalisation is constantly changing. Multiple identities are being constructed and they are shifting. Mort (1980, p.169) argues:

We carry a bewildering range of different, and at times conflicting, identities around with us in our heads at the same time. There is a continual smudging of personae and lifestyles depending where we are (at work, on the high street) and the spaces we are moving between.

Furthermore, recent world events, including the so called ‘war on terror’, have led to an increase in attention on Muslims in general and specifically on Muslim youth in Australia. Attending to Muslim youth has been the case in other parts of the Western world, as well; research on Muslim communities has been undertaken in response to the need to facilitate government, policy makers and other related agencies in providing input for their services.

This research attempts to draw attention to the literature that recognises identity construction for ABMY and highlights what research tells us about ABMY and how they learn and understand their religion. In addition, this chapter highlights how parents and community members of ABMY contribute to the shaping of their identity. These three themes will be examined further following a brief discussion on Muslim presence and its importance in the West. Firstly, the identity theme covers Muslim Identity, Muslim identity in the West in general and the identity of Muslim youth in the West. The second theme covers Islamic education and its status in the West as applied to ABMY, an area central to the thesis of this study. The third theme covers the contribution of parents in identity construction of ABMY.

Muslims in the West

As Muslim settlements in the West have become a visible reality, a Western version of Islam is already visible, as pointed out by Ramadan (2010, p.5):

Far from the media and political tensions, a constructive, in-depth movement is under way and Islam has become a Western religion. Western Islam is a reality,

just like African, Arab, or Asian Islam. Of course there is only one single Islam as far as fundamental religious principles are concerned, but it includes a variety of interpretations and a plurality of cultures. Its universality indeed stems from this capacity to integrate diversity into its fundamental oneness.

Given that Muslim presence in the West has been established, it is no longer possible to understand the history and the social evolution of Europe without taking into account its Muslim component (Allievi, 2003). Dittrich (2003, p. 8) stresses the same point by saying:

Muslim communities have grown rapidly in Europe in recent decades and Islam has emerged as the second religion in many European countries. The role of Islam is therefore no longer only a foreign policy matter, but has also become a domestic issue which needs to be addressed at local, national and European levels.

As the demography of Muslim populations change due to the growing numbers of Muslims in the West, it is interesting to note that the traditional classification of countries among Islamic jurists is also being reviewed. Islamic jurists traditionally categorise countries around the world as follows:

1. *Dar al Islam* (Islamic Land);
2. *Dar al Ahd* (domain of treaty); and
3. *Dar al Harb* (an abode of war).

These definitions are more appropriate when Muslims live as a majority dominant community. It is questionable how to apply these classifications while Muslims themselves live as minorities as they currently live in Western countries. I believe none of these classifications may apply for the situation of Muslim minorities where they live in small number. These countries cannot be defined as *Dar al Islam*, *Dar al Ahd* or *Dar al Harb*. As it is not ruled by Muslim dominant forces it cannot be called as *Dar al Islam*, as it has no formal (special) treaty with Muslims it cannot be called as *Dar al Ahd*, as these countries has no declared formal war

with Muslims it cannot be called as *Dar Al Harb*. Then how it should be defined according to above categories?

In the meantime, the current situation of Muslims in the West is under constant change and it is changing, as Dittrich (2003, p. 5) argues:

Young European Muslims ask themselves whether Europe should be considered (according to the ulama of the IX century) as a dar al-harb (an abode of war), rather than a dar al-Islam (a place where Muslims are a majority and live in security and according to the law). A group of young ulama living in Europe decided that Europe can no longer be considered as dar al-harb because there are too many Muslims who are becoming European. They decided that Europe is now dar-ul-Ahd – the “domain of treaty” or unity. This term implies a certain degree of social and civic responsibility and is not based on an “us” versus “them” concept.

This is referenced by the view of Said (2003, p.xvii) who commented on the importance of context and warned against creating binaries.

Every domain is linked to every other one, and that nothing that goes on in our world has ever been isolated and pure of any outside influence. The disheartening part is that the more the critical study of culture shows us that this is the case, the less influence such a view seems to have, and the more territorially reductive polarizations like “Islam v. West” seem to conquer.

Can the West for Muslims fall under the term *Dar al Ahd*? It is questioned by people like Ramadan who suggest a very different term. Dittrich (2003, p. 5) quotes Ramadan, saying:

To this question Tariq Ramadan, who advocates an “independent European Islam”, wrote that Europe should be seen as a Dar ash-Shahada, a “space of testimony” within which “Muslims are sent back to the essential teachings of Islam” so that they can contribute to “promoting good and equity within and through human brotherhood” by bringing the strengths of the Islamic message to their mostly non-Muslim societies.

This is an interesting development. Current Muslim existence in the West has prompted some to think beyond classical classifications to portray the current realities. Ramadan (2010, p. 5) places the responsibility on Muslim individuals rather than Muslims in general. He says that, 'It is up to Muslim individuals to be and become committed citizens, aware of their responsibilities and rights. Beyond the minority pretext or the temptation to see themselves as victims, they have the means to accept a new age of their history'. Ramadan, (2010, p. 5) goes on to say that for those Muslims who were born in the West or who took European citizenship 'it is no longer a question of 'settlement' or 'integration' but rather of 'participation' and 'contribution'. In contrast, Esposito (2010, p. 28) argues that:

...because of class structure and cultural attitudes, first- and second-generation European Muslims as well as recent immigrants feel that they will never be accepted as fully equal as British, French or German.

Dittrich (2006, p. 9) acknowledges that 'The aftermath of 9/11, and the Madrid and London bombings, have created an unfavourable climate for many Muslims in Europe and led to misconceptions and inaccurate stereotyping'. In Dittrich's view, 'distrust between Muslims and other communities is growing'. Consistent with this view, Saeed (2009, p. 2) states that 'there is a widely held assumption in the West that Muslims in the West constitute a serious threat to the very identity and existence of Western societies and their secular liberal values'. Saeed also voices the views of many others saying that this widely held Western assumption is 'alarmist, unfair and indeed dangerous' (p.2). As highlighted by Yasmeen (2008), Muslims accuse the media for its negative coverage of issues related to Islam and Muslims.

There have been a number of studies in recent times carried out with Muslims living in the West. Broad challenges for Muslims in Europe have been presented by Dittrich (2003) who outlined complex issues linked with the integration of Muslims in Europe and Islam, claiming that:

Conservative interpretations of Islam are increasingly challenged by “Western” values of tolerance, democracy and civil liberties. At the same time, young second- and third-generation Muslims feel uprooted, without any clear cultural identity, and experience a kind of cultural homelessness. (p. 13)

These add to the complexities of being a Muslim living in Western societies.

Saeed (2009, p. 2) argues that ‘in the West, Islam and Muslims are undergoing a process of indigenisation. This process will not lead to one uniform conception of Islam in the West’; he sees trends of Muslims in the West leading either to isolation or participation. Similarly, Yasmeeen (2008, p. iv) highlights, in Australia, a ‘perception of relative exclusion among Muslims’, arguing that:

The exclusion is apparent in increased incidents of harassment and the discourse on Australian values. Muslims feel that they can be both Muslim and Australian but perceive the wider community to be less accepting of this compatibility.

To add more complexities recently, a decade-long nation study revealed that nearly half of Australians are anti-Muslim.¹³

Apart from the ethnic and linguistic variations among Muslims in the West, based on affiliations to Islam, Muslims can be categorised as committed, practicing and nominal. Quoting the observation made by Tariq Ramadan that probably 50 per cent of Muslims are nominal, Saeed (2009, p. 3) argues that the same situation would apply to other parts of the West, and for these people Islam is ‘just an element of their cultural identity’. This view may be supported by Gallup polls on the importance of religion in their lives of people in the Western world. Esposito (2007, p. 47) reports that these polls reveal that only 68 per cent of respondents in the US and 28 per cent of respondents in the United Kingdom consider religion an important part of their lives. In contrast, the same polls in Muslim majority

¹³ It was reported by ABC on 23 Feb 2011, Retrieved from <http://www.abc.net.au/news/stories/2011/02/23/3146427.htm>

countries found that 98 per cent of respondents in Egypt, 96 per cent in Indonesia and 86 per cent in Turkey consider religion important to their lives.

Established Muslim settlements in the West have resulted in a number of views and interpretations. While some look at this as a positively, resulting in a different version of Islam; others view this negatively. Non-acceptance of Muslims by fellow citizens which results in isolation and/or exclusion of Muslims is also highlighted. (Woodlock, 2010; 2011). On the other hand, there are Muslims who are comfortable of being both Muslim and Westerner are also highlighted in the literature (e.g. Khaled, 2006; Ramadan, 1999b) Furthermore, Muslims can be categorised depending on the extent to which they are affiliated with their religion.

Women in Islam is an interesting and frequently discussed topic in the western media. While many argue that Islam values and respects women, since it does not discriminate between men and women in the application of separate rules for them (Maqsood, n.d; Badawi, 1980), others argue that Islam suppresses women and restricts their movements (Ali, 2004). The active participation of Muslim women in western societies is apparent in that there are many engaged in professional jobs. In Australia Muslim women have careers in many public professions including the role of police woman. This illustrates one of the ways in which Muslim women have adapted in their new society and extended their traditional role as housewives to progressively extend their presence in society, while maintaining their core beliefs.

Following the initial Muslim migration to Australia and settlement period, Muslim communities have been established and the needs of community including women's needs have begun to be addressed. It has been observed that Muslim women feel free to express their views in the public arena regarding religion. As Arwa El Misri (2011) has said recently:

I looked for my rights in Islam and I found that Islam is actually a feminist religion. Islam, hundreds of years ago, gave women the right to choose their

partner, to inherit, to work as they please. No other religion has outlined those rights. And for me, as a religious person, the word of God far outweighs the word of any human being. (Harvey, 2011, p.41)

However, it needs to be noted that the Islamic faith and practices differ between Muslim countries where Muslims are living in a majority community and non-Muslim countries where Muslims live as minorities such as in Western countries. While some practices of Muslims have two aspects: cultural and religious, some practices –between cultural and religious- are often misinterpreted even by Muslims and tensions become inevitable. Among Muslims there are those who want to preserve pre-modern cultural practices along which Islamic faith has been established and there are others who draw a fine line between cultural perspective and religious rules and argue that Muslims are required to practice only the religious rules. One of the good examples for with respect to female genital mutilation.¹⁴ This is still practiced in some parts of the world often in the name of Islam. There are people who support it and there are many others who oppose it saying there is no direct reference in the Islamic text (WISE).¹⁵

In these sorts of situations, in Muslim majority countries, authorities frequently create policies to implement rules and regulations in order to avoid any possible tensions. However, when this situation is applied to Muslim practices in the countries where Muslims live in minority communities such as in western countries, there can be tensions. In Europe as Uhlmann(2008) pointed out, Muslim communities have no formal structure or formal clergy. There are no single authorities in most of these countries. There are organizations or Imams which are often considered as the peak body of the community that has limited powers. There are instances where many such organisations claim that they are the peak bodies, but have no authority to address the leadership crisis. There are instances where

¹⁴ <http://www.jannah.org/genderequity/equityappendix.html>

¹⁵ http://www.wisemuslimwomen.org/images/uploads/WISE_Shura_Council_FGC_DigestStatement.pdf_.pdf.

one or many individual Muslim community members or even another Muslim organization/s refuse to accept the rules prescribed by the peak body of the community. This often leads to tensions or factions in the community.

Another important factor is that there are variations in interpreting the Islamic text among Muslim jurists and its followers. It often leads to tensions and disunity in the Muslim communities. For example the practice of *Niqab* (Face covering) or *Hijab* (Head covering) has different interpretations among Muslim jurists. Some argue for the *Niqab* or *Hijab*. Others who do not wear the *Niqab* or *Hijab* but claim that they are still Muslims. There are other women who wear *Niqab* in the Muslim countries but choose to wear *Hijab* when they live in non-Muslim countries. There are many young Muslims who either ignore or reject Islamic practices and take an anti-Islamic stand when they migrate to non-Muslim western countries. Even though the latter is not occurring on a mass scale, when one or two cases take place, they are given primacy in the media such as in the case of Salman Rushdi or Ayyan Hirsi.

On the contrary, new Muslims (Converts or Reverts) and their role in the Muslim community in western countries should not be underestimated when Islam or Muslim in the west are discussed. The majority of converts have learned about Islam and embraced it. They play active roles in the Muslim and Non Muslim community and are able to create links between Muslim and non-Muslim communities. In recent years their roles and involvement have been highlighted as some of them have had links with terrorism (Uhlmann, 2008). However many of Muslim converts have made a positive contribution to Muslim and non-Muslim communities. Many of them have associated themselves with Islamic organisations or educational institutions and contributed positively. There are many examples in Australia and other countries which include former singer Cat Stevens (Yusuf Islam) and boxing champion Cassius Clay (Mohamed Ali).

Identity: its categories and multiple definitions

“You ought to have some papers to show who you are,” the police officer advised me. “I do not need any papers. I know who I am,” I said. “May be so. Other people are also interested in knowing who you are.” (Traven, 1973).

Erickson (1968) views the search for identity as a component part of adolescent development. Identity formation and perceptions of identity are areas about which many researchers, academics and policy makers have written. When defining the term identity it is apparent that there are many interpretations. With no one finite definition it is important to acknowledge the fluidity of the meaning of this term and that it is often dependent upon time, place, culture and politics. Gleason (1983) underscores this point when he writes:

Today we could hardly do without the word identity in talking about immigration and ethnicity. Those who write on these matters use it casually; they assume the reader will know what they mean. And readers seem to feel that they do - at least there has been no clamour for clarification of the term. But if pinned down, most of us would find it difficult to explain just what we do mean by identity. Its very obviousness seems to defy elucidation (p. 910)

Gleason (1983, p. 910) gives the meaning of identity as being ‘what a thing is!’ And further questions ‘How is one supposed to go beyond that in explaining it?’ He traces the word identity to ‘the Latin root *idem*, the same, and has been used in English since the sixteenth century.’ At the same time, he cites the Oxford English dictionary’s meaning for identity to support his argument as follows:

the sameness of a person or thing at all times or in all circumstances; the condition or fact that a person or thing is itself and not something else; individuality, personality. Personal identity (in Psychology), the condition or fact of remaining the same person throughout the various phases of existence; continuity of the personality.

In his concluding remarks in the paper ‘Identifying the identity’, Gleason (1983, p. 930) emphasises that:

the term can legitimately be employed in a number of ways. It may, for example, mean no more than that a person or group is known by a certain name, but it may also be used in reference to the distinguishing characteristics marking whatever is known by that name or to the ensemble of cultural features that collectively constitutes the larger reality with which a person or group is identified through a certain name.

Erikson (1950; 1968, p. 19) developed a theory of identity arguing that identity is a ‘subjective sense of an invigorating sameness of continuity’. According to Erikson, identity is a subjective feeling experienced by any individual and is distinct and consistent and visible at all times. This means it is identification by an individual by distinctive and long-term features around him or her that shape perceptions of self and how they connect to other. Accordingly, both continuity and sameness are physiological needs of an individual (Dewey, 2007).

Marcia (1966) further elaborated on Erikson’s theory in her identity status model. According to her, identity is accrued and is based on commitments and experiences of sameness. Thus, Erickson’s theory was based on an individual’s interpretation of how they identify themselves. Schachter (2004, p. 196) challenges this view, saying that a ‘universal psychological model of identity development cannot continue to ignore variations in cultural context, as context is involved in the most basic processes of identity development’. Whether ABMY live in Western societies or in minority contexts, their situations tend to conform to Erickson’s explanation and Schachter’s elaborations: *they might take their identities as subjective feelings experienced by themselves which could be distinct, consistent and visible all the time* (Erickson, 1968, p. 19); *on other hand, they will be unable to ignore variations in cultural contexts* (Schachter, 2004, p.196).

Even though there are many types of identities that could identify individuals or groups, often the term ‘identity’ is used in a vague manner. There are many criteria

that might be used to differentiate people or groups. According to Rummens (2003, p. 13); these include ‘sex, gender, age, generation, sexual orientation, disability, socio-economic (class), occupation, culture, ethnicity, race, religion, nationality, language, ideology, and territorial allegiance, among others’. Rummens further stated that

Illustrative examples of types of identities more prevalent in non-Western societies include: age cohort, tribe and lineage, moiety and clan. It is important to clearly distinguish between types of identity and specific identities.

Rummens (2003, 12) provides an excellent explanation of identity and self-identification, and the manner in which they overlap:

...self-identifications are central to the individual's self-concept and overall sense of well being. Personal and social identifications in turn help to position individuals and groups within the larger societal framework.

Thus, in order to look into ABMY it is crucial to know their self-identification and their position in the larger societal framework. In order to do this, basic distinctions given by Rummens (2003, pp. 23-24) between self identity, personal identity and social identity should also be clarified. ‘Self-identity’, according to Rummens:

...concerns itself with the state of being a unique person distinct from all others as reflexively understood by that individual through time, and has been largely the domain of psychology’.

Personal and social identity, she asserts, are based on ‘social comparisons and positioning of individuals and groups within society’ (p. 24) Rummens sees ‘personal identity’ as ‘the result of an identification of self, by self, with respect to other’ (p.23) while social identity is ‘the outcome of an identification of self by other’ (ibid). It is identification accorded or assigned an individual by another social actor’. Even though there are differences as pointed out by Rummens (2003), for the purpose of this study ‘identity’ is used as a common term comprising self,

personal and social identity. It was left to the ABMY for them to prioritise just which they preferred and to which they gave emphasis.

Interestingly, many authors have expressed the view that identity is not a permanent structure and may change over time as individual circumstances change. Bouma (1996) points out that:

...any change in a person's life situation will bring [about] some change in identity, including the move from one suburb to another, from one job to another, or from one marital status to another. The shifts experienced by international migrants may be rather more significant than these and involve constructing new identities' (p. 70).

Identity, according to Bouma (1996, p. 73) can be categorised as being permanent, temporary, optional or non-optional. An 'optional identity' is the one chosen by the individual; it can be changed when the individual chooses to do so. By way of contrast, 'non-optional' identity, such as physical appearance or skin colour, cannot be changed even if the individual or the environment changes.

Multiple identities are commonly found among migrant communities. While describing identity, Ivic (2009, p. 46) indicates that 'identity is shifting, fragmented and multiple'. The concept of people having multiple identities is not new; Rummens (2003, p. 11) argues that:

...more than one type of identity can influence any given individual's life circumstances at any given time. Greater attention must be given to the plurality of identities operative within a particular cultural and/or societal context.

She further comments that 'there is also increasing research evidence that individuals can have multiple identifications even on a single identity criterion' (p. 11). Kostakopulu (1996) has argued that EU citizenship should be based on the assumption of multiple identities of citizens.

Just as construction of multiple identities has been observed in many other parts of the world, it has been observed amongst migrant communities in Australia, too.

The Migrant Information Centre (2008) points out that ‘Australian-born young people whose parents or grandparents were born overseas can find themselves straddling the orientations of different cultural identities’ (p. 15). This has been widely observed by many authors in the West and in Australia (see McGavin, 2008; Marshallsay, 2007). Many ABMY also have multiple identities because of the situation in which they find themselves. Marshallsay (2007, p. 3) confirms this when she asserts that ‘young Muslims articulate their multiple identities depending on their specific circumstances and situations’.

When commenting on migrant communities, Schiller (1995, p. 48) notes that migrants:

...are not sojourners because they settle and become incorporated in the economy and political institutions, localities, and patterns of daily life of the country in which they reside. However, at the same time, they are engaged elsewhere in the sense that they maintain connections, build institutions, conduct transactions, and influence local and national events in the countries from which they emigrated.

This is often the case when a migrant first arrives in Australia. During settlement in a new country, Based on this study, migrants may choose a number of affiliations:

1. Affiliation to the countries of origin ignoring an affiliation to Australia;
2. Affiliation to the Australia ignoring the countries of origin;
3. Affiliation to both/ many countries – Australia and the country of origin.

These choices affect the identity formation process of any migrant or their family members. The identity of ABMY will also be affected by these three choices.

While commenting on Islamic and national identities Saeed & Shahram (2001, p. 4) state:

It is important to note that images of self are not static. Identity is relative and circumstantial, constantly shifting and adapting to evolving social environments. However, while it can swing from one extreme to another, one’s identity is

generally a combination of loyalties and responsibilities. Muslims, therefore, carry layers of identity: familial, tribal, provincial, national and Islamic.

This may apply to many including ABMY. Having discussed identity types and their formation, the next section examines Muslim identity and its meanings from primary sources.

Muslim Identity

Muslim identity, like earlier identity definitions, has no unique definition offerings. The Oxford dictionary defines ‘Muslim’ as ‘a person whose religion is Islam’ (Wehmeier, 2000, p. 838). As identity is one of the primary themes of this study, it is very important to review what Islamic primary sources say about Muslims and their identities.

The Holy *Quran* (Asad, 1980) outlines the characteristics of a believer of the Islamic faith in the chapter called ‘The believers’ (*Quran*, 23: 1-10):

TRULY, to a happy state shall attain the believers: those who humble themselves in their prayer, and who turn away from all that is frivolous, and who are intent on inner purity; and who are mindful of their chastity, [not giving way to their desires] with any but their spouses - that is, those whom they rightfully possess [through wedlock]: [3] for then, behold, they are free of all blame, whereas such as seek to go beyond that [limit] are truly transgressors; and who are faithful to their trusts and to their pledges, and who guard their prayers [from all worldly intent]. It is they, they who shall be the inheritors.

The Prophet Muhammad has said (Bukhāri, as quoted by Mishkāt Al-Maḥabīā, 2008, p.1), that ‘The Muslim is one from whose tongue and hand the Muslims are safe, and the emigrant is he who abandons what God has prohibited.’ The Muslim identity was further clarified in the final address of the Prophet Muhammad to his followers:

All mankind is from Adam and Eve, an Arab has no superiority over a non-Arab nor a non-Arab has any superiority over an Arab; also a white has no superiority over black nor a black have any superiority over white except by piety and good action. Learn that every Muslim is a brother to every Muslim and that the Muslims constitute one brotherhood. Nothing shall be legitimate to a Muslim which belongs to a fellow Muslim unless it was given freely and willingly. Do not, therefore, do injustice to yourselves. Remember, one day you will appear before God and answer your deeds. So beware, do not stray from the path of righteousness after I am gone.¹⁶

Accordingly, Islam has ruled out that there was any superiority among humans based on ethnicity or colour of the skin. Hence, the identity of a Muslim cannot be based on these criteria which were rejected by Islam. This has been further clarified (see Sura Al Hujrat 13)¹⁷ by another *Quranic* verse.

O mankind! We have created you from a male and a female, and made you into nations and tribes, that you may know one another. Verily, the most honourable of you with Allâh is that (believer) who has At-Taqwa [i.e. he is one of the Muttaqûn (pious - see V.2:2)].

The primary sources of Islam go far beyond visible appearance to inner faith and behaviours to decide the faith of a Muslim. As these definitions are from the core doctrine of Islam and from its very primary source, Islam expects its followers to adhere to them. With this in mind the following section will explore the current Muslim identity in the West.

Identity of Muslims in the West

Bhatti (2006) notes that ‘recent events such as the aftermath of 11 September 2001, the London bombings in 2005, the Iraq War, together with other unresolved matters in the Middle East, have all come together to re-open questions about Muslim Identity and Muslim consciousness among young people and families’ (p. 140).

¹⁶ Taken from <http://www.islamfortoday.com/lastsermon.htm>

¹⁷ Taken from Muhsin Khan’s translation, Chapter Al Hujrat 13

When Muslim migrants who live as a minority community, are questioned about their identity, their responses are different from those who live among a majority Muslim community. Changes listed in the quote below take place to migrant identities as noted by Hashmi (2000, p.165):

In itself, immigrant identity is a particular one since it involves the re-evaluation of oneself and one's identity when being situated in a strange environment and surrounded by different customs, traditions and language to which the immigrant is expected to adjust.

The conclusion is that changes to identity affect all immigrants; Muslim migrants cannot avoid this affect.

This study is concerned with ABMY in an Australian context. Even though there are a few differences between the Western countries in Europe and Australia situated in the South, there are many similarities between them in regard to second generation youth. Hence, in this literature review, literature on Muslim identity in the West has been reviewed through an Australian lens.

With global challenges, which include current events, wars, the role of Information Communication Technology and other factors, Muslim identity is positioned where continued changes and developments take place. Islamic doctrine, with its basic teachings, has many flexible aspects which fit into many different environments. As stated by Witness Pioneer (2004)¹⁸, 'Islam, being a flexible religion, allows for a variety of opinions and customs, as long as they do not contradict the religion'. If this is the case, how would or should the Muslim identity be defined in the West? Will it be a single identity, multiple identities, optional, non optional or something else?

Muslim academics like Ramadan (2009, p. 5) strongly argue for the view that people can carry multiple identities at any point of a time. He writes:

¹⁸ http://www.witness-pioneer.org/vil/Articles/politics/Juma_Khutba_Islam_vs_the_Sects.htm

I state firmly that we have multiple, moving identities and that there is no reason—religious, legal, or cultural—a woman or a man cannot be both American or European and Muslim. Millions of individuals prove this daily..

This is a reality in many other parts of the world as well according to Mutalib (2005, p. 58) who, when commenting on Singaporean Malays, says ‘most Malays do not perceive any problem in adopting concurrently a triple, inter-dependent identity: Singaporean, Malay and Muslim’. Hence, ABMY are likely to have multiple identities at the same time. It is reasonable to expect that they may not only have multiple identities but that these identities may change from time to time.

Younger generation Muslims, who are better educated than their parents, are in better positions financially and professionally than their migrant parents. This is especially the case for those parents who arrived predominately as labourers. Their status did not offer them an opportunity to think in term of ‘European Islam’ (Ramadan, 1999b, p. 250). According to Salam (2010)¹⁹, since the younger generation has a different exposure and expectation of life, they

rejected the integration and assimilation that their parents often desired. They were no longer the meek, invisible immigrants grateful to be allowed in at all; they wished to assert themselves... It is undeniable that a statistically significant segment of Muslim Youth is becoming assimilated into Western or American society to an extent that seriously impacts their practice of Islam and their identity as Muslims.

While looking at this situation Ramadan (1999b, p. 250) sees the religious observance of young Muslims as relatively low, argues that that for young Muslims ‘integration into their host countries has actually meant assimilation’. According to Ramadan (1999b, p. 251), later developments asserts the need for Muslim youth to have rights to be Europeans. Further, roles in the society they live in have led to further developments of new ‘judicial opinions (fatwa) more in line with the

¹⁹ http://www.salaam.co.uk/themeofthefmonth/april02_index.php?l=6

realities of life in the West' (Salam, para. 8). The ghetto or subordinate mentality of the first generation of Muslims in the West is fading and an active participation is replacing it. Muslim youth organisations are playing a vital role in this move. The active participation of Muslim youth in blood drives, open dialogues, interfaith meetings and other public welfare events are widely noticed.²⁰

The current Muslim situation might be regarded as being a co-existing with host communities and diverse faiths. This is the opposite of both assimilation and isolation. Ramadan (1999, p. 234) concludes that Muslim identity in the West:

...is not closed and shaped once and for all, far from the evaluation of societies and their dynamics. On the contrary, this identity, whilst always remaining faithful to its principles, is characterized by a constant necessity to interact with its context, to question and to understand it so as to find the most satisfactory and harmonious solution. (p. 234)

This is a strong explanation that can be used to describe the current identity of Muslims in Australia. A study carried out by Kabir (2006) highlights that ABMY are keen to keep their religious values along with their Australian ways and traditions. She writes:

In all instances the Australian-born interviewees felt more affiliated with Australian ways, but seemed keen to retain some aspects of the cultural heritage, especially their religion. I take from these tentative findings two ideas: one, is that Australian Muslim youth identity is in a process of development and subject to change between the old and new aspects of their culture; two, if some form of bi-cultural identity is the outcome, it is most likely to be beneficial to the youths and to the host nation. (p. 23)

Even though her research was not restricted to ABMY as in the current study, she noticed that ABMY are more affiliated to Australian ways and are keen to retain their religion. A similar situation has been highlighted through a study carried out

²⁰ One of the community leader mentioned this during the data collection.

by Fisher & Hussein (2005, p. 139) on Australian Muslim adolescents and their identity. They concluded that those adolescents may not be adequately covered by 'biculturalism' as some of them may have been exposed to three cultures such as: mainstream Australian culture, ethnic culture and Islamic culture. This work affirms the notion that Muslims in Australia are not prevented from having multiple identities.

Saeed & Akbarzadeh (2001, p. 5) echoed the same point:

In the Australian context, Muslims, especially second and third generation Muslims, are adding a new layer to their identity. They are developing a certain bond with Australia, which in most cases, is not at the expense of their Islamic and ethnic heritage. Their Australianness complements and puts into perspective their Muslim identity and their ethnic traditions. The result may be hybrid Islamic Identity based on commitment to the secular norms of Australian society and Islamic/ethnic traditions. However it may be premature to talk of an Australian Muslim Identity as the exact contours of this identity are still evolving. (p. 5)

Aly (2008) however, argues that negative perceptions or portrayals of Muslims 'as "other" in the Australian media and in political discourse has resulted in Australian Muslims constructing alternative identities based on a common perception of injustice'. Even though this is a minority view it may carry a valid and important message that is relevant to the current context.

Ethnic and Religious Identities

Ethnic and religious identities are closely related to migrant communities in the West. As the focus of this study is ABMY, ethnic and religious identities becomes relevant to ABMY. Asmar (2001, p. 148) affirms this view in relation to an Australian context saying 'the relationship between ethnicity and race on one hand, and religious affiliation on the other, has at times been highly contentious in

Australian history'. This section provides a brief discussion on these two factors of identity.

Ethnic identity

Phinney (1990, p. 499) points out that, 'Ethnic identity is central to the psychological functioning of members of ethnic and racial minority groups'. It is accepted that the majority of Muslim communities in the West originated from migrant communities, and that they form racially minority groups in Western countries that include Australia. After reviewing 70 studies of ethnic identity in refereed journal articles, Phinney (1990, p. 499) concluded that 'The task of understanding ethnic identity is complicated because the uniqueness that distinguishes each group makes it difficult to draw general conclusions'. He pointed out, however, that most of the studies were based on one of three broad perspectives which are; social identity theory, acculturation and culture conflict and identity formation. Phinney (1990, p. 511) also states that

...although attitudes of the majority toward minority ethnic groups have received most attention, it is equally important to understand how ethnic group members deal with being part of a group that may be disparaged or discriminated against, that must struggle to maintain its own customs and traditions, and that is not well represented in the media, among other problems'.

Fisher & Hussein (2005, p. 138) point out that 'identity development of adolescents of immigrant backgrounds occurs in the context of adaptation, involving the culture of their country of origin and culture of the host country'. Citing Omar & Allen (1996), and Saeed (2003), Fisher & Hussein (2005, p. 239) mention the common view of Muslims in Australia of 'being the target of overt hostility, prejudice and discrimination'. They then conclude that 'this must be considered when investigating the ethnic identity of Australian Muslims'.

Wallace & Forman (1998) suggest that religious affiliation, which may be visible by church-going and young people's importance of religion in their lives,

plays the role of protection. As a result, these children are less likely to engage in acts like carrying weapons, engaging in fights or drink driving. Youniss et al. (1999) agree. They believe that those religious youth are more likely to be involved with community services. Thus it is natural to expect that these youth are likely to hold leadership positions in these communities in the future.

The contribution of religion in shaping the identity process of young people is significant and inevitable. Erickson (1964, p.125) finds religion as a major component of identity together with other factors such as occupational, political, social interactions and peer attitudes. Referring to the role of religion in shaping identity in Australia, Baldock (1996, p. 184) reflects that:

...my role as Australian Secretary of the World Conference on Religion and Peace and my attendance at a very large number of events like the ones described here lead me to believe that religious identity is set to become a central concern for Australian society in the next fifty years and that the parameters of the debate that will emerge about religion in this country are already being set.

Peek (2005) has explored the development of the religious identity of Muslims amongst Muslim university students in New York and Colorado. He defines three stages of religious identity development: 'religion as ascribed identity; religion as chosen identity and religion as declared identity'. Peek further asserts that religious identity emerges in social and historical contexts and its development is variable rather than static; he argues that:

...through asserting the primacy of their religious identity over other forms of social identity, religion became a powerful base of personal identification and collective association for these young Muslims. (p. 215)

Schmidt (2004) has examined identity formation among young Muslims in Denmark, Sweden and the US. His study includes Muslim youth either born or raised in the various locations; he looked at the process of transnational identity formation according to four overall conditions:

1. visibility and aesthetics;
2. choice;
3. transnationalism; and
4. social ethics.

According to Schmit (2004, pp. 34-38), Muslim youth argue that their 'religious identity is a consequence of individual choice' and parents of Muslim youth practice 'Islam infected by cultural misconceptions'; Muslim youth find Islamic ideology as workable and adaptable all the time; and that 'there exists no contradiction between the religious ideas of the Islam that they advocate and the non-Muslim society they live in'. He concludes that religious identity and the role of religion in the life of young Muslims play an important role in the life of young Muslims in the West.

Muslim migrants in the West often observed or identified in the status of 'foreigners', 'guests' or 'citizens'. They may identify themselves as the citizen of the European/ Western country or the country of the origin. However the status of their children may differ. As noted by Esposito (2010), 'younger generations in Britain, France, and Germany become alienated both from their European identity and from the traditional national and religious identities of their parents' (p. 28). The outcome is likely to be an identity emerging for these youngsters which is different from their parents. A new form of Islam or identity is created as it has been noted by Dittrich (2006) who argues that:

Many second- and third-generation Muslims born into secular European societies are re-assessing their identity and religious beliefs. They are creating a new form of Islam; one more reflective of their adopted homelands. (p.13)

Schmidt (2004, p. 33) agrees, pointing out that this later generation of Muslim youth ‘shows strong signs of a re-formation of Islamic identities as well as an intensive and conscious public exposure to Islam and Islamic activism’.

Ramadan has written extensively on emerging minority Muslim communities and youth in Europe. He notes the fact that the Muslim identity in the West is itself a contested question. His research (Ramadan, 1999a, 1999b, 2004, 2007, 2009; Ramadan & Amghar, 2001) has highlighted Muslim presence and related issues in Western society in recent years. He argues that Muslim identity is not based on superficial principles. He raises the religious and cultural conflict that is frequently associated with the paradox of ‘how to be at the same time fully Muslim and fully Western’. Ramadan’s (1999) book *To be a European Muslim* is a landmark work on Muslims in the West. In it, he classifies Muslims living in Europe as ‘European Muslim’ and it was interesting to note if this concept resonates within the data collected in my study. Ramadan reported in (Curtis, 2005)²¹ highlights his theory with his own life by claiming that ‘I am Swiss by nationality, Muslim by religion, Egyptian by memory’. People like Ramadan see that Muslims can co-exist with other communities without any clash in the West.

Naber’s (2005) research in the San Francisco Bay area includes youth of second generation Arab Americans who may not have been practicing Muslims. She (Naber, 2005) highlights the response from her participants regarding:

...preconceived notions of racialised social structure [that] shape the ways in which individuals use racial codes or meaning to interpret everyday experiences....everyday life experiences indicate that preconceived notions about “Arabs“, “Middle Easterners“ or “Muslims“ strongly influenced their identities“ (p. 480).

²¹ <http://www.guardian.co.uk/education/2005/oct/04/highereducationprofile>. academicexperts

She further states that ‘I predict that anti-Arab/anti-Muslim racism evident since September 11th will further intensify and complicate the process of identity formation among Arab American Muslims’ (pp. 480-481).

Dittrich (2003) predicts that Europe will have to think about how to deal with its Muslim population and Islam. While commenting on Muslims as one of the components in Europe, Karlsson (2007) notes:

There are already between fifteen million and twenty million Muslims in the European Union and their numbers will increase because of continuing migration. Some estimates speak of there being about sixty million European Muslims in twenty-five years’ time. The European Union is therefore no longer conceivable without an Islamic “green” component. (p.11).

He further comments that “Muslims can make a positive contribution to the construction of a new Europe. Their presence should be seen as a source of enrichment and not as a problem” (Karlsson, 2007, p.15). Many others like Qaradawi (2008) expressed similar views as some sort of bridges need to be built for confidence to be established.

If the situation of the Australian Muslim migrants is compared with these findings from the US and Europe, it could be said that Muslim migrants may have ‘their religious self understanding from that of their national origin’ as Bouma (1996, p. 69) notes; however, he points out that due to Muslim migrants’ links and connections with Australian culture and the broader community their understanding of Islam and their religious identity may take a different shape. Saeed (2009, p. 3) points to a similar shift:

Many Muslims therefore are not adopting ideas and principles that may not have been part of Islamic tradition, They are also transforming many of the ideas and principles of pre-modern Islamic law to suit their needs in the West.

It is likely, the ABMY in this study may take another stand on their religious identity, and that it is likely to be different from that of their parents.

Different ethnic origins and cultures but one religion

Even though Muslims are coming from very different parts of the world, ethnicities, languages and nations, their links or affiliation to Islam bring them into contact with the rest of the Muslim community and unify segments of Muslim community groups. Local mosques and Islamic schools where Muslims meet fellow Muslims from different part of world act as centres to meet and mingle and help form their community. This has been found to be a reality in the West (e.g. Saeed, 2004). Saeed's work has noted that Muslims from different ethnic origins have formed a common identity based on their religion.

Muslims in Australia

Commenting on the Australian future immigration process in Australia, Jupp (2007, p. 210) predicts the following:

In the foreseeable future the population of Australia will continue to rise, will continue to be concentrated in a small number of large cities and will be varied in its origins and culture. Complaining about any aspect of these changes is futile but will doubtless continue. Australia will never be 'white' or 'British' again, will never live in the bush, will never be dominated by male manual workers and will never be socially or culturally uniform.

The need for research on Muslims and Muslim youth in Australia was raised by John Howard, the former Australian Prime Minister, in 2005. He invited Muslim leaders for a discussion in August 2005. It has been reported that this discussion led to an agreement to conduct further research on Australian Muslim youth (Australian Government, 2005). Along with this he established the Muslim Community Reference Group (MCRG) to act as an advisory group to the government on Muslim related issues. Under the MCRG, many subgroups were established to address areas such as youth, women, schooling, education and training of clerical and lay leaders, work placement issues, crisis management,

family and community (APJC, 2006). The MCRG (2006) submitted a report to the parliamentary secretary to the Minister for Immigration and Multicultural Affairs stating their suggestion for ‘building on social cohesion, harmony and security’ involving the Australian Muslim community. One of the key factors identified by the MCRG was ‘the social isolation facing many Australian Muslims, particularly the young, both at school and in the Community’ (p. 7). The MCRG initiated community consultations which included a National Muslim Youth Summit held from 3-4 December 2005 and 12 state and territory youth summits held in 2006 and 2007. The National Muslim youth summit was attended by 66 young Australian Muslims from every state and territory. The summit focused on finding solutions to issues such as identity, relationship, employment/education and training and discrimination (MCRG, 2008).

The summit identified six key issues and presented 51 solutions. The key issues were as follows:

1. The perceived conflict between Muslim and Australian identity;
2. Inter-generational conflict between parents and children, especially when parents are migrants and children have been born in Australia;
3. Belonging versus marginalisation;
4. Unemployment;
5. Muslims and the media; and
6. Community building.

(pp. 36-39, See the full Summit Communiqué in Appendix 6)

The first issue dealt directly with one of the major themes of this thesis. The report did not reveal what was discussed in the summit about identity; however, it presented suggested solutions to the perceived conflict, as follows:

- government sponsored education for the public on what Islam is;
- media campaigns promoting anti-discrimination;
- grass roots communication between Muslims and non-Muslims;

- better education for Muslims about Islam and about the compatibility between Australian law and Islamic values;
- school- and university-based interfaith activities;
- a more proactive approach to promoting multiculturalism;
- programs for Muslims to experience and understand Australia's indigenous heritage;
- programs and activities that increase the self-esteem of young Australian Muslims so they feel confident about their identity; and
- identifying more successful and high profile Australian Muslims who can act as Ambassadors. (p. 36)

It is reported (Muslim Community Reference Group, 2006, p. 5) that AUD\$35 million was allocated by the federal government to assist in the implementation of these solutions.

Hussain & Fisher (2005) have examined the Australian Muslim Adolescent identity. This study was restricted to year-nine school children who were studying at two Islamic colleges in Victoria. They (Hussain & Fisher, 2005, p. 13) report that Australian Muslim identity is multi-dimensional:

Divergent identity patterns appeared related to factors including length of time in Australia, exposure and involvement in Australian society and experiences of racism and hostility.

These findings are associated with year-nine children who were attending Islamic schools. While the group is close in age to the focus group of my study, the latter group was older: they may think differently from year-nine children.

ABMY and their experiences with current realities

It has been highlighted by the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission (HREOC, 2004, p. 4) that, following the terrorist bombing and attacks in the US and other places:

Arab and Muslim youth felt that they were particularly at risk of harassment which has led to feelings of frustration, alienation and a loss of confidence in themselves and trust in authority.

The Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission has been involved in research tied to discrimination and Muslim identity. This research project called IsmaU, in which more than 1400 Arab and Muslim Australians participated all over Australia was launched in March 2003. This research complements Akbarzadeh & Saeed's (2001) work in that it mainly looked at the wider Australian Arab and Muslim community. IsmaU mainly concentrated on unfair treatment the Muslim community received in their daily lives; Muslim youth's problems were not specifically researched in this project which was published later in 2004. IsmaU reported (HREOC, 2004), generally, the wide perception among the Muslim community that they have been unfairly targeted and that there has been increased prejudice because of their race or religion.

The earlier work of Asmar (1999) with Muslim university students at an Australian university in New South Wales was tied to notions of acceptance from their non-Muslim peers and their feelings about the treatment they received. Asmar (1999, p. 2) comments that for Muslim university students their main concern was being regarded as 'not like other Australians'; this is a typical concern expressed by many Australian Muslim youth. A direct outcome for many Muslim students has meant encountering feelings of alienation from university culture and an inability to engage in outdoor activities or social functions on site. Asmar (1999) highlights the extent to which Muslim students are deprived of social or extracurricular activities in university life, which eventually alienate Muslim youth from their

peers. These views match those subsequently expressed by Esposito (2010) in which he refers to the ‘guest’ to ‘foreigner’ status of migrants.

A report from the Australian Parliamentary Joint Committee on Intelligence and Security (APJC, 2006, p. 24) indicated the following:

Over the past five years Islamic and other community based organisations have consistently raised their concerns about a rise in generalised fear and uncertainty within the Arab and Muslim Australian communities.

This committee furthermore reported that Muslim groups told the committee that ‘biased media reporting and alleged incidents of vilification on radio were promoting prejudicial attitudes toward Arab and Muslim Australians’ (APJC, 2006, p. 30). There have been a number of reports (APJC, 2006; HREOC, 2004) and news items published on harassment and difficulties faced by Muslims and youth in Australia. For example, concern and security of Muslim youth especially girls and their fear even to go out wearing the *Hijab* has also been highlighted in the parliament by a Member of Parliament, Julie Owens (Owens, 2005, p. 96-97), who reported the problems faced by Muslim schoolgirls in these terms:

To brand these schoolgirls as some sort of symbol of a clash of culture or to suggest that a young girl wearing a *Hijab* is some kind of icon of terrorism is ludicrous and, quite frankly, it is cruel.

She concluded:

You will hear stories of their being verbally abused, being assaulted, being spat on, having their scarves pulled off, being pushed out of the way and even being pushed over.

These are very serious allegations that, if true, are likely to impact adversely on the minds and lives of those youth who are victimised. Identity construction is also severely compromised. Turner (2003, p. 412) concludes that, following events such as the gang rapes in Sydney (2005) or the 9/11 attacks in the US (2001), ‘Muslims

of one kind or another were described in ways that denied them membership to the Australian community’.

A state-wide survey in Victoria among year 10 and 11 students undertaken by Leung (2006) revealed that most Victorian school children view Muslims as terrorists. However, it must be noted that there are others (Haque, 2003) who argue positive public attitudes towards Muslims and Islam as evidenced by a research carried out in Brisbane.

Having understood the underlying issues, the Australian Parliamentary Joint Committee on Intelligence and Security (AJPC, 2006, p. 47) recommended ‘a commitment to the rights of Muslims to live free from harassment and enjoy the same rights extended to all religious groups in Australia’. Such a commitment from the government law enforcing authorities was designed to ensure harassment-free lives for Muslims in future.

The citizenship debate and Muslim experiences

Hart (2009, p. 641) points out that the world is facing a crisis of citizenship which largely involves young people; with regard to citizenship in Australia:

...policies have been implemented to educate them and control their behaviour, particularly in their local communities, in an attempt to foster them as citizens deemed appropriate to join adult society.

Kabir (2007) indicates that the citizenship debate in Australia has raised the question of Australian values and what they mean for Australian and non-Australia citizens. The citizenship debate had its origins in the federal Parliament in 2005. Aly (2006)²² reports that, during this period, the Australian Prime Minister John Howard commented that ‘a small section of the Islamic population was very resistant to integration. They failed to learn English quickly enough and didn't

²² <http://www.theaustralian.com.au/news/features/islam-maligned-in-veiled-moderation/story-e6frg6z6-1111112219497>

accept Australian values such as gender equality'. Jones (2005) reports that, following the prime minister's statement, Treasurer Peter Costello asserted:

...our laws are made by the Australian Parliament. If those are not your values, if you want a country which has Sharia law or a theocratic state, then Australia is not for you. This is not the kind of country where you would feel comfortable if you were opposed to democracy, parliamentary law, independent courts and so I would say to people who don't feel comfortable with those values there might be other countries where they'd feel more comfortable with their own values or beliefs.

Costello's statement was summarised by a cartoon drawn by Ron Tandberg which appeared in *The Age* newspaper (February 24, 2006, p.1). It is shown in Figure 3.

FIGURE 2 TANDBERG CARTOON, *THE AGE*, 24 FEB, 2006



On Monday, 11 September 2006, Maria Vamvakinou MP (2006, p. 132) pointed out the problems faced by Muslims, in the House of Representatives, stating:

The aftermath of September 11 has seen a new climate of fear, suspicion and sometimes open hostility directed towards Australia's Arab and Muslim communities, one in which the 'war on terrorism' has all too often been translated,

both in sections of our media and by some members of the Australian community, as a war on Australia's Arab and Muslim population.

She further blamed the Prime Minister and the treasurer:

Over the last week or so we have seen a Prime Minister and a Treasurer taking turns to periodically attack the loyalty and integrity of Arab and Muslim Australians and their leaders. In a copycat rendition of comments made earlier by the Prime Minister, last week the Treasurer demanded that Muslim Australians openly endorse Australian values, learn English and renounce terrorism. The decision by both the Prime Minister and the Treasurer to single out Australia's Muslim communities for criticism in the lead-up to the anniversary of September 11 is more a case of cynical political posturing and political opportunism than a show of leadership. Both have exhibited the sort of crude stereotyping and open hostility to Australian Muslims that we have now come to expect from a government that has built its political platform largely around a politics of fear and scapegoating. (Vamvakinou, 2006, p.132)

While these sorts of arguments are going on, Dunn (2001) draws attention to an important fact in term of Australian citizenship issues in Australia as follow:

Many Australians who are not White, or who come from a non-English speaking background, the disabled, non-heterosexuals, and many others, routinely have their status as genuine Australians questioned. Australia and 'Australian-ness', was until fairly recently defined in racist terms: White Australia. As a result, migrants or people who were not White were not accorded full citizenship. These people might have been legal citizens (naturalised or Australia-born) but their Australianness was questioned every day. Today in Australia, someone with blonde hair and blue eyes might be assumed to be an Australian, when they were actually a Swedish tourist or a British migrant who had never bothered becoming a legal citizen. Meanwhile, a person who has Asiatic physical features might be referred to as an Asian, and yet they may never have set foot outside of Australia. (Dunn, 2001, pp. 4-5)

The above facts need to be well understood when researching migrant communities in Australia. This situation applies to Muslim community and to ABMY too.

Negative comments made in the federal parliament by Liberal Sophie Panopoulos in 2005 (Panopoulos, 2005, p. 101) perpetuate further dissonance towards Muslim community. His remarks in the parliament attest to this:

I fear a frightening Islamic class emerging, supported by a perverse interpretation of the Koran where disenchantment breeds disengagement, where powerful and subversive orthodoxies are inculcated into passionate and impressionable young Muslims, where the Islamic mosque becomes the breeding ground for violence and rejection of Australian law and ideals, where extremists hijack the Islamic faith with their own prescriptive and unbending version of the Koran and where extremist views are given currency and validity Why should one section of the community be stuck in the Dark Ages of compliance cloaked under a veil of some distorted form of religious freedom?

These statements, without substantial evidence, were made in the Australian parliament, the highest authority of a democratic country. How would it reflect on the country and what sort of impact would it have on Muslims and ABMY? Anne Aly (2008) notes that social and political restrictions such as those identified by Panopolos lead ABMY to question whether they enjoy citizenship rights on an equal footing with Australians from the broader community.

Julie Owens, a federal MP warns of the destructive effects of ethnocentrism to fostering and nurturing an inclusive and tolerant Australian society. She said:

I have always thought of Australia as being a successful multicultural society extremely tolerant of others, I am finding myself increasingly afraid for the welfare of one sector. This should be of concern to all of us, and any of us who use our political positions to stir up divisions in our society should be well and truly ashamed. Anyone who plays up to one section of the community for their own political benefit, anybody who drives in a wedge and increases the risk for a particularly vulnerable group in our community—and here we are talking about young Australian Muslim girls—should be well and truly ashamed...In the matter

of our multicultural society and support of our Muslim Australians, we have a chronic failure of leadership.

Owens (2005) further commented on Australian Muslim young girls, indicating that there were few differences between Australian and Australian Muslim girls: 'They are typical Australian girls – remarkably Australian – and, like most Australians, they practise their religion privately' (p. 97). This is a very positive encouraging remark.

In conclusion, current political, religious and social situations and the experiences of youth affect the formation of their identity and its bases. AMBY face a situation where they are exposed to many different cultures: Australian, ethnic and Islamic and/or others. Occasionally clashes have been observed between all three. Along with this it has been reported that they also face discrimination and hostilities (Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission, 2004) and some view it as failure of multiculturalism and the leadership of the country. These often lead to alienation and ghetto life and often produce a negative mentality. The identity of AMBY emerges from multi-layered frameworks.

Islamic Education and Youth

Bhatti (2006, p. 133) points out that Muslim youth's education has been in the spotlight in recent times and that is discussed 'in terms of ethnicity and belonging, the wider question that is significant for many countries in the West after "Nine-Eleven" is the education of Muslim children'. When Muslims migrated to Western countries one of the main concerns was how to educate their children in their religion, traditions and culture. Halstead (1995, p. 520) points out that, while there has been admirable commitment and enthusiasm among Muslims to establish schools and colleges, they have not considered deeper educational issues:

Particularly in the West, such schools have frequently been established in response to perceived inadequacies in the state system of schooling and they have been happy to contribute to the preservation of Muslim identity and help children to take pride in their religion, without giving serious thought to the nature of the distinctive education they provide nor to the way they should deal with the philosophical and epistemological problems posed for Muslims by modern secular scientific knowledge.

In Australia, Muslim children may study their religion in four ways: by attending weekend schools; attending scripture classes during normal school hours; going to Islamic schools or engaging in after hours study sessions with their parents or others. Buckley (no date) reports that those parents who send their children to Islamic school may expect that their children will learn their religion and traditions and will not lose the community values. Islamic studies, which students are taught during normal study times, are also part of the curriculum in Islamic schools.

An additional form of religious education known as weekend schools is organised by Muslim community organisations in the West. In these schools native language, religion and cultural aspects are taught. Rashid & Gregory (1997, in Bhatti, 2006, p. 137) describe how it works in Britain:

Depending on their resources, different South Asian communities have tried to set up their own language classes in community settings or in hired rooms over the weekend, and *Quran*/Arabic classes in mosques after school.

These arrangements are common among Muslim communities all over the Western world. Bhatti (2006) further comments that while parents have shown interest in these schools to teach their language, religion and traditions to their children are additional important facts that also need to be noticed:

...parents who want to retain their traditions, which might be old fashioned, but they are valued because they are built on knowledge passed on from one generation to another (p. 138).

However, the differences between ABMY in the West and their parents – the environment in which the parents previously lived and the different environment in which the children now live – are often ignored when weekend schools and lessons are planned and delivered.

A third form of religious education is called *Halaqa*, which means ‘study circle’, is normally run by an Imam or a religious scholar at mosques. In the *Halaqa*, participants engage in formal and informal religious study which may take many forms – from informal home-based study, to formal weekdays or weekend study. *Halaqa* are normally attended by adults, and sessions are run separately for men and women. These study circles have their own syllabi which are designed by the person or organisation running the circles. There is no unified syllabus for these sessions.

It is expected that these *Halaqa* will produce cultured Muslim individuals who are religiously knowledgeable and capable of contributing to the society. Banna (1981)²³ reports that one of the Islamic reformers; Imam Hasan Al Banna has outlined the target qualities of an ideal Muslim:

A Muslim should strive to attain: a strong body, good character, cultured thought, ability to earn his own living, correct belief, true worship, control his inner instincts, careful about his time, organized in his affairs, willing to offer help and service to others, these comprise the duties of every Muslim as an individual.

Ahmad (ND), in commenting on Islamic education, provides what arguably is the best statement about Islamic education in Australia or in the West:

[It] should foster and promote moral and academic excellence in students through a creatively-designed curriculum implemented by concerned, inspired and dedicated teaching staff. Islamic institutions should promote such quality education to enable students to lead a successful individual, family and social life.’

²³ http://web.youngmuslims.ca/online_library/books/tmott/

There are many who find dilemmas in Islamic education, arguing that ‘Muslims in the West’ have been caught in a three-dimensional dilemma, as far as Islamic education is concerned:

- How Islamic is education in Muslim countries?
- To what extent they are able to develop a vision of education from both Islamic history and Islamic revealed sources?
- In what way they can deal with contemporary education?

The biggest dilemma is the failure of Muslim educators to build a comprehensive vision to answer these questions: it is this lack of vision that the various experiences in Islamic education are not adding much to enhancing insights and skills, however good these experiences may be. While there are no single answers to these questions, they remain as stark realities in Islamic education in the West.

Youth and Parents

Family bonds and close relationships with blood relatives is a religious obligation in Islam. At the same time, parents are required to look after their children and guide them in ‘the correct path’. Since Muslims believe in the life hereafter, they believe that according to the good deeds that their children do, so they will be rewarded by God. In this context, Muslim parents – irrespective of their country of residence –are concerned about the upbringing and morals of their children.

Bhatti (2006, p.135) believes that ‘The diverse ways in which different communities negotiate their way in society for the benefit of their children is crucial’, and emphasises the importance of transferring knowledge:

Equally significant is how this knowledge is transferred, not just for the purpose of limited gains such as social mobility within single family units, but also for the sustenance of long-term optimism, survival of a collective memory for communities which gives them respect, integrity and hope. (ibid)

Hobson (1984) observes that most parents want to share their beliefs with their children. Interests, and the seriousness of parents passing their cultural and religious values, are increased when they migrate to a different country where they do not find much support to bring the children up as they could do in their home country. Youth in host countries face a new and different environment from that which their parents are familiar. In this regard, Carlson's (2005, p. 113) research on a Somali community in Columbus, Ohio is insightful. He looks at the second generation of a Somali community. He concludes that Somalis transmit cultural knowledge to their children:

...through [a] combination of four elements, which include religious education, secular education, instruction at home, and manipulation of the environment in which their children live.

Carlson further comments that children build their knowledge of culture based on these experiences as well as parts of American culture which they find valuable or appropriate. Geaves (2005) found that there were mixed feeling amongst Muslims who were attempting to navigate and understand their ethnic and cultural origins. Their perceptions of themselves were tied to their existing contexts within a minority cohort.

Carlson's (2005, p. 115) research reports the primary concerns of practicing Somali Muslims immigrant towards their children in Columbus, Ohio. They were concerned with passing on cultural and religious values, teaching their mother tongue, providing *halal* foods, facilitating prayer five times a day, fasting in Ramadan, being productive members of the host society, and avoiding negative effects of the host society. These are typical expectations of Muslims parents in the West. Carlson concluded that 'being a Muslim in America was important to parents' and he has observed Somali parents of his study placed high values on the community and religious identity.

Conclusion

The current study fills a much needed gap of empirical data regarding the identity formation of ABMY. The primary objective of this chapter has been to establish a platform for this study in order to raise national if not global awareness of the seriousness and depth of issues related to ABMY. This study hopes to build a bridge between previous and future studies in this area while adding to the value of academic inquiry. In providing a focus on the major themes of this study, the literature review started with a review of the literature related to Muslims in the West, and then moved to Muslim identity, Muslim identity in the West, identity of ABMY, Islamic education and its status in the West, and the contribution of parents in forming the identity of ABMY.

The next section provided an overview on identities and its multiple definitions. Erikson's (1968) definition of identity as subjective feeling, and the counter argument not to neglect other factors in defining identity, has been presented. The possibility that people can have multiple identities has been addressed; these include Muslim identity, Muslim identity in the West, and identity of ABMY. Ramadan's (2005) perception of co-existence rather than assimilation, or even integration, has been highlighted. Ethnic and religious identities which are inter- or closely-related have also been presented, e.g., Ramadan's explanation that 'I am Swiss by nationality, Muslim by religion, Egyptian by memory' (Ramadan, 2008).

The current situation of Muslims in Australia, and the challenges that they face, has been presented as a contribution to the formation of ABMY's identity. Conflicting views on the acceptance of Muslims in Australia, as voiced by federal government members, has also been highlighted.

The status of Islamic education and four possible forms were presented: weekend schools, scripture classes, *halaqas*, and Islamic schools and the current challenges facing them have been discussed. Finally, the role of parents and influence on children has been presented.

This chapter provided an overview of the research that is relevant to general focus of the study. The next chapter will focus on methods utilized in order to answer the stated research questions.

CHAPTER THREE

Methodology

Introduction

The primary focus of this research was to identify the notions of identity of Australian Born Muslim Youth (ABMY) in Melbourne, Australia, their understanding of Islam and the Islamic education they were receiving, and those characteristics that affect their identity construction. Along with this, the research also investigated the expectations of parents and community from ABMY. This chapter outlines the research paradigms, methods and data collection tools used in this research study. Data collected and analysed in this research was to be used to study how this group of Muslim youth articulate their identity; how and what they understand about their religion; who educates them, and what are the expectations of their parents and community.

In order to comprehend the range and depth of views associated with these research areas, both quantitative and qualitative research techniques were used. Due to the nature of the focus of this study, a mixed method approach, which includes both quantitative and qualitative paradigms, was chosen as the most appropriate methodology.

The Research Paradigm: Mixed Methods

Mixed methods

A mixed method approach for research, as pointed out by Creswell (2003, p. 20), is ‘gathering both numeric information (e.g., on instruments) as well as text

information (e.g., on interviews) so that the final database represents both quantitative and qualitative information' This approach has been identified by Gorard (2004, p. 7) as a 'key element in the improvement of social science, including educational science'. While indicating there are no universally accepted definitions of mixed methods, Pool et al. (2010, p. 3) indicate that they are used to:

1. develop or evaluate study tools and procedures;
2. examine different aspects of the research question;
3. broaden the scope of the research;
4. triangulate results in order to get more accurate data.

Thus, mixed methods examine different aspects of the focus and broaden the scope to help ensure that data has both breadth and depth; mixed methodology helps to answer the questions of both 'what' and 'why'.

Creswell (2003, p. 22) articulates the benefits of using both qualitative and quantitative methods when he asserts that the researcher 'may want to both generalise the findings to a population and develop a detailed view of the meaning of a phenomenon or concept for individuals'. Gorard (2004, p. 7) points out that mixed methods are welcomed as they impact greatly on policy makers 'because figures can be very persuasive to policy makers whereas stories are more easily remembered and repeated by them for illustrative purposes'. In this study the initial figures were collected through quantitative methods, and illustrated through data from qualitative methods in the second stage; this made the analysis more comprehensive in nature.

Many researchers (see, for example, Fontana & Frey, 1994; Denzin & Lincoln, 2000; Patton, 2002) suggest that multiple methods facilitate a better understanding of the views of participants. Once again, collecting quantitative data from ABMY and using it to extend qualitative research on major themes was an ideal research method for this study. Wilson (1981) argues that mixed methods 'complement the use of a range of methods to capture both subjective and objective states of being to provide a clear comprehensive outcome of the research'.

While explaining the differences between both popular methods, Brannen (2005, p.175) assertion that ‘qualitative research lacks quantitative research’s power to generalise’ is valid if ‘generalisability is taken to refer only to statistical inference, that is, when the findings of a research sample are generalised to the parent population’. With this in mind, statistical data from ABMY in research may not be the only evidence to rely on when investigating the complex range of issues related to ABMY. That is a major reason why mixed methods provided an ideal solution for this study. Nevertheless, an initial quantitative study, such as using a questionnaire, allowed for a basic insight into the issues under investigation and provided me with valuable back-up for the qualitative data obtained through the use of interviews.

Quantitative methods facilitate the quantifying of data for analysis; however, as pointed out by Weinreich (1996)²⁴, their strength is weakened when ‘the phenomenon under study is difficult to measure or quantify’; Furthermore, a weakness of quantitative methods ‘is that it decontextualises human behaviour in a way that removes the event from its real world setting and ignores the effects of variables that have not been included in the model’ (Para. 4).

Getting the best out of both qualitative and quantitative methods while ‘compensating at the same time for the weakness of each method’, as Punch (2009, p.290) argues, was the main reason for choosing a mixed method approach for this study. Creswell (2008) argues, similarly, for mixed methods as both quantitative and qualitative approaches may be insufficient on their own; He further argues that, by providing multiple angles that produce different ‘pictures’ is better because ‘it mirrors “real life”’.

Creswell (2008, slide 13), an authority on mixed methods, explains that mixed methods might be used in research in four ways:

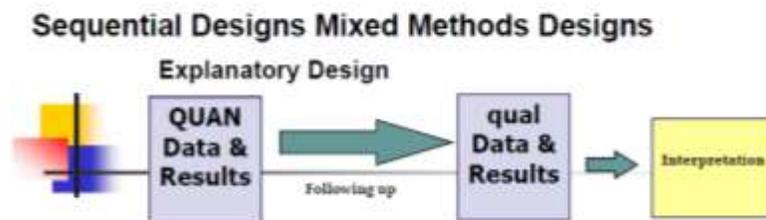
- 1) Quantitative and qualitative data are merged in a single phase study;

²⁴ <http://www.social-marketing.com/research.html>

- 2) Quantitative results are obtained in a first phase and analyzed, and the results used (connected) to select participants and design questions for a second qualitative phase;
- 3) Qualitative results are obtained in a first phase and analyzed and the results used to study quantitatively a sample from a population in the second phase;
- 4) Qualitative data may be embedded within a larger quantitative study.

For the purpose of this study, of the four categories indicated above, the second one has been chosen, because in the language of Creswell (2008) it falls under Sequential Design Mixed Methods Design (Explanatory Design) as depicted in Figure 3.1.

FIGURE 3.1 MIXED METHOD DESIGN



Using the above model, researchers may first survey a large number of individuals, and then follow up with a few of them to obtain their specific language and voices about the topic. In these situations, the advantages of collecting both closed-ended quantitative data and open-ended qualitative data prove advantageous to best understand a research problem. Data from ABMY were collected using quantitative methods then followed by qualitative methods for later interpretation.

As the primary objective of this research was ‘to investigate the ‘participants’ views of the situation being studied’ (Creswell, 2003, p. 8), it falls into the interpretivist/ constructivist paradigm. In interpretive based research, the aim is to

comprehend the ‘world of human experience’ of the participants of research as well as the focus of the subject (Cohen & Manion, 1994, p. 36; Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). Data for this research was based on mixed methods with the major part of them being qualitative research methods favoured over quantitative methods because of the richness this method provides for eliciting participants’ views and in-depth feelings. These issues cannot be accessed through structured quantitative based surveys.

As pointed out by Mackenzie & Knipe (2006):

the constructivist researcher is most likely to rely on qualitative and quantitative methods (mixed methods). Qualitative data may be utilised in a way which supports or expands upon quantitative data and effectively deepen the description.
(p.216)

In this study the quantitative data collected in the first stage were utilised to focus the qualitative data collection in the second stage.

Mixed Method Approach for this Study

Due to the nature of this study and the research focus, instead of relying on a single method, the triangulation mixed method was favoured as the most appropriate method. A triangulation mixed methods design as defined by Creswell (2008) ‘is a type of design in which different but complementary data will be collected on the same topic’ (slide 22). The main reason for the choice of this method is to ‘bring together the strength of both forms of research to ...compare results, validate results and corroborate results’ (Creswell, 2008, slide 29)

This study’s primary focus was on finding information related to ABMY: their notions of identity, their knowledge of their religion; the expectations the community has for them. The research questions required more than a single survey response; a mixed method was found to be the more appropriate one. While the study attempted to look gain deeper insights that would be gained by qualitative research, it sought to collect broader insights through the use of quantitative

methods and thus gaining perspective of both breadth and depth (Mertler 2009, p.11). In other words, the initial quantitative data was used to identify the issues that were then used to guide further investigation in the qualitative phase of the research.

Data Collection Procedure

As soon as permission to undertake data collection was granted by the ethics committee at Victoria University, communication was made with potential coordinators who could assist me in finding suitable candidates for this study. Many individuals in the Muslim community and a few Islamic/Muslim community organisations assisted me and offered valuable ideas on how to find candidates. While engaged in the process of distributing the questionnaire, I was given an opportunity to present my research proposal at an annual conference of the Federation of Australian Muslim students and youth. The organisers of the conference supported me to openly invite the audience members who fitted into my criteria to participate in my research. This made my job easier as I was able to get a large number of Muslim youth who fit into my targeted group at a single venue.

Participants were assured about the confidentiality of the data collected. Every effort was made to maintain impartiality in data collection and analysis; however, I must acknowledge that it cannot be ruled out that the influence of my personal involvement and familiarity with a few of the youth interviewed may be reflected in this research.

Australian Born Muslim Youth (ABMY) in this Study

As this study is not restricted to particular ethnic or linguistic groups, the ABMY participants in this study were from diverse ethnic backgrounds and experiences. The main criteria for selection was that they be religiously conscious and practicing

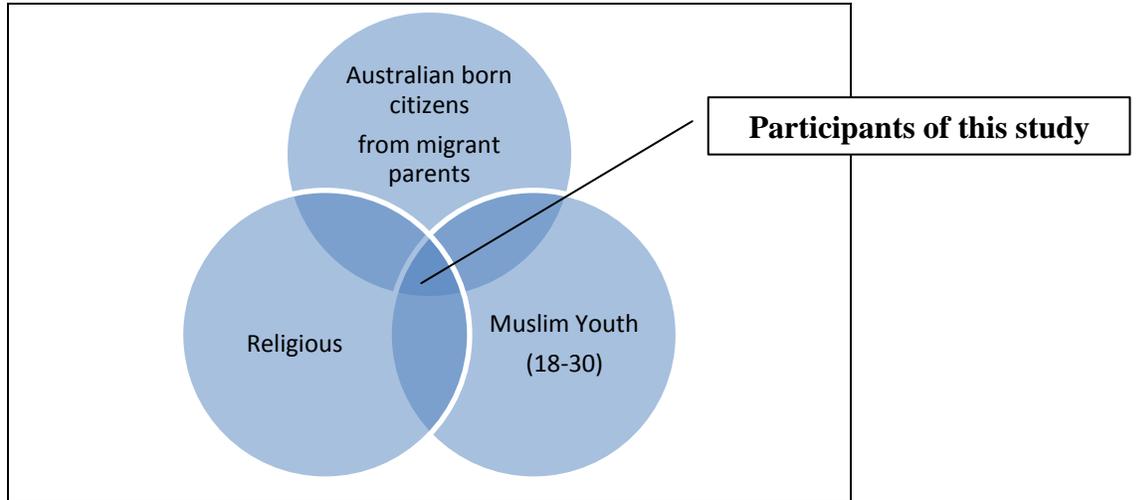
Muslims. Following specific advice and guidance from the ethics committee, I decided to include ABMY only from one of the two main sects, the *Sunni* sect. Youth from the *Shia* sect were excluded from the study as it would complicate the research focus. Their background and set up differ from *Sunni* sect. During the initial presentation of this study it was advised by the university committee to exclude *Shia* ABMY to concentrate on the specific *Sunni* ABMY.

As a consequence, the primary participants in this research were Australian-born Muslim Youth (ABMY), aged between 18 to 30 and who belonged to the *Sunni* sect. They clearly identified themselves as Muslims and had lived most of their lives in Melbourne. The main reason for choosing this age group was that they were at an age where they were capable of independently expressing their own views; likewise, identity interpretation was also independent of parental influences. Many studies conducted in Europe and the United States of America indicate this is a group that shows strong signs of a re-formation of identities (Schmit, 2004; Cesari, 2004).

As shown in the Figure 3.2, to be included in this study ABMY needed

1. to be Australian born Australian citizens living in Melbourne, with one or both parents migrants;
2. to believe in the Islamic faith and practise/observe its teachings in their daily lives;
3. to be between 18-30 of age.

FIGURE 3.2 VENN DIAGRAM IDENTIFYING RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS



People of Anglo-Saxon origin who converted to Islam and their children were not included as participants for this study, as their ethnic origins would have been different from those of the ABMY.

It is very important to define the second criteria of being religious as believing in Islamic faith and practising/observing its teachings in their public lives. As discussed in chapter two, assessing religiosity of anyone is a difficult task as there is no unified scale to assess someone's religiosity by another person.

Yet, for the purpose of this research, ABMY were defined in the manner discussed in Chapter 1: those who believe in the oneness of God and the finality of the prophet-hood; practice the daily religious prayers five times a day; observe religious guidelines in food, clothing and morals. Furthermore, they should not be seen, to be involved in any activities prohibited by Islam (such as drinking alcohol, having sex out of wedlock, etc.).

Term ABMY used in the study only for those who meet the above three criteria. It should not be taken as any Muslim youth born in Australia as it is a distinct group among Australian Born Muslims.

Research Setting

The Melbourne metropolitan area in the state of Victoria in Australia was chosen as the geographical area for this research. Sunni Sect Muslim community members from ethnic origins who live in Melbourne were chosen to take part in the data collection. Originally, it was thought that data would be collected in private homes, mosques, schools and public places such as Islamic centres and universities. Most of the data from ABMY were, however, collected in private homes, except for a limited amount collected at public gathering places of ABMY. The reason for this was the availability of youth and the convenience of data collection within a short time frame. This is very important for the success of the research, as supported by Schatzman & Strauss (1973, p. 32), who suggest that the 'researcher's success depends simply on taking into account the comfort and convenience of a particular host or sub group'. Data from parents and community leaders were collected in variety of locations places, on mutual agreement with the researcher.

The Sample

When sourcing participants for this study the intent was to include individuals from major Muslim migrant communities from different ethnic origins. Including participants from major diverse ethnic backgrounds was important to ensure that data obtained provided a diverse insight into the identity formation of ABMY.

Based on the 2006 census, the Department of Immigrations and Citizenship (DIAC) identified major ethnic Muslim communities as Lebanon 8.9 per cent, Turkey 6.8 per cent, Afghanistan 4.7 per cent, Pakistan 4.1 per cent, Bangladesh 3.9 per cent, Iraq 2.9 per cent, Indonesia 2.5 per cent, Bosnia' & Herzegovina 2.2 per cent and Iran 2.1 per cent. In order to involve as many participants as possible from the above major countries, I had planned to get in touch with major Muslim ethnic community organisations to assist me to find potential candidates (ABMY)

from their communities. During this process I was given an opportunity to distribute the questionnaire at a public Muslim youth conference held in Melbourne. This is where the majority of questionnaires were distributed and collected.

Of the questionnaires received, I found almost all major Australian Muslim migrant communities Lebanon, Turkey, Afghanistan, Iran and people from the Indian subcontinent countries (India, Pakistan and Bangladesh) represented. The only ethnic groups not represented were those from Iraq and Bosnia-Herzegovina; this resulted from a sufficiently large sample of participants from these groups not being available for the study. The ages of those participated in the stage one (questionnaire) were from eighteen to thirty. All of them are native English speakers and many of them were bilingual and could comfortably speak their parents' languages.

The samples for this study, therefore, cannot be exclusively classified as probability samples. In the initial data collection stage, questionnaires were distributed to almost all of the participants at the conference. Later, some questionnaires were distributed through community coordinators; as a consequence, participants were not randomly selected (Cohen' & Manion, 1994, p. 88). For the first phase of the research (the questionnaire), the participants were selected for 'convenience' as they were suggested by community coordinators.

Later, using the results obtained from the questionnaire, interview questions were crafted to gain a deeper understanding of the individuals in each group. Interview questions were prepared separately for ABMY, their parents and community leaders, and some members from these three groups were interviewed.

In this second stage only those who expressed a prior willingness to participate were contacted and invited to engage in semi-structured and open-ended interviews. Out of total ten ABMY, Eight of them were working and two of them were engaged in tertiary studies. It contained gender balance of half male (5) and half female (5) participants.

The following section below details the data collection stages, including the design of quantitative and qualitative instruments.

Data Collection Stages

Data collection for this research was carried out in four stages, as follows:

Stage One: Questionnaire and semi-structured question development

Using the research questions as the basis for items, a questionnaire (Appendix 1), consisting of close- and open-ended items was prepared. The questionnaire consisted of four sections: section A for background information about the participants; section B for information about identity perception; section C for the context in which they lived (society acceptance and belonging); and section D for information about the role of religion in their lives.

One hundred and fifty questionnaires were distributed among ABMY of which 39 of the questionnaires were completed (26 per cent).

Stage Two: ABMY interviews

The cohort encompassed five major ethnic groups from Lebanon, Turkey, Afghanistan, Iran and the Indian subcontinent (Pakistan and Bangladesh). In stage one, at the end of the questionnaire, participants were invited to participate in follow up interviews. Ten ABMY agreed to be interviewed and data collection stage two emerged from this process.

ABMY were interviewed in order to enrich the data about the ways in which the Muslim identity is created and maintained. The aim of the interview with the ABMY was to document their thoughts and views on the focus points of this research. Questions for interviews were developed based on the responses of students to the questionnaire. The interview questions included both structured and open-ended (see Appendix 2-4).

I made appointments for interviews with the ABMY and most of the interviews took place in their homes or their friends' homes. This made them feel comfortable and relaxed about answering the questions. Duration of interviews varied between 20 to 40 minutes.

Stage Three: Parent Interviews

Parents have some influence on their children's development and ways of thinking. They transmit cultural knowledge to their children. As noted by Carlson (2005) immigrant children 'create a sense of cultural identification based on a combination of their own experiences and cultural knowledge transmitted from their parents' (Carlson, 2005, p. 4).

Five parents of the ABMY were available for the interview. They were contacted through their children who had already been interviewed, and the community coordinators facilitated the process. The involvement of the coordinators in finding parents for the interviews made the process much easier because participants were likely to feel more comfortable responding to a coordinator. This is especially the case should a participant not want to be a part of this study.

Of these five parents, two men and one woman were interviewed directly. Another two women were not comfortable having their responses recorded; instead, they offered their assistance by agreeing to write detailed responses to my interview questions.

Stage Four: Community leader interviews

The final stage of data collection was interviews with community leaders. Five leaders who were connected to ABMY were interviewed. This include political, law enforcing officials and Muslim and mainstream community leaders.

For this, initially I made a great effort to interview the Victorian Premier or Victorian Minister for Multicultural Affairs or the Minister Assisting the Premier

on Multicultural Affairs. I was advised by their offices to communicate with policy officers within the Victorian Government's Victorian Multicultural Commission (VMC). I communicated with them and they accepted my invitation and were interviewed.

I then interviewed a community liaison officer attached to a Victorian law enforcing authority on an unofficial basis. The person I interviewed was not allowed to be interviewed officially, by their superior. This person agreed to meet me for a casual chat (without tape recording) in a Melbourne city cafe and this person shared with me many issues related to ABMY. This was very useful, due to anonymity, I am omitting the person's and the department's name.

I then interviewed three Muslim community leaders/ workers for their input. One of them is a president of a Muslim Students' Federation, and one was a chairperson of a Muslim Women Network. The last one was an adolescent counsellor and psychologist who had been working within the private education sector and the Muslim community. The focus of the interviews with community leaders was on their expectations of ABMY.

Data Analysis

The data collected in this study were analysed in order to investigate the research questions. The methods used to carry out the study are outlined below. It was hoped the information gathered in this project would be used to inform relevant stakeholders about education programs for ABMY.

Quantitative data analysis

In the first stage data, which were drawn from the questionnaire, were entered into a Microsoft Excel sheet for analysis. Responses to quantitative questions were entered directly and responses to qualitative questions were coded and entered in number formats in order to make analysis easier. The quantitative data are

presented in percentages and statistics. Questionnaire data information has been analysed naturalistically, identifying patterns, themes, trends and linkages, as described by Patton (1990, p. 406). Policy implications have been derived through reflections on the outcomes and findings.

Qualitative data analysis

Qualitative data aims to understand the phenomena in ways that extend and enrich participant voices; documenting feelings and sentiments ensures that report findings are not merely represented by numbers and statistics. Data obtained from interviews was coded using thematic analysis (Attride-Stirling, 2001). This facilitated the categorising of emerging themes from which frequencies, consistence and differences became apparent. Data analysis of stage two (interviews with ABMY) has been provided in chapter 5, inputs from parents and community leaders have been provided in chapter six. Thomas and Harden (2008) assert the value of thematic analysis in that it provides the researcher with an opportunity to examine the data 'line by line'. In doing so the researcher is able to track and expose patterns that emerge from data and over-arching themes that tell a story.

Limitations of the study

The success of this research is due to the openness of Muslim youth, parents, local Muslim and non-Muslim communities in responding to the interviews. One major limitation of this study is that the cohort of this study comprises a small sample of 'non-probable' participants in Melbourne. Data in the initial stage (questionnaire) 150 questionnaires were distributed to ABMY and only 39 valid completed questionnaires were returned. Out of this only 10 ABMY and 5 parents were available for interview. All of them were able to speak English and all the interviews were conducted in English. All of these participants were interviewed face to face except two female participants and they submitted written responses to

my in-depth interview questions. Due to the nature of this study, I wanted to get some input from some leaders of the community (including Muslims and non-Muslims) for their views. Considering the time factor I decided to interview five community leaders and this included two non-Muslim government employees and three Muslim community leaders who directly deal with Muslim youth.

Due to this fact and also that the study was based on the data obtained from the limited number of participants, responses may not be applicable to a wide spectrum of Muslim youth living in Melbourne, Australia. Also, given the size of the sample, generalisable statements and reflections that are consistent with ABMY across Australia cannot be made, but rather are applicable only to the people who completed the questionnaire and who participated in the interviews.

Conclusion

This chapter summarises research methods utilised in this study, data collection procedures and background of the participants which include ABMY, Parents and Community leaders. Accessing the ABMY through community workers and a youth student conference and collecting quantitative data facilitated going deeper into the research area through in-depth interviews at the second stage. This interview process provided valuable data or analysis. The primary objective of this study was to investigate the notion of identity of ABMY then the way they learn their religion and their commitments and the views of parents and community leaders. This chapter also outlined how the data were analysed and what were the limitations of this study.

The next chapter provides participants' reflections (from stage one data collection) on the research questions raised at the beginning of this thesis.

CHAPTER FOUR

Introduction

In this chapter the results from the survey data is presented. As indicated in Chapter 3, data was obtained from three groups of people that included Australian Born Muslim Youth (ABMY), Muslim migrant parents and local community leaders. Data from ABMY were collected in two stages: Initially through a questionnaire, and then followed up by in-depth interviews. This chapter presents the initial data collected from the survey questionnaire.

In presenting and analysing the data collected it is important to revisit and respond to the original research questions raised at the beginning of this thesis. These questions were:

1. How do ABMY identify themselves? What contributes to this identification?
2. What are the impacts of Australian society on the (daily) lives of ABMY?
3. What is the role of religion in the lives of ABMY?
4. Is there a generational gap between ABMY and their parents regarding their interpretations/ understanding of Islam?

Participants for this study, as explained in Chapter 3, were selected from a group of Muslim youth who attended a national conference held in Melbourne. Table 1 shows the composition of ABMY who responded to the questionnaire. With the support of the conference committee, the project was publicly announced at the conference. One hundred and fifty questionnaires were distributed to conference delegates. As the conference was mainly for Muslim youth and student participants, it was assumed that principal participants were those interested in the

Islamic religion and community issues. I noticed during the conference almost all participants performed their prayers (*Salat*) in congregation. This confirmed, for me, their commitment to their religion, as they were conscious about fulfilling religious obligations on time choosing not to wait until they reached their hotel room or their home.

Questionnaire structure

The questionnaire contained six sections with a total of 42 questions. The sections included details of their background information of participants, questions related to identity, society (acceptance and belonging), affiliation with religion, religious education and the role of parents/ guardians. It also provided an extra page if participants wanted to write detailed answers for any of the questions.

Distribution of Questionnaires

During the conference the master of the ceremony introduced the research and urged the participants to support this research. Two volunteers assisted in the distribution of the questionnaires and ensured they were only given to ABMY between the ages of 18 and 30. The ages of the participants completing the questionnaire had also been confirmed, as participants were asked to write their age on the form. As Muslim males and females have a tradition of sitting separately and often they prefer to sit separately, a male volunteer distributed the questionnaires to the males and a female volunteer distributed them to the females. Such action was taken to ensure that Muslim cultural values were not violated and that participants felt comfortable and safe during the distribution of questionnaires.

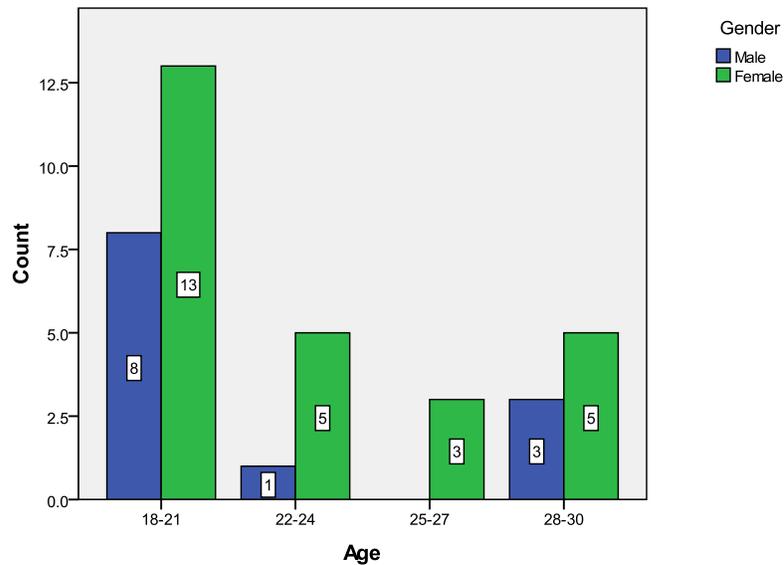
Background of Participants

Questionnaires were distributed to all participants who met the criteria for this study. Out of 150 questionnaires distributed, 51 were returned. Thus the return rate was 34 per cent. During the analysis phase it was found that twelve questionnaires were filled in by Muslim students born overseas. Thus, they were deemed as being invalid for the data analysis as they did not fit the criteria previously established. Accordingly, 39 questionnaires were found valid and used for analysis in this research.

When data were received and analysed it was revealed that 33 per cent (13 participants) of males and 67 per cent of females (26 participants) completed the survey. This coincides with the makeup of the conference whereby the majority of participants were female. Even though one side of the conference room had been allocated for female conference attendees and the other for male attendees, there were many empty seats on the male side, while the female side was almost full. The fact that more women participate in (Islamic) religious and community activities in Western societies has been noticed by other investigators, and the findings here coincide with this observation. Kaplan (2005:84) records this as ‘female adolescents are simultaneously more religious’ than male adolescents.

The ages of the participants of this study ranged from 18 to 30 years as shown below in Table 4.2. The majority of participants totalling 21 (53.8 per cent) were from the age group 18 to 21 years, the second largest group was aged 28 to 30 totalling 8 (20.5 per cent) of the participants; the smallest group of participants totalling 3 (8 per cent) were aged 25-27. One person did not answer this question. This data confirms that all participants are within the age range intended for this study. Among the participants, the number of female participants was higher in each age group as shown in the following graph (Figure 4).

FIGURE 3: AGE AND GENDER OF PARTICIPANTS



Questions 3 and 4 in the questionnaire were screening questions to determine if the participants qualified for this study. Even though other precautions had been taken before distribution of the questionnaires, these two questions reconfirmed their eligibility as Australian born with Australian citizenship. Accordingly, all of the participants of this study were born in Australia and currently permanently live in the Melbourne metropolitan area. As shown in Table 2, the majority of them were born in Victoria while a very small per cent were born in the Australian Capital Territory (ACT) and New South Wales (NSW).

Table 2: Places of birth

STATE	Frequency	Percentage
VIC	34	91.9
ACT	2	5.4
NSW	1	2.7
Total	37	100

Participants in this study include people who were employed and unemployed, and also some were students. While the majority of them were full time students, almost one third of them were employed full time at the time of completing the questionnaire. A very small number of participants were unemployed (Table 3).

Table 3: Occupation of Participants

		Frequency	Percentage
Valid	Full Time Student	25	64.1
	Working Full Time	11	28.2
	Unemployed	1	2.6
	Total	37	94.9
Missing	System	2	5.1
Total		39	100

The questionnaire also sought information about living patterns of ABMY. As shown in table 4 below, most of the participants lived with both of their biological parents, about a fifth were married, and a small minority live with friends or relatives.

Table 4: Living patterns of ABMY

ABMY living with	Frequency	Percentage
Biological Parents	27	71.1
Friends	2	5.3
Relatives	1	2.6
Biological Mother	0	0
Biological Father	0	0
Other	8	21.1
TOTAL	38	100

Language at home

The majority of the participants in this study speak English as their primary language at home. Participants were asked to indicate their language preferences in order. As shown in table 5, just over half of the participants involved in the study spoke English as their primary language of communication at home, just under half spoke Arabic and a small minority spoke Indonesian.

Table 5: Home Language 1

	Frequency	Percentage
English	20	51.3
Arabic	17	43.6
Indonesian	2	5.1
Total	39	100.0

While the above table shows the first preference of home language, the study also received data regarding additional languages spoken at home. The most prevalent additional languages spoken were English and Arabic. The following table (Tables 6) shows other languages they speak at home.

Table 6: Other Home Languages 2

		Frequency	Percentage
Valid	English	16	41.0
	Arabic	11	28.2
	Turkish	2	5.1
	Indonesian	1	2.6
	Urdu	1	2.6
	Total	31	79.5
Missing	System	8	20.5
Total		39	100.0

Ethnic background of parents

Participants of this study came from very diverse backgrounds. While the majority of parents came from a Lebanese background, the cohort also included participants from Egypt, Syria, Iraq, Turkey, India and Indonesia. Table 7 shows the ethnic origins of the participants. In the sample of respondents, the majority of participants (ABMY) at the Islamic youth conference where majority data were collected, were Lebanese Australians. The remainder came from South Asia, Indonesia, and countries in the Middle East,

Table 7: Ethnic backgrounds of parents

Father	Mother	Frequency	Percentage
Lebanon	Lebanon	22	56.4
India	India	2	5.1
Indonesia	Indonesia	2	5.1
Turkey	Turkey	2	5.1
Egypt	Syria	2	5.1
Lebanon	Syria	1	2.6
Syria	Syria	1	2.6
Syria/Lebanon	Syria	1	2.6
Egypt	Egypt	1	2.6
Egypt		1	2.6
Arab	Arab	1	2.6
Iraqi	Iraqi	1	2.6
Syria	Syria	1	2.6
Not Answered		1	2.6
TOTAL		39	100

All participants were Australian citizens. To find out how many of those participants possessed citizenships other than Australian, the questionnaire questioned “do you have citizenship of any other countries?”. Just over half of the respondents responded that they had other citizenships (dual) along with Australian citizenship; just under half of them did not have any other citizenship other than Australian as shown in table 8. Dual citizenship may have some influence in shaping the notion of identity. This information gave very crucial background information of the participants before the next data collection stage of face to face interviews.

Table 8: Other citizenships

	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	20	51.3
No	19	48.7
Total	39	100.0

The data further revealed the details of dual citizenships (Table 9) just over two-thirds of the participants had Lebanese citizenship, just over two-tenths had Turkish citizenship, one-tenth were Egyptian, and the remainder had either Palestinian or Syrian citizenship. These data are consistent with Australian Bureau of Statistics 2006 census data (ABS, 2008) that indicate the highest number of Muslim community members in Australia with dual citizenship identify as Lebanese.

Table 9: Countries of citizenship

		Frequency	Percentage
Valid	Lebanon	13	33.3
	Turkey	2	5.1
	Syria	1	2.6
	Egypt	2	5.1
	Palestine	1	2.6
	Total	19	48.7
Missing	System	20	51.3
Total		39	100

Data Analysis

After the background information was obtained, the questionnaire concentrated on the main themes of this study, identity, religious education and the expectations of parents and the community on ABMY. The following section provides the data analysis of these themes.

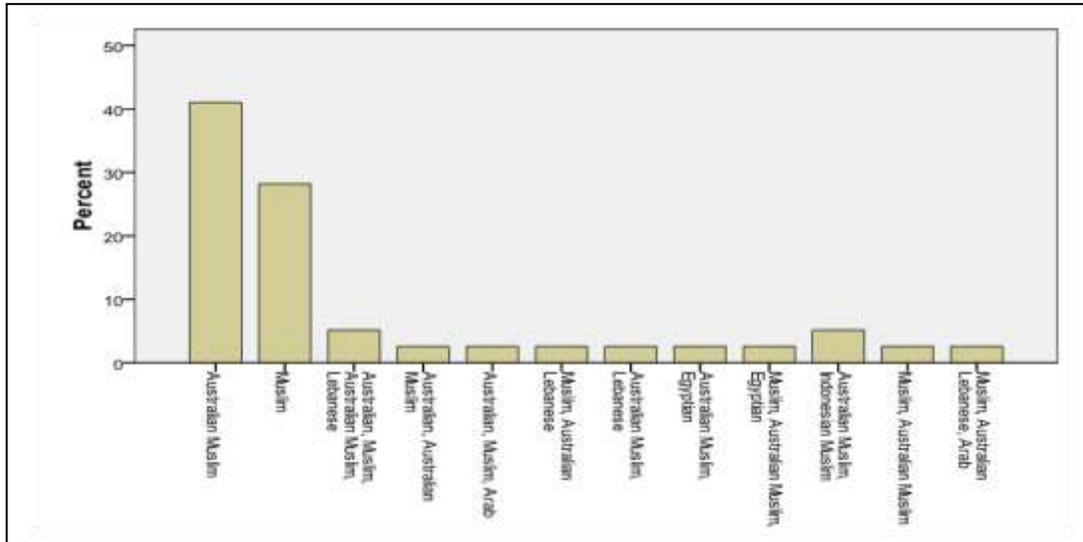
Identity

Initial questions concentrated on how ABMY identified themselves. The questionnaire provided many options to choose from such as Australian, Muslim, Australian Muslim and others. Participants were told that they could choose more than one if they desired. Table 10 and figure 5 outline their responses. While the majority of them identified themselves as ‘Australian Muslim’, just over a quarter chose ‘Muslim’ and the remainder – nearly one-third – identified themselves as having combined identities.

Table 10: How do ABMY identify themselves?

Identity	Frequency	Percentage
Australian Muslim	16	41
Muslim	11	28.2
Australian, Muslim, Australian Muslim, Lebanese	2	5.1
Australian, Australian Muslim	1	2.6
Australian, Muslim, Arab	1	2.6
Muslim, Australian Lebanese	1	2.6
Australian Muslim, Lebanese	1	2.6
Australian Muslim, Egyptian	1	2.6
Muslim, Australian Muslim, Egyptian	1	2.6
Australian Muslim, Indonesian Muslim	2	5.1
Muslim, Australian Muslim	1	2.6
Muslim, Australian Lebanese, Arab	1	2.6
Total	39	100

Figure 4: How do ABMY identify themselves?



Australian Muslims

The majority of those who identified themselves as ‘Australian Muslim’ related to the fact that they were born in Australia and their religion was an integral part of them. Thus, the respondents gave reasons such as ‘...I am proud to be an Australian and a Muslim’ (5F). Another participant wrote that, ‘Because I was born and raised in Australia, I only speak English and identify very much with Australian culture more than my heritage’ (23F). ‘Australian’ and ‘Muslim’ are two different entities which are combined and frequently used as a single combined identity as ‘Australian Muslim’. This is how it is used in this study; no one identified themselves as ‘Muslim Australian’ which was another option; the emphasis was given to being ‘Australian’ rather than the second component, ‘Muslim’.

Disappointment, frustration and anger among ABMY because of non-acceptance by the wider Australian community was expressed by many participants. This is indicated by one of the participants who asserts, ‘People assume that we are non-Australian Muslims, but are surprised when they hear me

speak in an Australian accent' (8F). Another participant indicated that, 'For me it's important to identify both nationally and religiously' (38M). Both these participants highlight a central themes that many ABMY feel that they are not accepted by the wider community within a religious lens. In comparison they feel connected and accepted by the Australian Muslim community. This was acknowledged by a participant, who exclaimed:

I am proud to be an Australian and I call myself Australian, when I say I am an 'Aussie' they ask me 'where you were born?' when I say I was born in Australia, they ask me where your parents were born or coming from? To avoid all of these I say I am 'Australian Muslim', this will also give them a message across that I do not date with guys, do wear modest cloth, do not drink alcohol, do not gamble, do not gossip, lie and so on (2F).

There is another argument regarding identity made by one of the participants. She strongly criticized identity being determined of religion. She argued, 'I believe I am both Australian and Lebanese; however, I do not understand why people identify themselves by religion, I don't see its importance' (6F).

Being Muslim

Those who identified themselves as Muslim did not indicate any unwillingness to being identified as Australian. Rather they noted their comfort of being identified as a practicing Muslim which came from following their religion as a way of life. One respondent emphasized religion by noting that, 'There is no nationalism in Islam, although for sure some personal characteristics I share with many Australians' (20F) and another respondent wrote, 'Faith first, but in term of nationality I am Australian geographically, physically and socially but spiritually Muslim' (24M). Another respondent differentiated nationality and religion, writing, 'I identify myself as a Muslim, Islam is my way of life, if you ask me about my nationality, I would proudly say Australian' (28M). He is identifying as a Muslim as he follows Islam as his religion and way of life and he is also proud of saying

that he is an Australian in terms of nationality. For him it is natural that they can coexist and he feels comfortable with being both.

Ethnic Identity

Many respondents expressed their frustration and anger at not being accepted as being a fellow Australian by the wider Australian community. One female participant wrote, 'I don't feel accepted as an Australian' (30F). In this case because this participant does not feel accepted as an Australian, she is more likely to cling to different factors such as her own cultural origin as she said 'because I am not accepted by wider community to be part of them, I stick to people from my ethnic community' (30F). There were many others who expressed the same sentiment. One female said, 'sometimes I feel confident because I do look ethnic despite feeling Australian and through this I try to relate to my Egyptian background' (23F). From the data it was apparent that most of the participants were confident and proud to call themselves Australians. Since the ABMY often do not feel that they are accepted as Australians, they frequently attach their ethnic origin or religious faith to their Australian identity to clarify their identity such as being an Australian Muslim or Australian Arab. One explanation encapsulated this notion when a participant in the research said she was 'Australian by nationality and Muslim by religion'. Riddell and Yasmeen (2009) notes 'Muslim perceptions of social exclusion have increased post-9/11, in an environment where 'Muslim' had become political and social shorthand for 'terrorist.' (p.1).

Multiple identities

Participants were asked whether they had multiple identities. Out of 39 participants, 35 answered this question, just over half of them responded no while just less than half of them responded yes (Table 11). This is an interesting finding at the time when researchers like Ramadan argue on existence of multiple identities.

Table 11: Multiple Identities

		Frequency	Percentage
Valid	No	18	46.2
	Yes	17	43.6
	Total	35	89.7
Missing	System	4	10.3
Total		39	100

The above table highlights that there are mixed of participants who identify themselves by a single identity while others by multiple identities. This is not new to migrant generations. Multiple identities and multiple home lands are natural for this generation of people. Views expressed by Hall (1996, p.2) on these people are very relevant to this situation:

There are people who belong to more than one world, speak more than one language (literally and metaphorically), inhabit more than one identity, have more than one home; who have learned to negotiate and translate between cultures, and who, because they are irrevocably the product of several interlocking histories and cultures, have learned to live with, and indeed to speak from, difference. They speak from the 'in-between' of different cultures.

There are many ABMY in this study who were proud of having multiple identities and who were very comfortable with them. For example, one of the participants indicated that, ‘...people think that we are not proud of being Aussies ... we are, people need to understand our reality’. This view was supported by another participant who said, ‘(The) media say that Muslims do not identify themselves as Aussies, which is not true’. The same view has been shared by others, as well as one participant who said, ‘...when you refer to yourself as a Lebo/Muslim, non-Arabs seem to think it’s because we aren’t proud of being Australians and vice versa’ (6F). It appears these youth, even though they call themselves Lebo or Muslim, are proud of being Australian and their ethnic links adds value to their Australian identity.

Despite the fact that there are many ABMY who identify themselves with multiple labels as identities, there are people who argue that Muslims' identity through religion, supersedes their nationality. For example, according to Rupert Murdoch (2006), 'You have to be careful about Muslims, who have a very strong, in many ways a fine, but very strong religion, which supersedes any sense of nationalism wherever they go' (The Age, 2006). On the other hand, this argument has been strongly denied by Rahim Ghauri, the president of the Australian Federation of Islamic Councils (Ghauri, 2006):

Both (religion and nationality) go hand in hand. I am a Muslim, my religion is there, and nobody is there to stop me from praying five times a day and giving to charity. At the same time, I must be faithful and loyal to my country.' ('Murdoch warns on Muslims,

While these counter arguments are made by a Muslim, there are ABMY who think very differently, as one respondent indicated in the questionnaire:

I am Australian by nationality, Muslim by religion, Lebanese by ethnicity; if you want me to identify myself you need to tell me on what basis, I eat fish and chips, McDonald junks [sic], Lebanese food, eat breakfast with Vegemite (F39).

Tension of having multiple identities

Participants were asked whether they experience any tensions in having multiple identities. Surprisingly, the majority of participants didn't answer this question. Of those who did, 13 participants (out of 39) answered 'no' and two of them answered 'yes'. However, there were some interesting comments. Because of their religious faith, many Muslim females wear a *Hijab*. These women said that they are often not considered by others as being Australian because of their unique clothes. One female participant wrote about the tensions of having multiple identities by saying, 'It is very hard to be a Muslim and be identified as one physically but wanting to live with the mentality of an Australian' (F1). Another female participant wrote, 'I am Muslim, but more Australian than Lebanese. I am not accepted as an Australian

because of the way I dress, so I constantly have to explain myself' (F8). This reflects upon the strong nature of dress and clothing to perceptions of religious and cultural identity.

Clashes between religion and culture

Another female participant pointed out the clashes between cultural traditions and religious guidelines during wedding parties, she pointed out that cultural values supersedes religious guidelines. Islam accommodates cultural values as long as they do not contradict clear Islamic rulings. When these cultural traditions contradict Islamic rulings, Islamic religious traditions should be given priority; nevertheless, while religious views or guidelines are clear, parents often give priority to their cultural values over Islamic rulings. According to ABMY, some of their parents mix and confuse cultural values with Islamic rulings without knowing which one to prioritise. This will be further discussed in the later part of this chapter. Regarding these tensions one Muslim girl said, 'Yes! It's hard to be Australian, Lebanese and a Muslim all in one, e.g., our cultural weddings don't follow any Islamic belief' (F15).

Most of those who answered 'no tensions', did not give reasons. Of the few who did, one female wrote, 'In my school I don [sic] face any tensions having to take on multiple identities, I think many people are in the same position, I do not go to Muslim school' (F29). A male participant wrote, 'I don't feel any tensions, I am comfortable in my beliefs and I know who I am, I don't feel a conflict being Muslim and Australian' (M28). There are people who balance both Australian culture and the religion in their lives. As one participant explained, many ABMY try '...fitting in with the Australian culture and at the same time trying to fulfil [their] duties as a Muslim [and succeed]' (19F).

As explained earlier, contradictions between religious points of views and interpretations about religious views by ethnic communities are quite apparent. Research participants expressed this during casual conversations and in focus group

sessions. I noticed that most ABMY prefer to interpret their religion and take their religious guidelines directly from primary sources of Islam rather than what they see as misinterpreted views of Islam made by some of their parents. As most of the parents learned about their religion from their home countries in traditional religious schools or from their parents or elders, often the primary source of their religious education was the person who taught them at a young age; however, this is not the case of ABMY as they learn and apply the religion in a very different environment from their parents. These ABMY prefer to learn from primary sources of Islam rather than depending on elders or parents.

Factors shaping Identity

One of the issues on which this study seeks further information is related to the factors that contribute to shaping the identity of ABMY. There were six areas the questionnaire addressed. They are discussed in this section.

To start with, participants were asked to indicate two main factors shaping their identity; however, some participants indicated more than two applied to their circumstances. For the purpose of this data analysis, only the first two factors were used. Out of these first two factors, religion was the primary factor indicated by a very high majority of respondents while family and culture also being indicated by a small minority. Three respondents did not answer this question as shown in the next Table (Table 12).

Table 12: Primary factors contributing to shape identity

	Factors	Frequency	Percentage
Valid	Religion	34	87.2
	Family	1	2.6
	Culture and Background	1	2.6
	Total	36	92.3
Missing	System	3	7.7
Total		39	100.0

Other factors mentioned as contributors for shaping their identity were collected and presented in Table 13. Family accounts for almost half of the responses others were: ethnicity, culture and background, gender, personality, religion, morals and nationality were featured in smaller numbers.

Table 13: Other factors contributing to shape the identity

	Factors	Frequency	Percentage
Valid	Religion	1	2.6
	Ethnicity	6	15.4
	Family	17	43.6
	Culture and Background	4	10.3
	Gender	2	5.1
	Personality	2	5.1
	Morals	1	2.6
	Nationality	1	2.6
	Total	34	87.2
Missing	System	5	12.8
Total		39	100

From Tables 12 and 13, it is apparent that for most religion and family play important roles in shaping the identity of ABMY.

Impact of Australian society

People are affected by the environment that they live in. It is natural to expect that ABMY feel affected by the context and the times that they live in. This was addressed in the survey, in the question ‘What is the impact of being a Muslim in contemporary Australian society?’ Table 14 outlines the data received.

Table 14: Impact of being a Muslim in Australia

Impacts of being a Muslim in Australian society	Frequency	Percentage
Stereotype	11	28.2
Discrimination	8	20.5
Not accepted by fellow Australians	6	15.4
Very comfortable life	5	12.8
Not Answered	5	12.8
Misconceptions	4	10.3
Total	39	100

The survey asked the following question, ‘What aspects of Australian social and cultural life have had the biggest impact on you?’ A wide range of aspects was pointed out by the participants (Table 15).

Table 15: Aspects of Australian life having the highest impact on ABMY

Aspects	Frequency	Percentage
Sports	6	15.8
Alcohol	3	7.9
Alienation	2	5.3
Education	2	5.3
Social Life	2	5.3
University	2	5.3
Being part of people	1	2.6
Connected with culture	1	2.6
Enjoyments	1	2.6
Environmental Friendly	1	2.6
Equal Opportunities	1	2.6
Equal opportunity for Women	1	2.6
Fashion	1	2.6
Focus on body image	1	2.6
Free Speech	1	2.6
Freedom	1	2.6
Language	1	2.6
Multicultural	1	2.6
Non-Halal food	1	2.6
Racism	1	2.6
Respect for others	1	2.6
School	1	2.6
Sex	1	2.6
Stereotypes	1	2.6
Time conscious society	1	2.6
Well run Government	1	2.6
Work	1	2.6
Total	38	100

All together 27 aspects were indicated. Of the diverse aspects impacting on the lives of ABMY, sports had the highest primary influence, followed, in order, by alcohol, alienation (non-inclusion), education, social life and education. The remaining factors had only single observations.

As ABMY have indicated there is a diverse range of factors that impact on and contribute to their notions of identity. The above data also highlights that ABMY are not living in isolation; just like other Australian youth, ABMY are also interested and consider that one of the biggest impacts on them is sports. This factor too has to be considered along with other factors shaping the identity of ABMY, the primary focus of this study.

Positive factors of welcoming religious and cultural diversity

Participants were asked about the positive factors in Australian society in welcoming religious and cultural diversity. The following data were collected as shown in Table 16.

Table 16: Positive factors of Australian society

Factors	Frequency	Percentage
Freedom of Religion	11	28.9
Democracy	8	21.1
Integration	4	10.5
Multicultural	4	10.5
Free Speech	4	10.5
Friendly nature	3	7.9
Aussies interested to know about Islam	1	2.6
Total	35	92.1
System	3	7.9
	38	100

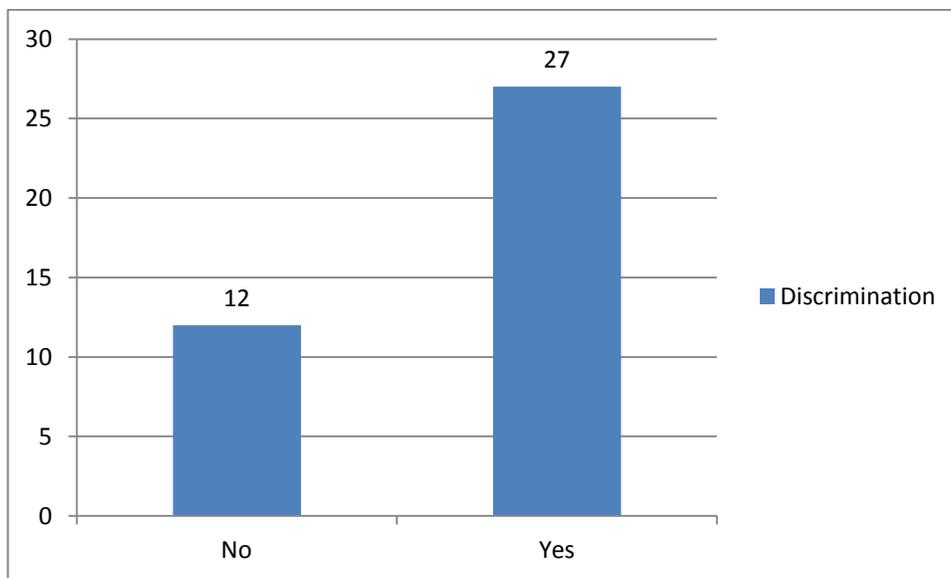
Freedom of religion was the highest-rated factor followed by democracy, integration, multicultural, free speech and (Australians) friendly nature contribute positively to their well being. These data indicate that ABMY, with many factors seen as positive for their well being in Australia. As ABMY find these as positive factors, these too have to be considered along with other factors shaping the identity of ABMY, the primary focus of this study. During the study I have

observed ABMY use a term Aussies for white Australians, I presume in the above table it has been used in this meaning.

Discrimination

Discrimination is one of the major themes that surfaces when talking about migrant communities, their children and second generation relatives. One of the research questions that this study attempts to answer is the impact of Australian society on the lives of ABMY. In this study, questionnaire respondents were asked, ‘Have you faced discrimination as a Muslim in Australia?’ The following data were received.

Figure 5: Discrimination as a Muslim in Australia



In this sample, over two-thirds had experienced discrimination of some kind. The nature of that discrimination is discussed in the following section.

Types of discrimination

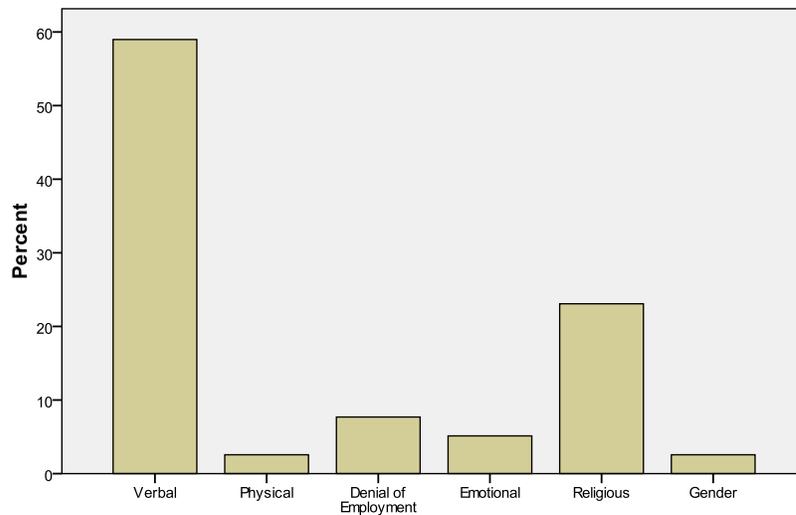
As described above, a majority of participants had experienced some sort of discrimination in their lives. The questionnaire further explored the types of

discrimination that was articulated by the participants. Verbal discrimination includes verbal abuses and physical include mainly physical attacks such as pulling the hijabs etc. The following results were obtained. The results are reported in Table 17 and Figure 7. More than half had experienced verbal discrimination; just under a quarter had experienced religious discrimination; the third most common discrimination was denial of employment. Physical, emotional and gender discrimination were low.

Table 17: Types of discrimination

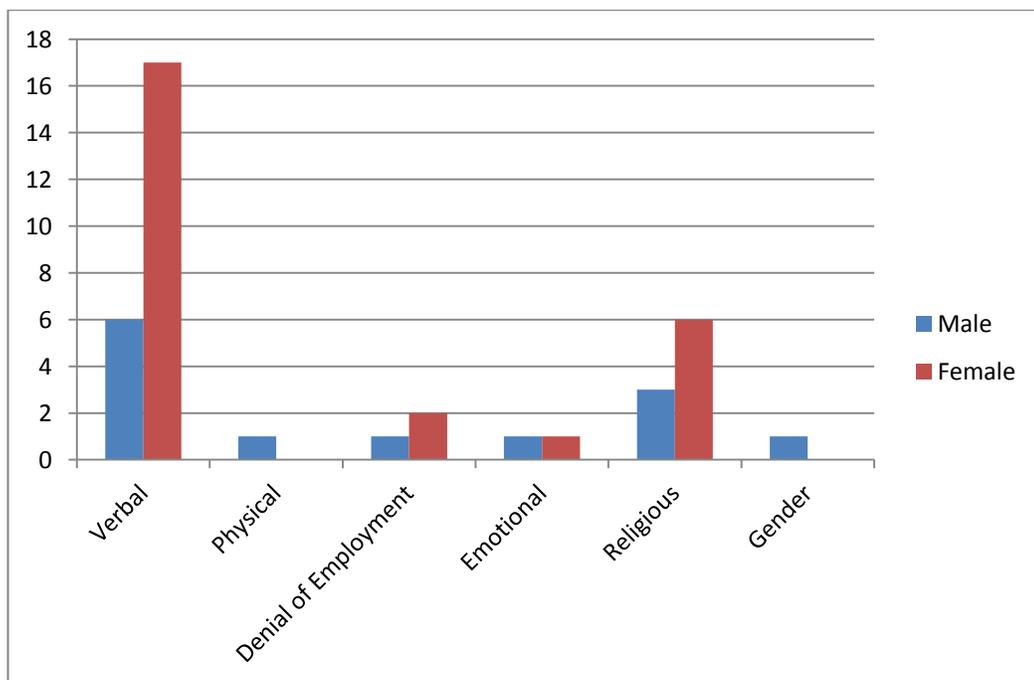
Types of discrimination	Frequency	Percentage
Verbal	23	59
Religious	9	23.1
Denial of Employment	3	7.7
Emotional	2	5.1
Physical	1	2.6
Gender	1	2.6
Total	39	100

Figure 6: Types of discrimination



Data was further analysed by sexuality to see if there was a difference between discrimination for Muslim males and females. The results are reported in Figure 9. Women were more subject to verbal and religious discrimination than were men. One possible explanation could relate to Muslim women's distinct (physical) visibility of women wearing *Hijab*, which uniquely distinguishes them from others especially in Western countries. The *Hijab* often plays an important role in establishing the religious identity. In the American context, as Haddad (2007, p.254) points out Muslim girls' assumption of public Islamic identity is assumed by wearing the *Hijab* and she concluded in her research that the '*Hijab* has become a symbol of American Islamic identity'. This is a common aspect which would apply for any Western or other countries where Muslims live as minority. Discrimination is another fact which contributes to shaping the identity of youth, in our case ABMY's notions of identity.

Figure 7: Victims of discrimination by gender and types of Discrimination

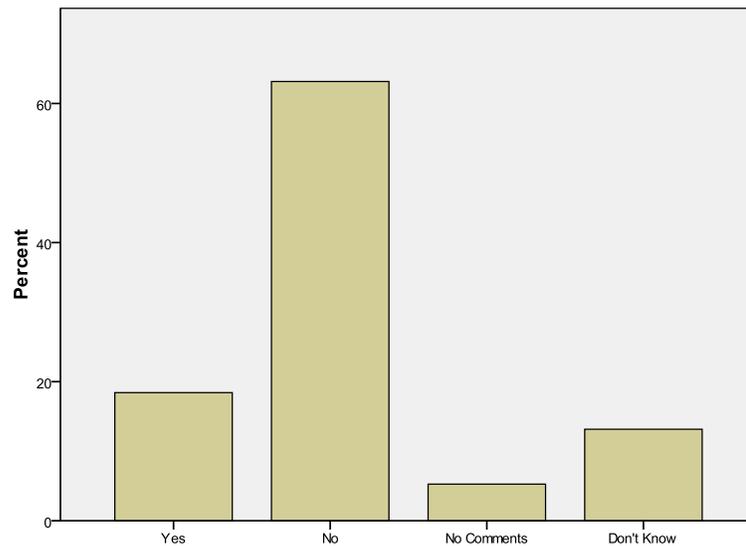


Isolation in the social milieu

One of the main issues or problems faced by migrant communities is with regard to feeling a sense of isolation in their social milieu. Participants were asked whether they felt isolated because of their Muslim faith. The results to this question are reported in Figure 9. The majority of participants reported that they did not feel isolated, with 63 per cent of them responding that they felt connected to their local Australian community. Only 18 per cent of them responded that they felt isolated.

Isolation is another factor through which people measure the level of their belonging and affiliation to the rest of the community. This feeling contributes to the shaping of identity of everyone, but is especially significant in migrant communities, and especially in the case of ABMY. That is why this question was raised in the early stage of data collection. Surprisingly the results revealed that the majority of questionnaire responses indicated that ABMY did not feel isolated.

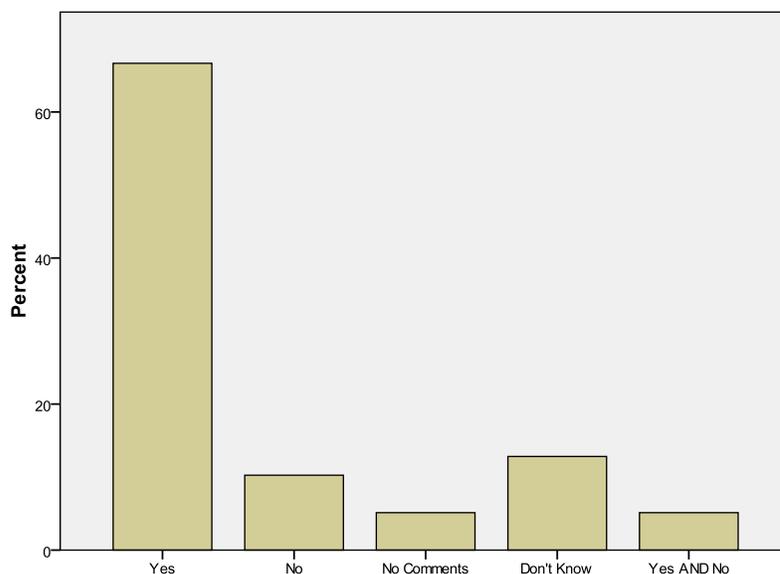
Figure 8: Isolation because of membership to Muslim community



Connectedness to Australian society

This study further explored whether participants felt connected to the wider Australian community highlights the responses to the question. Interestingly, in spite of previous comments regarding verbal abuse and being discriminated against because of their religion, the results from this study just over two-thirds of participants indicated that they *did* feel connected to the wider Australian community. Only a small minority noted that they did not feel connected. A small number following on from this either ambivalent or did not know. No reasons for the responses were provided.

Figure 9: Connected to Australian



Issues facing Australia

The participants were asked what they regarded as being the most important issues facing them as members of Australian society and what aspects of Australian social life had most impact on them. Multiple factors were given but there were no dominating factors. Table 18 showcases the response shown.

Table 18: Issues facing Australia

Issues	Issue 1	Issue 2	Issue 3	Frequency	Percentage
Racism	4	1		5	20
Terrorism	1	1	2	4	16
Religion	2	2		4	16
Misunderstanding of Islam	2			2	8
Media	2			2	8
Education	1	1	1	3	12
Discrimination	2			2	8
Draught	1			1	4
Unity of Muslim community	1			1	4
Non-Halal Food	1			1	4
Total				25	100

Racism received the highest response and may have been linked with discrimination that ABMY felt that they have faced in recent times.

Government Attitudes towards Muslims

Government attitudes towards Muslim young people were perceived by two-thirds of the ABMY as being unfavourable. No one mentioned their reasons for this and therefore it is not easy to draw conclusions from their statements. At the time of the survey there was a prominent issue in the media regarding a boatload of refugees who were accused of throwing their children overboard (Walter, 2004).²⁵ The consequent actions by the then Howard government, and the government's stance regarding the war on terror, (which at some stage made Muslims the 'bad' guys) may have influenced the responses at this time.

²⁵ <http://www.abc.net.au/lateline/stories/s482891.htm>,
<http://education.theage.com.au/cmspage.php?intid=135&intversion=113>,

Table 19: Government attitudes towards Muslims

Govt. Attitude	Frequency	Percentage
Very Favourable	0	0.00
Favourable	7	19.4
Unfavourable	24	66.7
Not sure	5	13.9
Total	36	100.00

Government attitude is an important factor that contributes towards shaping the identity of ABMY. After this question, the questionnaire moved towards religion and religious education in the lives of ABMY, the second major theme of this study.

Religion and religious education

Religion plays a very important part in the lives of Muslims as they believe Islam is a complete code of life rather than simply a collection of rituals that are confined within the four walls of a mosque. This has been frequently cited as one of the distinguishing features of Islam which is passed to its followers. The Islamic Education Foundation (2006, para 2) clearly defines the message of Islam for followers:

Islam contains complete systems of life. It establishes a clear system of worship, civil rights, laws of marriage and divorce, laws of inheritance, code of behaviour, what not to drink, what to wear, and what not to wear, and how to worship God. It also tells us how to govern, the laws of war and peace, when to go to war, when to make peace, the laws of economics, and the laws of buying and selling, etc. Islam is a complete code of life. Islam is not for mosques only. Islam is for life, daily life. Islam is a guide to life in all its aspects: socially, ethically, economically, and politically. Islam is a complete constitution.

Furthermore, a *Quranic* verse states (*Quran* 6:162):

Say: “Truly, my prayer, my sacrifice, my living and my dying are for Allah, the Lord of the worlds. No partner has He: this am I commanded, and I am the first of those who submit to His Will”.

The writing of Islam expects followers to commit themselves and their lives as a totality to its guidelines and the ethos inherent to it. As the second major theme of this study concentrated on looking at the role of religion in the lives of ABMY, it was necessary to explore more deeply the areas such as affiliation of ABMY with religion, how it is practiced and who educate them and how they learn the religion.

Practicing Islam and ABMY

Islam expects its followers to practice Islam throughout all aspects of their lives. This study sought to uncover the relationship of religion and the lives of ABMY and whether they are practicing Islam in their lives by following its commands. The data in Table 20, 21 and Figure 11 indicate that an overwhelming majority of the respondents were practicing Muslims. It must be acknowledged, as explained earlier in Chapter 3, that the majority of those who participated in this study affirmed that religion was the major factor shaping their identity. Here again, they have expressed that they are practicing Muslims.

The study next addressed the extent to which the respondents practiced the teachings of Islam in their lives. Again, a resounding majority indicated that they either follow their religion in either everything or in most things (Table 20).

Of this group, nearly half indicated that they followed their religion in everything; the other half said that they follow most of the things that are required. This data contained in Table 21. A very small minority indicated that they practice their religion only in relation to a few aspects of it; not one respondent indicated zero following. It is a significant finding that almost all ABMY who completed this questionnaire are totally committed to their religion as practicing Muslims.

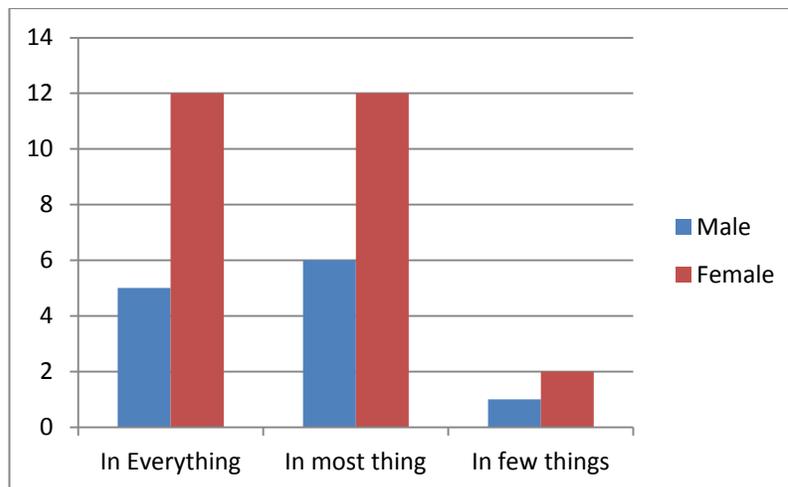
Table 20: Practicing Muslims

		Frequency	Percentage
Valid	No	1	2.6
	Yes	37	94.9
	Total	38	97.4
Missing	System	1	2.6
Total		39	100

Table 21: Daily practice of religion

Gender	In Everything	In most thing	In few things	Total
Male	5	6	1	12
Female	12	12	2	26
Total	17	18	3	38

Figure 10: Daily practice of religion



After the general query of how much the religion is practiced, the questionnaire addressed main practices of religious obligation: observance of daily prayers; visible signs such as wearing *Hijab*, growing beards; the results follow.

Daily Prayers

In a Muslim's life, prayers occur five times daily and are regarded as a very important duty in religious obligations. Islam considers that if anyone omits the daily prayers, they breach Islamic boundaries. This has been outlined in the primary Islamic sources, *Quran* and *Sunnah*. The Prophet Muhammad has said (*Sahih Muslim-82*):

It is reported on the authority of Jaabir that he said: 'Allah's Messenger (PBUH) said: 'Verily, between a man and shirk [associating another God] and *kufr* [disbelieving] is the abandonment of the prayer'

Since Islam gives so much importance to prayers occurring five times daily, this study examined how the participants observe the religious obligation of daily prayers as reported in Table 22. A large majority pray five times daily, regularly, while a small minority either pray irregularly or not at all. These responses were independent of sexuality.

Table 22: Praying daily five time prayers

Sexuality	Yes	No	Sometimes	Total
Male	10	1	1	12
Female	23	1	2	26
Total	33	2	3	38

Along with this, It must be acknowledged that participants may do other forms of prayers (secondary) to God such as *Dhikr* (Remembrance of God by chanting), reading the *Quran* and Islamic Books, respecting parents/elders, telling the truth, avoiding backbiting, and avoiding interest (usury) for example.

Growing beards or wearing Hijab

While Islam preaches and guides its followers on issues relating to worshiping and morals, it also lays out instructions about suitable clothing for men and women. In this context, I explored Islamic primary sources: *Quran* and the sayings of Prophet Muhammad, to locate information pertaining to what is required of Muslims with regard to their clothing. It revealed that women should cover their whole bodies except their faces and hands and men should cover ‘at least navel to his knees’ (Al Kaysi, 2007, p. 82). Growing beards also considered a religious obligation (Sabiq, 1991, p. 21) and can be taken as a visible identification for Muslim males.

Out of 12 male participants, two thirds (8) of them did not have beards, while one third (4) had a beard. The majority of females wore *Hijabs*. Out of 25 female participants, eighty percent (20) of participants had *Hijab* and only 20 per cent (5) of them did not. When comparing the issue of beards for men and wearing *Hijab* for women it became apparent that the majority of men did not have a beard while the majority of women wore the *Hijab*. While it is an interesting finding, reasons were not given in the questionnaire responses.

Importance of Islam in practical life

When the participants were asked about the importance of religion in their lives (How important Islam in your daily practical life?) the vast majority of participants said that they found it to be either important or very important with an emphasis on the latter. Only a single male participant answered, ‘don’t know’. Table 23 shows their responses.

Table 23: Importance of practicing Islam in the lives of ABMY

Gender	Very Important	Important	Don't know	Total
Male	9	2	1	12
Female	23	3	0	26
Total	32	5	1	38

Accordingly majority of the participants consider practicing Islam in their lives is very important. None of the participants said it was not important.

Learning Religion

Islam is a religion which is not inherited from family tradition. People who claim to be Muslims must believe in their faith and practice it in their daily lives as the Quran constantly describe about believers of Islamic faith.²⁶ There is no value given to any individual merely because he or she was born to Muslim parents. Islam encourages and emphasises the learning process (Maudoodi, 1974). What they learn and where they learn will reflect on its followers' actions and lifestyles. Therefore, this study attempted to find out what ABMY learn about their religion, from whom they learn, and their views on their learning (Do you currently learn about your religion on a regular basis?). Later, in stage two of the in-depth interviews, this will be further probed at an individual level.

Of all the participants as shown in the Table 24, just under half indicated that they learn about Islam in organized classes and a similar proportion indicated that they learn but not on a regular basis; only one respondent indicated that they are not learning about their religion on a regular basis in an organized sense.

²⁶ In number of places in the Quran verses similar to “those who believe and do righteous good deeds...” (Quran 98:7) are found.

Table 24: Learning religion on a regular basis

Gender	Yes	No	Sometimes	Rarely	Total
Male	7	1	4	0	12
Female	11	1	13	1	26
Total	18	2	17	1	38

When asked about the qualifications of their religious teachers, 13 of the participants responded. Six of them reported that they were learning from self-trained (non-formal qualification) teachers, while the other seven participants were learning from formally qualified teachers. This reveals that the majority of the people who taught religion to this group are not formally qualified teachers or scholars. It is an interesting finding, and it raises further questions about the amount of knowledge and the skills-set that these teachers possess. There is not a single authority in Australia which assesses the qualifications of these teachers before they are allowed to teach in Australia. Some efforts have been taken to provide formal qualifications for Imams, but these initiatives have not yet fully commenced on a long-term plan. Social recognition and acceptance by the local community, and preferably attachment to a mosque, are considered enough of recognition to start teaching. This information was provided by an ABMY and I later confirmed it through community contacts. Neither the Imams' Board nor the Australian Federation of Islamic Councils has any legal authority to assess anyone in this regard.

Currently it seems that some sort of arrangements needs to be made to formally assess those teachers and there must be institutions in Australia so that they can formally qualify to become Imams or to teach religious education within the community. So quality and uniformity can be maintained.

Resources to learn the religion

Participants were asked if resources to learn religion were available in Australia. Out of all the participants, majority of them said yes, while 16 per cent of them said no as shown in Table 25.

Table 25: Availability of resources to learn the religion

		Frequency	Percentage
Valid	No	6	15.4
	Yes	31	79.5
	Total	37	94.9
Missing	System	2	5.1
Total		39	100.0

This was a surprising finding since visits to various groups have revealed that they frequently admit to having little or no resources to support their teaching. However, it must be acknowledged that these responses from ABMY may differ from their parents who were not born in Australia but migrated to Australia. Electronic media and the growing learning online resources²⁷ may have contributed to the responses of these ABMY, who seem to find abundant resources on the Internet.

Practicing Islam in Australia

Data relating to the proportion of respondents who were actively practicing Islam is reported in Table 26. A large majority indicated that they were. Of the remainder, a small minority gave no indication, either directly or indirectly. This is an

²⁷ There are many website and institutions provide rich Islamic informations and many institutions run online courses in Australia and overseas. Appendix 5 has listed some of online resource links in Australia and overseas.

interesting finding as the majority of participants who are practicing Muslims agreed that they can freely practice their religion without experiencing any problems. The suggestion is that they are confident in their citizenship rights regarding expressing their religious freedom.

Table 26: Is it possible to practice Islam in Australia?

		Frequency	Percentage
Valid	Yes	31	79.5
	No	5	12.8
	No comments	1	2.6
	Don't know	1	2.6
	Total	38	97.4
Missing	System	1	2.6
Total		39	100.0

Conflicts between loyalty to Australia and/or to religion

While debate is maintained in the media – in talkback radio shows and in other forums – about how to balance loyalty to Islam in an essentially non-Muslim country like Australia, this study attempted to find out how participants reacted to this situation. Data presented in Table 27 notes that over three-quarters of the participants indicated that they did not have any conflicts between loyalty to their religion and loyalty to Australia.

Table 27: Conflicts between religion and loyalty to Australia

		Frequency	Percentage
Valid	No Conflicts	29	74.4
	Conflicts	8	20.5
	Total	37	94.9
Missing	System	2	5.1
Total		39	100.0

Inter-generational gap

Initially, this study looked at whether there were any conflicts between the transmission of language, culture and religion from parents to their children. The results may be found in Table 28. Two-thirds of the respondents replied to this issue. Of these a small majority responded that they did not have any conflict. This is significant, for it means that, of those responding, nearly half do experience conflict. Thus, it may be difficult to take a unilateral stand on the identity formation of ABMY as it is nearly equally divided. This issue is further explored below through a consideration of the written responses to this item.

Table 28: Inter-generational gap

		Frequency	Percentage
Valid	No	13	33.3
	Yes	12	30.8
	Total	25	64.1
Missing	System	14	35.9
Total		39	100.0

One participant (8F), who indicated that there were no conflicts, justified their response by saying that fluency in English and their long-term stay in Australia has

minimized the clash or conflicts between the culture of their parents and Australian culture. A second participant explained further that it was difficult in the early days of initial settlement. However this participant then went on to say that their parents built a life in Australia with the understanding of the different life styles between Australia and their country of origin. A third participant indicated that she and her siblings are teaching their parents about the Australian way of life. This suggests that ABMY are familiar with Australian culture and lifestyles and that they are comfortable enough to educate Australian way of life where suitable.

Some ABMY, however, reported that there were conflicts between the transmission of the language and culture of their parents. One participant (1F) states, 'Yes, they hold onto their cultural beliefs even though they are old and outdated'. Second (7M) participant indicated that their, '...parents are still living in the old age, haven't really changed'. A few participants indicated that some parents want their children to speak their parent's language. Another participant (37F) said that, 'although they live in Australia, their parents mentality has not changed from living in their village'.

Some participants went on to highlight another scenario of conflict between the religion of Islam and the culture of their parents. Many stated that their parents had stronger attachments to their ethnic culture than to their religion (Islam). One respondent (2M) said that 'at times they may impart knowledge that is more acceptable culturally than Islamically'. A similar view was expressed by another participant (16F), who went on to say that 'they practice Islam in an old way, but I practice Islam in its true form from reading books and trying to follow that rather than old cultures'. A third participant (30F) regarded it as frustrating that their parent's culture was more important to them than their religion

Historically, generational gaps are common throughout history. It is most noticeable when people migrate to new countries and their children are born in the new land. It is understandable that first generation migrants continue to practice their traditions as they are very familiar and bound to them by their culture of

origin. This has also been noticed among Muslim migrant communities living in Western countries as observed by Yasmeen (2008, p. 23), who noted that:

The first generation immigrants continue to practice culturally-determined varieties of Islam. Research on second and third generations, in contrast, reveals a process of de-territorialisation of Islam; Muslim youth in these societies shun culturally relevant practices of Islam in favour of salafi or other orthodox interpretations.

This study attempted to find out whether the participants' parents experienced similar situations, that is, whether traditions influenced them and there were gaps or conflicts in the understanding of Islam between them and their parents. These findings suggest that this is the case for the cohort of ABMY who completed this questionnaire.

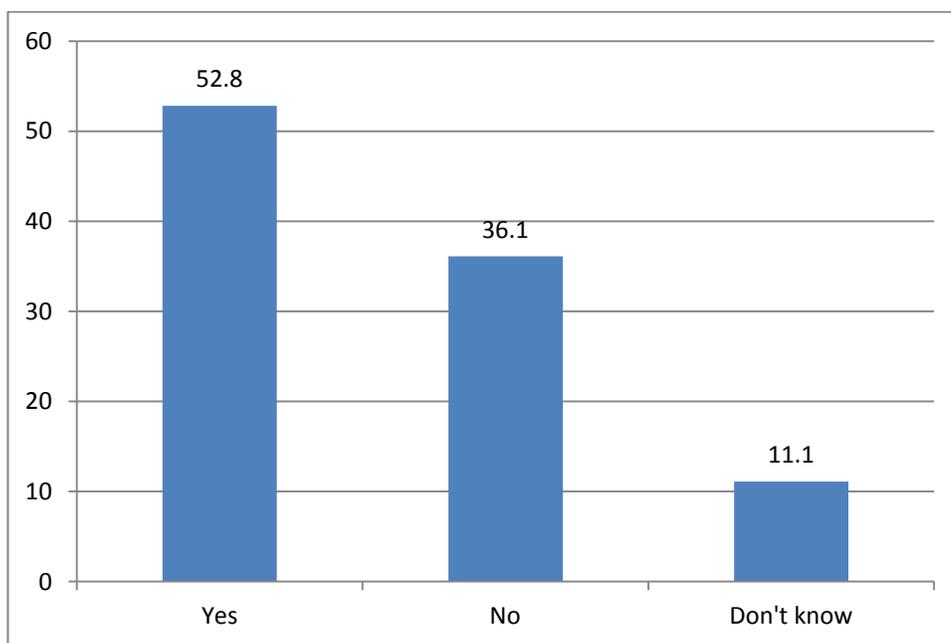
Influence of tradition on parents' understanding of the religion

One of the questions asked if the participants thought that tradition influenced their parents' understanding of Islam. Responses to this question are reported in figure 20. Nearly half of the respondents said it did; a third said it did not. It would appear that a majority of ABMY in this study believe that their parents are influenced by traditions when they interpret and practice their religion.

This suggests that the majority of youth in this study believe that their parents are influenced by cultural aspects of understanding their religion. This is not a new phenomenon in contemporary Muslim societies. There are many Muslims who interpret religious texts through the influence of their cultural values even though this may contradict the teachings of Islam. For example in South Asian countries like India or Sri Lanka, the Muslim bridegroom or his family demand a sum of money and/or other property from the bride's family as a dowry. This is in contradiction to the teachings of Islam which says that bridegrooms are supposed to give money called '*Mahar*' to brides. Muslim marriages are not considered to be valid without this condition being fulfilled (Sabiq, 1002). It is

believed that the Muslims in South Asian countries have taken on the dowry system which prevails among the Hindus who live around them. Even though these Muslims practice their religion and receive instruction from their religious texts, many of them do not exclude themselves from cultural values which often contradicts with primary sources of their religion, Islam.

Figure 11: Influence of tradition on parents' understanding of the religion (In percentage)



This single question addressed the situation of Muslim migrants in their new home country. Even though they have migrated to a new country, have probably learned a new language and live in a very different environment, they appear not to have relinquished their attachment to their traditional cultural values. This view was reflected in the above responses of the AMBY.

Role of traditions in understanding the religion

In order to compare the gap between the ABMY and their parents, respondents were asked about the influence of tradition on their own understanding of Islam. Interestingly, it has revealed contrasting results to the earlier question about their parents: two-thirds of them said that they were not influenced by traditions; a quarter said that they were, as reported in Table 29.

This may be because these ABMY were born in Australia and so do not have any pre-defined values about Islam because they study indicated that many of them study Islam from its original sources. Even though they may have been influenced by traditions inherited from their parents when they were young, once they matured, they may have developed enough skills and knowledge to independently interpret religious instruction and to follow the religion in their own way as here in Australia ABMY are tend to learn from original sources without mixing it with cultural interpretations.

Table 29: Role of traditions on ABMY and their parents in understanding the religion

		Frequency	Percentage
Valid	Yes	9	23.1
	No	24	61.5
	Don't know	3	7.7
	Total	36	92.3
Missing	System	3	7.7
Total		39	100.0

This clearly indicates that the majority of parents are influenced by tradition in interpreting or understanding of Islam, while the majority of youth are not.

Difference in understanding the religion, Islam

In order to clarify and further confirm findings, ABMY were asked whether there were differences in understanding Islam and religious practices between them and their parents. As shown in table 30, the majority responded no; nearly a third did not respond and another third responded yes to the question. Despite the lowered response rate, this is consistent with the result displayed in Figure 12: there is a strong contrast between the views of the ABMY and their parents.

Table 30: Understanding Islam and religious practices of ABMY and their parents

		Frequency	Percentage
Valid	No	17	43.6
	Yes	11	28.2
	Total	28	71.8
Missing	System	11	28.2
Total		39	100

In summary, there are clear indications from a majority of ABMY in this study that the understanding they have about their religion and its practices is different from that of their parents. However, it must be acknowledged that around 40 per cent of participants said that they did not differ from their parents.

Future of Muslims in Australia

Having expressed their views, feelings and notions about identity, the impact of the society in which they live, the role of religion, religious studies and religious practices in their lives and the intergenerational gap, this study further attempted to explore the views ABMY held about the future of Muslims in Australia. As shown in the table 31, the majority (57 per cent) of the respondents indicated the future of Muslims would be challenging and around 31 per cent of them said it was hopeful.

Surprisingly, only one respondent (3 per cent) indicated that it would be bleak and no one felt it would be very bleak.

Table 31: Future of Muslims in Australia

Future of Muslims	Frequency	Percentage
Hopeful	11	31.4
The same	0	0
Challenging	20	57.1
Bleak	1	2.9
Very Bleak	0	0
Don't know	3	8.6
Total	35	100

At this point, it is interesting to compare this response with responses given earlier. On the question of how AMBY found the Australian government's attitude towards Muslims, two-thirds indicated that it was unfavourable. On contrast, majority of AMBY felt that Muslims do not have a bleak future in Australia. Instead, they regard the future as being challenging and hopeful. As the current research was not directly futures-related, this issue was not explored further to uncover the reasons behind this belief.

Summary

The first stage of data collection concentrated on identifying issues as outlined in the research questions: the identity of ABMY, the impact of Australian society on them, the role of religion in their lives and the differences between them and their parents. Opinions were collected by questionnaire (Stage 1) and by interviews with selected ABMY, their parents, and community leaders (Stage 2).

Thirteen different labelling of identities were considered by ABMY; the 'Australian Muslim' label proved to be the most popular for the majority of the

participants. It was also observed that many ABMY claimed multiple identities, which is a very common aspect among the children of migrant communities. Having multiple identities does not appear to cause them any personal tensions in their lives.

When asked about the impact of Australian society on their lives, a wide spectrum of factors related to life in Australia was identified as impacting on ABMY. These included stereotypes, discrimination, non-acceptance by the wider Australian community, misconceptions about Islam and Muslims and sports. Discrimination was one factor experienced by many. Types of discrimination included verbal, physical, denial of employment, emotional, religious and gender. It was further revealed that Muslim women in this study felt that they experienced more discrimination than Muslim men. The ABMY in this study, as a whole, believed that the attitude of the Australian government towards them was not positive at the time of providing their responses. Despite stereotyping, non-acceptance by the wider community and other negative factors, many of these ABMY felt themselves connected to Australian society and noted many positive factors in Australian society.

The study revealed that religion plays a very major role in the lives of the ABMY in this study with almost all of them claiming that they are practicing Muslims. With the distinguishing feature of Muslim men and women being the beard and *Hijab*, respectively, the study revealed that the women are more easily identified as Muslim than the men from their appearance in contemporary Australian society. A scarcity of formally trained scholars of religion was also highlighted. Interestingly, it has been concluded that the majority of ABMY find no conflict between their loyalty to their religion and to Australia.

The intergenerational gap between ABMY and their parents was another theme emerged from the questionnaire. It revealed that while traditions and cultural values play some part in the religious understanding of the parents of ABMY. This is the opposite case for the ABMY, who are more interested in finding Islamic rules from

the primary texts of Islam, rather than from traditional interpretations of their parents and forefathers.

CHAPTER FIVE

Interviews with ABMY

I'm a Muslim and an Australian no matter what anyone says. (Abdullah)

A medical professor asked me in a slow tone, "So, tell me how it is back in your country". At this point I hadn't spoken to him. I looked puzzled and I responded, "Excuse me, I was born here", and he said, "Really", and looked at me up and down. He said, "Aaa, I wouldn't have guessed." (Zaynab)

Introduction

As outlined in Chapter 3, data from ABMY were collected in two stages. In Stage 1 ABMY completed a questionnaire which was designed in order to obtain data about the broad range of issues that they felt impacted on their lives. It primarily explored the basic research questions of this study regarding the identity and religion of ABMY, and the impact of Australian life on constructing personal and social identities tied to being Muslim within an Australian context. This has been presented in Chapter 4.

In Stage 2 interviews were used to gain greater insight into the issues that ABMY regarded as being important to them. Interviews were conducted with those participants who had expressed their willingness to participate during Stage 1. In this chapter the data findings from the interviews are presented and provided with in-depth discussion related to three main areas: identity and religion, which includes the role and status of religious education in the life of ABMY. The second

theme covers the perceived impact of Australian society which includes identity, challenges and views of ABMY on their community. The third theme covers ABMY's perceptions of their future of Muslims. Finally, this chapter builds on the findings of the survey in chapter four in a more in-depth way. The interview responses provide a greater narrative around those factors that impact on constructions of identity for ABMY.

At the end of the questionnaire in data collection Stage 1, participants were invited to participate in follow up interviews. Twelve individuals who completed the questionnaire agreed to participate in follow up interviews. Out of them only ten (five male and five female) were available for interview.

The following sections describe the main issues which were explored in the Stage 2 interviews: the identity and religion of ABMY; the impact of Australian society on them; and their views on their future in Australia.

As data from parents was needed to discuss the intergenerational gap, between ABMY and their parents is discussed in the next chapter. Along with this an analysis of interviews conducted with five of the parents of the ABMY who participated in this study is given.

Identity and Religion of ABMY

During the first stage of data collection, this study concentrated on how ABMY identified themselves. It was noted that the majority favoured the term 'Australian Muslim'. It was apparent that participants saw the term as being interlinked, with their Muslim identity which was regarded as a dominant feature in their lives. Ashraff a male ABMY noted in his interview "First and foremost I always see myself as a Muslim, as that is what I truly am, but following very closely behind is the fact that I'm Australian".

The feature of identifying themselves first and foremost as Muslims was associated with each ABMY response tied to the theme of identity. With this in

mind a question to ask is, ‘Why is this?’ In Stage 2, this study explored reasons behind participant explanations and statements made that being a Muslim was recognised as the primary factor in shaping their identity. Reasons provided varied from person to person, however, two main reasons surfaced that seemed to characterise this view. Being born into a Muslim family was regarded as the primary reason; simultaneously, there were statements about making a personal choice to follow the teachings of Islam.

Statements made by participants seemed to indicate that perhaps the strongest influence on notions of Muslim identity pertained to being born into and growing up in a Muslim family and community. As Zaynab, a female participant, asserted:

I was born into an Islamic family, and that’s how it all started off. I grew up in an Islamic environment and every aspect of my life revolves around being a good Muslim. I went to an Islamic school, attending weekend *Quran* classes, etc. You know as I grew older I knew in my heart that being a Muslim is the right choice.

Another participant Tasneem, pointed out that her Islamic identity had been her choice:

I am a Muslim because I choose to be, because it is a way of life and I want to be part of a faith that has the answers to all my questions. Being Muslim is something that was part of my life from an early age I was born into a Muslim family but I have decided to practice the religion because I want to.

Nafeesa, a third female participant, noted that:

Being a Muslim makes me the person I am today. Not only does the *hijab* make me easily “identifiable” as a Muslim, but also I try to follow the teachings of the Prophet (PBUH) by acting as a good Muslim throughout my day-to-day life.

Finally, Fatima categorically recognized and separated what she saw as cultural influences associated with her identity from her birth. For this participant her identity was drawn from Islam and not from her culture:

Before being anything else, I am a Muslim. Basically, it's not any cultural influence and practice that has made me who I am, but rather Islam has.

The reasons that ABMY gave for maintaining their Muslim identity were heavily dependent on their understanding of their religion and commitment to follow its teachings in their own lives. This study explored their understanding of Islam by asking how they understood and practised their religion in their lives. This study investigated the extent of religious commitments ABMY maintained that demonstrated their attachment to their Islamic faith. Two types of commitments were noted. Some of them practice the faith of Islam as a religion, believing it and following its teachings in their lives. Others consider the faith of Islam as a submission of their life to God and, in holding this belief, completely surrender their lives to the teachings of Islam. In illustrating this desire to live their lives according to the teaching of the religion Zaynab stated:

It's a way of life. For me, being a Muslim, I can't see myself any other way. The way I eat, drink, walk, everything, even how I act in the streets to strangers, I try to follow Islamic teaching. ...it's just, everything that I do, I sort of do Islamically, and whatever I don't do Islamically, I wonder how it's meant to be done Islamically, if you get what I mean.

Ajmal, a male participant had made a similar meaning:

If someone asks me, "Are you a Muslim, do you follow a religion?" I say, "Yes, I follow a religion; I am a Muslim, proud to be a Muslim". And if they ask me; "Well, do you actually follow the religion, do you pray 5 times a day?" And I say "Yes". Because when I was raised by parents and the way they raised me up. I feel it's the right thing to do.

Aysha, while describing her commitment to Islam, said:

Being a Muslim means the submission and obedience to Allah Subhaanahu Wa Ta'aaloh in order to attain inner peace. Therefore, being a Muslim is my top priority in life....Islam is not just a religion; it's a way of life... Hence, my entire

life, including my studies, family affairs, my social life, my leisure activities, moral values and so forth revolve around the teachings of Islam.

Raashid, a male participant commented:

Islam is my way of life. It teaches me and shows me what I can/can't do. It is not a foe but something that I accept without hesitation to be whom I am. Islam is bounties in its answers which enable me to lead my life pleasantly and humbly. Islam encourages me to learn and develop without hindrance and I am glad to take it up.

It was not clear to what extent ABMY understand and practice their religion in their own life. There are people who practise their religion within the four walls of their worshipping place, and their affiliations are normally restricted to religious rituals. But there are others who try to practise their religion throughout their life beyond their worshipping places. These people normally understand that religion extends religious rituals, and as such have adopted Islam as a way of life. The latter group of people fit into what Islam expects from its followers. Islam claims that it contains a complete code of life; it expects that the religion is practiced by its followers throughout their life which extends beyond simply attending a Mosque. *Quran* says: 'O believers enter into Islam completely and do not follow the footsteps of *Shaitan*' (*Surah Al-Baqara*, 208-210).

It was not possible to draw conclusions from the responses of how ABMY acquire their religious guidelines: do they consider religious guidelines as rituals to be practiced inside the mosque? Are religious guidelines interpreted as a complete code of life which is applied throughout their lives? It must be acknowledged that many of the interviewees said that they take the religion as a way of life and practice it in their lives. Ashraff, a male participant, asserted that, 'Being a Muslim is very important to me as it helps me make important decisions in how to live my everyday life'. It was apparent that their religion played a vital role in their lives and it seemed as if they were quite happy and proud about it and that they were

committed to its cause. For example, Raashid another male participant said, “Being a Muslim is also a great honour which I try to fulfil”. While the level of commitment may vary from person to person, they are all committed and want to practice the religion in their lives.

There was, however, a paradox here. During the interviews all the females interviewed wore the hijab, which distinguishes them as Muslims. This visible dress code of hijab has been prescribed for women by Islam –as Quran prescribes²⁸ it- as they are required to cover every part of the body except face and hands. However, in Islam there is no prescribed noticeable special dress code for males that would distinguish them as Muslims except Muslim men are required simply to cover only between their knees and belly buttons.

Islamic dress code for men has no compulsory piece of cloth which would uniquely identify them from non-Muslims. However this does not uniquely identify them as Muslims from others. According to many Islamic jurists, growing a beard is, however, compulsory for Muslim males, yet this is not an exclusive feature to identify religious Muslims as many non-Muslims grow beards for many other reasons. It is debatable as to whether or not the Muslim topknot (Muslim cap) may be considered Muslim dress. There are debates as to whether this represents a religious or cultural tradition as whether or not a Muslim male wears the topknot will not be counted a sin from the Islamic religious point of view. Thus, the visibility of a Muslim female’s clothes can give some indications of their religious attachment. With this in mind it is difficult to identify religious Muslim males from their dress or appearance. As indicated in chapter two, there are Muslims who mix the cultural values with religious rulings.

A large number of participants noted that their religion was a peaceful religion. Ajmal said, ‘It’s a peaceful religion, a religion which takes commitment. It has nothing violent about it.’ It was not clear why this was emphasised in many

²⁸ O Prophet! Tell thy wives and thy daughters and the women of the believers to draw their cloaks close round them (when they go abroad). That will be better, so that they may be recognised and not annoyed. Allah is ever Forgiving, Merciful. Surah Al-Ahzab (33) 59.

instances. One possible explanation might be that it directly links to issues in contemporary times. Because of current world events Islam is frequently regarded as being a violent religion and many may feel the need to defend their religion. From the patterns of statements made by ABMY, I would suggest that they wish to defend Islam whenever it is needed.

It may be interesting to know how much ABMY are committed to their religion and what makes them very committed and how the process of learning about Islam and its practices take place. The next section outlines the findings to these two themes.

Religious Education

The first stage of data collection revealed that many ABMY are continuing with, and constantly learning about, Islam. During Stage 2 of the data collection, insight was gained into where ABMY in this study learn about their religion. Apart from reading books, listening to talks, learning from electronic resources, I noted that the majority of ABMY were connected to study circles which are run in non-formal settings. All of the participants who were interviewed indicated that they are reading books to expand their knowledge and understandings of their religion. They also said that their readings were not limited by anyone or by a particular school of thought. The books they named as being relevant here ranged from primary sources of Islam, such as the *Quran*, its translations and commentaries, and the words of Prophet Muhammad, to books written by modern Islamic scholars. At the end of this chapter details of the range of materials that are being read by ABMY and parents are given (Table 32). Three *types* of materials appear to be read by ABMY:

1. Primary Sources of Islam, the *Quran* and Hadees;
2. Books by older generation Islamic scholars/authors;
3. Books by modern scholars/authors.

Older generation or traditional scholars included people such as Ibn Katheer and Imam Nawawi; modern scholars include authors like Sayyid Qutb, Abul a'la Maududi, Sayyid Sabiq, Ibn Katheer, Muhammad Saeed Ramadan Al Booty, Afif. A. Tabbarah, Hasan Al Banna, Aaidh ibn Abdullah al-Qarni, Muhammad al-Ghazaali, Yusuf Al Qaradawi, and Tariq Ramadan. It was also revealed that the ABMY in this study listen to many international and local speakers, in Melbourne, such as Bilal Assad, Muhammad al Sharef, Tawfique Chowdhury, Yasir Qadhi, Ana Tikriti and Zachariah Matthews. Thus, a rich mix and variety of authors and speakers from classical to modern times are involved. This suggests that the current ABMY are very open-minded and that they are not blindly following or forced to follow any particular scholar or speaker.

ABMY in this study read widely, attend a range of Islamic lectures that they find beneficial and as a result they have access to different views and interpretations of religious text by scholars. This provides them with the opportunity to form their own views as they access this wide range of sources. This flexibility seems to reflect the free Australian society which would facilitate access ABMY to a wide variety of texts which may not be possible in some other countries. Over three-quarters of the ABMY in this study felt free to read anything about their religion from any author; what is more, they had access to a range of options from which to select. Fatimah, a female interviewee, said, 'I try to give myself access to all types of authors and scholars, even the controversial ones'. Ashraff, a male participant, said: 'excluding the Qur'an, there are none that I read regularly, other than going on the Internet to look at a few topics here and there'. Nafeesa, a second female participant, reported as she does not re-read the same book regularly but several different books'.

As ABMY receive their knowledge from different sources, their understanding or definitions of Islam vary widely from person to person; however, almost all of

them agree that Islam is a way of life. This is very different to someone who takes religion to be practiced within four walls of a worship place.

Islamic study circles and Islamic schools also contribute to the commitment of ABMY to their religion. Initially, they said that they were taken by their parents to these study circles, and that this led to them forming a group of friends within it. It later became their favourite social gathering place at the weekends. Sara, a female participant, said:

From a young age I attended an Islamic school, so I was brought up with general knowledge about Islam. Upon graduating from high school, I took the next step in obtaining knowledge and joined a weekly Islamic circle in my area. This played a major role in being a reminder of the importance of Islamic knowledge as a Muslim.

Learning about Islam from a young age with parental guidance and joining study circles was noticed as being a common experience among those who were interviewed for this study. Most of the group had attended Islamic religious schools (or *Quran* schools) from a young age. The foundation of Islamic studies is laid at the early age through these *Quran* schools. When they grow up many of them opt to join wider Islamic study circles that involve people from different cultural and religious backgrounds. Those who are comfortable with these study circles continue to stay on and those who do not feel comfortable drop out. The remaining participants in this study were either regulars or frequent attendees in those study circles. This link between them and study circles has long-term effects in forming their notions of identity.

Contents and quality of Religious Education

Because the religious classes or study circles are organised by individuals, mosques or Islamic community organisations, it is difficult to make generalisations about their quality and the content of the courses. There are many differences between the various groups. Some classes are taught by university graduates who have Shariah

degree qualifications; some are run by self-trained individuals or organisations. Generally comments from the interviews indicated that being a member of such groups was a positive experience which enabled them to expand their knowledge about their religion. Zaynab, a one female participant commenting on Islamic education, stated: 'It allowed me to develop better general knowledge about Islam, and then I was able to go off and inquire to get an in-depth understanding of Islam'.

Some ABMY said that they expected their teachers to have more formal qualifications in order to lead the groups. However, because of a shortage of people who are currently running study circles, this was not always possible. The ABMY said that there was enthusiasm for the classes not only as a source of knowledge but also in terms of being able to spend times with other ABMY. No one indicated that they were not satisfied with the skills and knowledge of the group leader, but some who attended sessions with non-formally trained leaders said that they wished their trainer had had more formal educational qualifications. It was evident from the interviews and personal communications with the participants that the outcomes of these study circles was heavily dependent on the knowledge and experiences of the teacher.

The content covered in sessions differed considerably, most of the ABMY were happy about what was included. They indicated that if they were not finding it useful, they would not attend; Zaynab however commented that she felt that in some instances current issues related to the Australian context were not sufficiently dealt with. She noted that the focus was basically around spiritual or ritual aspects. It was obvious from this comment that she felt that current issues faced by ABMY needed to be discussed more frequently in some of these sessions. She suggested a survey may be helpful to identify what topics the youth wanted to cover. Zaynab added:

... halaqas [non-formal Islamic study circles] need to be relevant to what we're facing here; ... sometimes issues weren't being addressed, and I mean unless we request it, and many times we did request for certain issues to be discussed. I think

maybe surveying student needs to be done for halaqa teachers to get an understanding of what the group of girls and boys are interested or keen in, and work around that.

She further commented that the curriculum of the study circles conducted by volunteers needed to be structured more effectively.

As Zaynab further noted: ‘I also would like structure, as during our halaqa group we jumped a lot from topic to topic, I think structure would be great as we know what to follow...’. Structured content in some Islamic study circles seemed to be missing in many cases.

Qualified teachers and more structured content via needs analysis were the two main issues highlighted during the interviews. The first issue highlights the need to assess the qualifications and skills of those who are involved in teaching in these study circles. This concern has been raised by Cahill et al. (2004, p. 66): ‘What are the required attributes for religious personnel called to give spiritual and/or pastoral leadership in ministering in a multi-faith society with all its complexities and sensitivities?’ There is no clear answer to this question; however, a sense of urgency to find a common answer is felt. Further, it would seem that curriculum content needs to be well defined; in particular, it should include contemporary issues that many ABMY find complex and sometimes difficult to navigate. It would be appropriate for the various Islamic groups to consider these issues as improvements that will facilitate their ongoing popularity amongst ABMY.

Impact of Australian Society

Questions about the impact of living in Australian society on ABMY revealed mixed responses. Some ABMY are very mindful of their religious beliefs regardless of the situation they are in. While acknowledging that ABMY identities are affected by the information they receive, they do attempt to preserve their religious identity. They appreciate the opportunities available to them in Australia;

they do not take them for granted. This is evident in the voice of Sara when she reflects on the information she is given tied to her religious way of knowing:

The amount of information we are exposed to today has influenced not only the way we think but also our identities. Although I am Muslim first, I have been blessed with a lot of the benefits Australia has to offer which is a significant advantage and should not be taken for granted.

Similar views were expressed by Nafeesa, a second female participant are seen below:

The people who I am exposed to on a day-to-day basis have surely influenced the type of person I am. We have learnt with each other and done a lot of research together. In regards to non-Muslims friends: I went to an Anglican school and hence my school friends have played a great role in helping me understand myself better. I have been able to explain Islam from my point of view with them and thus we have learnt a lot from each other...Muslim friends outside of school have helped me deal with the battles I have with myself and understanding how to live as a Muslim in Australia. ...I have allowed the construction of my identity to come from the information I have gained whilst growing up.

Many young people look at life in Australia as being 'normal' that is, not confronting, negative or challenging at all. While ABMY appreciate the multicultural nature of Australian society, they often use it as an opportunity to design their own dual identity without any interference from others. In fact, a number of the ABMY stated that they were not affected by the opinions and actions of others. As Ashraff, a male participant, explained:

Being an Australian with a background from another country is not too difficult to see nowadays in Australia as our society is so diverse and multicultural. Australian society I believe is starting to accept that having a diverse society greatly benefits the country as a whole. As far as how this affects my identity, it doesn't exactly change who I am or what I see myself as. I'm a Muslim and an Australian no matter what anyone says

A similar view was expressed by Raashid, a second male participant, who said that he found being both Islamic and Australian – and embracing the values associated with each – works without any clashes:

I am Australian, and proud to be so. I readily identify with Australian values and identities. I am pleased to say that Islam and Australian values, in a majority of aspects, work together in harmony and without clashes.

He could not tell me any specific reason why there were no clashes. His statement presupposes the ability for him to connect to both cultures in a seamless way. What was also apparent, following a discussion with this participant, was that he was from a family which encourages open communication with non-Muslims on topics tied to inter-faith dialogues. Having parents as role models who welcome interfaith discussion assists to establish notions of tolerance and respect for other people of diverse faiths and beliefs. This is shown in the case of Raashid.

Preserved Identity

There were ABMY who felt that their identity was not affected by any other influences. Many participants confirmed this. While commenting on this, one of the male participants Ashraff said:

My Muslim identity is very personal to me and I don't let many people influence that as I believe my journey as a Muslim will, the majority of the time be a personal thing, even though many aspects require a social dynamic.

He found his Muslim identity as a very personal one he did not want any to influence. While he is acknowledging social factors he insisted that most of the time it has been a personal one. This is evidence that identity may not depend on other factors as some youth want to keep it personal and unaffected by any. A very similar view has been expressed by many other male and female participants.

My identity is not affected by contemporary Australian society as it does not play a major part in my life and decisions (Fatimah).

Nobody influences my actions. I am old enough to make my own decisions (Yassir).

During my VCE years, all my friends were non-Muslim. This didn't influence my actions or notion of identity in any bad manner. Alhamdulillah, it actually made me reflect quite a lot on my Muslim identity and consequently increased me in knowledge and faith. I was never the one to succumb to peer pressure (Aysha).

The above statements emphasise how ABMY shape their identity and actions based on their personal wish rather than others. They live in Australian multicultural and multi faith society and socialize with their fellow non-Muslim Australians. They also maintain their religious identity and life.

The independence and the freedom of ABMY to make own decisions in their lives was a notable feature to emerge from the data. Many categorically denied the allegation that they were forced to do things by their parents and others. Nafeesa, a female participant, said:

Unlike most parents, my parents explained the right from the wrong to me and allowed me to make the decision as to which path I would choose to take in all matters. My parents have provided me with extensive education so that I am able to make these decisions on my own.

As Nafeesa many others also expressed that even though their parents guided or educated them on what was wrong and right, it is ABMY, finally make their own decisions in their life. The role and contribution of parents and the way ABMY were brought up facilitated this freedom tied to decision making. Depending on the degree to which parents have influence in the lives of their children when they grow up and willingness of youth to accept parental guidelines or advice, impacted on their decision making process. Kabir (2008) acknowledges that identity can be built up with or without the influence of family members,

where ‘in some cases, both independent and interdependent factors can influence one’s identity’ (P. 7). It is a fact to acknowledge that identity can be shaped either independently or interdependently from family influence or mix of both elements.

Mixed Feelings

While there was a strong positive feeling about the impact of Australian society amongst many AMBY, there were some respondents who had mixed feelings related to their everyday lives. One female recognized that the acceptability of drinking alcohol was not supported in the teachings of Islam. She felt that this Islamic belief isolates AMBY from Australian life, which seems to involve a lot of social drinking. On the other hand, she found that Australian multiculturalism makes her feel proud to be an Australian. Nafeesa explained:

I believe that the contemporary Australian society encourages drinking alcohol as a part of the lifestyle. This is obviously not acceptable in Islam as Islam does not allow anything which is harmful or could be harmful to the body. As this is a major part of the current Australian society, these attitudes often make the Muslim youth feel left out of the ‘Australian’ lifestyle. Other than these sorts of attitudes, I believe the Australian values of mate-ship and the developing encouragement to enhance multiculturalism makes me feel extremely happy to call myself a proud Australian.

There were many other AMBY with similar views. They indicated many positive aspects of Australian culture. Yet this was not the case when there is a contradiction with basic principles of Islam like drinking alcohol, or having free sex out of wedlock. Many of the participants noted that they refer to their Islamic teachings when reflecting on how they ought to behave and how to build up good morals. They are ‘proud to be Australian’ on the one hand, and are also proud to be Muslim as well. So there is a fine balance in between two cultures for AMBY.

Challenges

There were some AMBY who found life in Australia's Muslim community full of challenges and felt like they had to constantly struggle to ensure their religious guidelines are followed in their lives. They said that they struggle to meet the requirements of living in contemporary Australian society. This is seen by Aysha below:

However, this isn't the easiest of tasks. Instead, it requires quite some sacrifice/struggle. But then again, nothing with such great value comes easy anyway. Being a Muslim, one's heart is filled with gratitude to Allah for blessing us with this priceless gift of Islam.

Some ABMY in this study noted that Muslim's life in Australia involves being constantly watched, as terrorist events have placed them in the spotlight. Many were aware of the fact that Muslims are often not portrayed positively. Despite this, they are confident that it doesn't prevent them from practicing their religion freely. Aysha reflected on this difficulty:

Being part of a minority, and one that's not portrayed in much positive light. A challenge I may face is always being under the spotlight. I feel as though our every action is monitored and the public eye is constantly on us. But that awkwardness that arises at times in public doesn't affect the practicing of my religion Alhamdulillah.

Some participants found that because of the media's negative coverage of Islam, Australians now have a negative view of Muslims. This worries ABMY; Zaynab, a female, commented:

Yes, there is a lot in the media about Islam. On a daily basis you will read or hear something about Islam. As a result of this Australians have developed a bad conception on what a Muslim is.

Some ABMY find the situation of negative publications challenging, but insist that they need to be confident in their identity. This was also highlighted by Zaynab:

Recently I had an appointment and the receptionist kept on asking me, so which country you were born, Lebanon? I was thinking, no actually, I was born in Williamstown; it's a little town in Melbourne. I have been spoken to like that on a couple of occasions. On another occasion a medical professor asked me in a slow tone, 'So, tell me how is it back in your country?'. At this point I hadn't spoken to him. I looked puzzled and I responded, 'Excuse me, I was born here' and he said 'really' and looked at me up and down. He said 'Aaa, I wouldn't have guessed', 'Well... I was born here..., so'.

Zaynab's comments suggest that ABMY are confident in the reality that they share both religious and national identities.

ABMY in this study found no conflict between Australian and Islamic values; they have learned to live with both. It was expressed by many ABMY that they were able to live without creating tensions between their national status as Australians and their religious affiliation to Islam. The following interview responses affirm this:

Not as such, but there is the constant requirement that I explain to non-Muslims the teachings and values of Islam. There may be some points of disagreement, but we as individuals are able to resolve them without heightened tensions that are continually shown on the media (Fatimah).

No conflict as the larger Australian community is beginning to understand Islam...it does not affect me in any shape. I pray when I need to, wherever I am, with no shame and I practice Islam with no shame (Yassir).

I find that a lot of people find there is a problem; however, I personally do not see any problem in being both. In fact, I often find myself to be more Australian than the stereotypical Aussie (Nafeesa).

The reality of being both Australian and Muslim cultures was expressed by many participants. They are fully aware how to present themselves as Australian, Muslim, or Australian Muslim. The Sydney Morning Herald (27 April 2007) reported an young Australian Muslim's viewpoint of his perception of cultural and religious identity:

Salman sees no conflict himself. "When I see someone who's obviously Muslim in Australia, I'll say 'Assalam alaikum', and when I encounter another Aussie overseas, I'll say 'G'day'," he said. "I don't have any conflict within myself about being a practising Muslim and happy to talk to anyone about it, and the fact that I am Australian as well."

Apparently these reflections indicate that they do not have much problem with community connections are minimized when an individual effectively manages his/her national and religious identities.

ABMYs views on their Muslim Community

ABMY expressed their opinions about their Muslim community and what effects it has on them. Many found their community positive and supportive of their efforts. This popular view was exemplified by Aysha:

The Muslim Community here has, ever since I can remember, always run youth activities, excursions, Islamic classes, etc. for us. Furthermore, they have always been encouraging of our participation in both Islamic activities and the gaining of Islamic knowledge as well as leisure activities and secular knowledge. It's always healthy to have a balance of both.

Even though many ABMY find their Muslim community supportive, some ABMY expressed alternative views regarding specific members of the Muslim community. Nafeesa commented:

Often the views within our community are skewed. Despite the fact that there are many respectable and knowledgeable Muslims in our community, I have also seen

the other extreme where we find ignorant people who do not represent the vast majority of the community.

One male participant, Ashraff, said that he felt very comfortable integrating with non-Muslims, but found he was unique in the Muslim community because they frequently felt no shared values or interests with Non-Muslims. He explained:

I personally have no problem with integrating with others. I think however members of the Islamic community generally have trouble integrating with non-Muslim people and being part of the society is difficult as they feel they have no shared interest or values.

This statement contrasts with the views expressed by others and some parents during their interviews, which are discussed in the following chapter. The lack of integration could be explained as a ‘one off’ situation that was the reaction of Ashraff, a particular ABMY, to a very specific environment that he was exposed to. More generally, however, Iran went on to say that, ‘Many people in the Muslim community try to influence others in the wrong way and that is the problem I am trying to avoid’.

The Future of Muslims in Australia

In the questionnaire, the majority of participants responded that they thought that the future for Muslims in Australia was bright. During the interviews, ABMY were asked “why they thought so?” Most of the responses highlighted that the education and the educated ABMY were central to transforming. Comments of four respondents are presented below:

Hopefully a bright one if we get a few younger ones educated and dedicated to their religion. The sky is the limit for Muslims in Australia (Yassir).

I think that Muslims have progressed and created a lot of change in Australia in the past decade. I believe Muslims will be having a greater role in all parts of

society in the future, where we will be represented in all areas, particularly a greater participation in the arts. With the current active Muslims in the society who are breaking down barriers, it is great to see people who are willing to create a change in a society which had created antagonism against Muslims after 9/11 (Nafeesa).

I feel the future of Muslims in Australia will be better insha'Allah. More of the youth are grasping onto their religion and more and more facilities and organizations are being established for Muslims. People are learning more about Islam and many misconceptions are being cleared. Also, there is more unity between the Muslims – it still needs a lot of work, but efforts are being exerted, Alhamdulillah (Aysha).

I think that the future of Muslims here is positive. So far, we have encountered challenges as a community but we have overcome them...With more Muslim youth graduating from university and entering the professional world we will help contribute to society as well as eliminate misconceptions about Islam...In my family we have a nurse, teachers, social worker, lawyer and a psychologist; and we are just first generation Muslim Australians. Inshallah. With future generations they can accomplish even more (Zaynab).

Education of the ABMY gives them hope and confidence on how to face the present and future. They understand that religious understandings need to be by skilled leaders and teachers and that unity among the community is the key to gaining acceptance and respect. Based on this, whatever adverse feelings and experiences ABMY have experienced, they are very positive about the future of the Muslim community in Australia.

Conclusion

This chapter has reported on the findings of interviews conducted with ABMY following the survey stage of the research. It has found that ABMY have a very clear idea about their identity; they have willingly accepted being Muslim and are

aware that it has not been forced upon them. This chapter also noted that from a young age, ABMY have been brought up in an Islamic family background, were sent to Islamic schools or weekend Islamic school by their parents. Now that they have grown older they adopt Islamic ways of life as a matter of their own choice. This does not eliminate them from calling themselves as Australian or saying that they are 'proud to be Australian'. They have learned ways to live with both Australian values and Islamic teaching without causing any clashes by striking a satisfactory balance between the two.

They are keen learners of their religion. They learn or are willing to learn their religion in study circles which provide them with opportunities to learn and practice their religion. As part of this learning process, they try to free themselves from following the religion blindly or following cultural interpretations of Islam. They want to learn Islam from the primary sources of Islam. They consider traditional practices such as open dance mixing men and women in the wedding parties are not from authentic teachings of Islam even though it still practiced by some Muslims. ABMY point out that these traditional practises by their parents has nothing to do with authentic teachings of Islam.

In the view of ABMY, they are very confident that they will have a bright future in Australia. Education is the key to building tolerance and respect for religious diversity.

CHAPTER SIX

Parents, Community and ABMY

This chapter is divided into two parts. Part one presents the data analysis of interviews from community leaders and parents. The second part presents inter-generational differences between second generation Muslim youth and their migrant parents.

Part One: Expectations of Community Leaders and Parents

In this part, the data obtained from semi-structured interviews with community leaders and parents, as well as my personal perceptions and reflections, are considered.

Community Leaders

This section discusses data obtained from five community leaders who were interviewed. The five community leaders held the following positions: senior policy officer of the Victorian Multi Cultural Commission, a psychologist closely connected with wider Muslim community youth, the Victorian president of the Federation of Australian Muslim Students and Youth (FAMSY), the chairperson of the Islamic Women's Welfare Council of Victoria, and a community liaison officer of a government funded law enforcing authority in Melbourne. All of those interviewed were connected with ABMY at different levels of contact and frequency. With the exception of the Victorian president of the Federation of

Australian Muslim Students and Youth (FAMSY), all of the community leaders were female.

As discussed in Chapter 5, a questionnaire was designed to elicit main issues related to ABMY. The following themes were formed to investigate further from parents and community leaders their views on: being a Muslim in contemporary Australia, challenges of ABMY, impacts of the challenges, the contemporary lives of ABMY and expectations for the lives of ABMY. The responses to this questionnaire guided the items discussed in these semi-structured interviews.

Being a Muslim in contemporary Australia

The five community leaders were asked about conflicts in practicing Islam and being an Australian. All of them, without exception, said that they did not think that any conflicts existed. The following statement by the policy officer of Victorian Multicultural Commission (CL1) clarified her reasons for thinking that this was the case:

The concept of what it means to be Australian has shifted with waves of new migration to Australia. Being Australian means coming from a whole range of backgrounds and there is no conflict between practicing Islam and being an Australian.

The same view was expressed by another leader (CL2), but from a different perspective:

Most young people I work with are highly integrated into the Australian community. They are the Australian community. Indicators of integration include part time employment whilst studying at tertiary level universities, involvement in volunteering for community organisations or for charitable causes, being proactive in making changes within their communities.

A third community leader (CL5) described her thoughts on how the Islamic way of life had been incorporated effectively into Western societies, saying:

I do feel that in general Muslims are under less scrutiny than what they had been before as the West adapts to Islam as a part of modern Western life in a globalised world. Interfaith dialogue has also encouraged greater understanding between Australia's diverse communities.

While she stated that she thought there '...are no areas of conflict between practicing Islam and being an Australian for me, and I believe there should not be any issue for the community', she also acknowledged that, 'to an extent, the widespread reporting of terrorism as "Islamic", and also generally negative media-reporting of the community, has impacted the feeling of integration and belonging of ABMY'. She went on to say that these issues are not necessarily unique to the Muslim community, as other culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) communities experience similar situations (CL5):

...there are also issues in other CALD communities that I know of, such as Sudanese Christian youth, Samoan and Tongan. Indigenous Australians have faced the greatest discrimination and the most ingrained institutionalised forms of racism, and have it particularly difficult in comparison to the Muslim community.

Another community leader noted that:

Islam is not a nationalistic identity, and Muslims should religiously not conceive of themselves as culturally separate entities. This was not a practice endorsed by the prophet Mohammed PBUH (CL5).

During data collection, I noticed this view among ABMY than was the case with their parents. The more they read or learn about Islam independently, the more they tend to form their views directly from primary sources of Islam rather than from their parents. Having ethnic based institutions or mosques, as in their country of origin, is fiercely opposed by many youth as one of female participant, Tasneem said:

We are sick and tired of some of our parents who still try to label their country of origin for any mosque they build or institutions they establish like Albanian mosque, Bengali mosque, Turkish mosque or Pakistani Muslim organization. This is totally wrong. Islam is not a religion for an ethnic groups or nationalities, it is a universal message and anyone who believes in its message can become Muslim. Attaching the ethnic names with it is totally wrong; in fact it is against Islamic teaching. I do not understand how some of our parents do this even though they have spent their most of the life in Australia. We do not like this.

In summary, almost all of the leaders indicated that they felt that there was no conflict regarding the practicing of Islamic faith and living in Australia. It appears, however that ABMY are not happy with continuing parental attachment to the country of origin. This they believe influences parents to name mosques they build by their country of origin rather than linking them to the wider Muslim community. Factors such as the continuous process of migration, and the effective integration of Muslim youth into Australian community were provided as reasons as not having conflicts between being a Muslim and being Australian. Additionally, respondents noted the more general adaptation of Islam into Western countries contributed to narrowing the gap between various ethnic groups including Muslims and reducing the possibilities of conflict between them.

Considering the challenges for ABMY

The modern world is full of challenges and Muslim youth must too face these challenges in their daily lives. This part of the interviews focused on discovering the views of community leaders on the challenges faced by ABMY. Some of these identified by the five community leaders include challenges include, discrimination, the negative portrayal of Muslims in the media, Islamophobia and a victim mentality of ABMY due to the negative portrayal of Muslims in the media.

Discrimination based on religious faith remains one of the major challenges faced by Muslim youth. This was acknowledged by one of the leaders (CL1, who came from an Anglo-saxon background and who was a non-Muslim) she said:

I think there are often additional barriers of discrimination, particularly for young Muslim women. There remains significant prejudice among the wider community of Muslims and through our contact with young Muslims and peak organizations there is still quite open discrimination (verbal abuse, employment discrimination, etc).

The media's portrayal of Muslims, for example, as terror suspects or Muslim women as being oppressed, was identified by the community leaders as challenges faced by ABMY. One of the community leaders (CL2) said:

Muslim youth at the moment are visually depicted in the media as potential terror suspects, or trouble makers and Muslim women as oppressed. Other young people are not necessarily subjected to these stereotypes.

All participants in this study recognized and stated that they felt that the media portrays Muslims as 'terrorists', Islam as 'terrorism' and Muslim women as being oppressed. This view is shared by many other authors as it has been reported by Munro (2006, para.1), 'Muslims are portrayed as uniformly violent, oppressors of women, and members of a global conspiracy opposed to Australian values'. This view is further affirmed as it has been reported in the media (Leung, 2006):

MOST Victorian schoolchildren view Muslims as terrorists, and two out of five students agree that 'Muslims are unclean'. Just over 50 per cent believe 'Muslims behave strangely', and 45 per cent say Australians do not have 'positive feelings about Muslims'. These are some of the preliminary findings from a statewide survey of student attitudes towards the Muslim community. (para 1)

Early chapters summarises of ABMY reflection indicates that they feel intimidated by the stand that the media take against them. Kabir (2006) affirms this following her field research of Muslim youths in Australia she, too, reported that 'the general perception of Australian Muslims is that the media is biased against them' (p. 277). I believe that this affirms the prevailing view among ABMY regarding the media. It was pointed out by Zaynab who said "that the media also

contributed in misrepresenting the situation creating hostilities within the community”. Another ABMY Tasneem also highlighted “negative coverage by the media about Islam and Muslims”. Certainly, it was a common comment I gathered from ABMY during data collection that ABMY and other members of Muslim community believe that the media always take anti-Muslim stand. Some of ABMY blame the current political climate for such ‘Islamophobia’, which they regarded as contributing to the global injustices against Muslims as one of the community leaders (CL4) stated:

The political climate, more so globally than nationally, does present a considerably more Islamophobic tendency. This is evidenced in foreign policy, Western national imperialism; a perceived arrogance of the West. These realities do not escape the attention of ABMY, nor the majority of educated non-Muslims as well. To this end, there is a certain resentment of such policies and a sense of global injustices against Muslims (CL4).

Interestingly, another community leader (CL5), who is a recent convert to Islam and whose work is directly linked to Muslim youth, while acknowledging the media’s portrayal of Muslims, and discrimination against Muslims, highlighted an important pressure point facing ABMY:

The development of a victim mentality among the Muslim community in general is a particularly pressing challenge for ABMY. The heavier the community’s views about outside scrutiny and racism, the greater pressure ABMY feel on themselves also.

She contended that such a victim mentality exacerbates existing challenges and may have negative effects and will not positively help the ABMY. Another community leader (CL3), who is a practicing Muslim, pointed out that an identity crisis may result from not understanding the message of Islam clearly:

Keeping their religion while integrating... Sometimes they face an identity challenge. But I believe that this is due to misunderstanding of the objectives of the message of Islam.

In summary, community leaders have identified some key challenges for ABMY; discrimination against ABMY in the media was articulated as the main area of concern. Of particular concern in this regard was the portrayal of Muslims as terror suspects and Islam as supporting terrorism. Other concerns raised by community leaders as to identity formation for ABMY included Muslim women being subjugated by Muslim men, the political climate created for the development of Islamophobia, and the resultant victim mentality of some Muslims. While community leaders are negative about the portrayal of Muslims, they are positive about the integration of ABMY into Australian society.

Impacts of the challenges

Community leaders believe that the challenges just discussed do have a negative impact on the lives of ABMY. They noted that the negative portrayal of Muslims in the community might result in marginalization of these young people. Further negative portrayal can impact adversely on their confidence and identity, and create mental health issues. Community leader CL2 pointed out:

These stereotypes are debilitating as they impact [on their] positive identity formation and [create] a deficit construction of identity, rather than a strength based construction of identity. There are also negative effects on mental health.

CL1 noted that this can result in frustration and a sense of being marginalized from the wider community. The wider implication for ABMY who are marginalized is that it would impact on their ability to function as active Muslim citizens in the wider Australian community.

The contemporary lives of ABMY

There are many initiatives at different levels that attempt to minimize the gaps between ABMY and the wider communities in which they live. This is supported by voices of the community leaders interviewed. CL1 asserted that ‘...many of the young people we work with are very focused on developing new ideas for combating discrimination and remain very positive about making changes within society’. CL4 emphasized active participation of the ABMY in mainstream society. This is noted below:

Also there is significantly greater onus upon of the ABMY to be seen to participate in mainstream ventures, not just because they are Muslim, but because they are global citizens who need to be interacting more with their global community.

CL5 shared a similar view:

The solution lies in the Muslim community becoming more active agents for social change. If Muslims want to be recognised to be positive contributors to Australian society, then they must stand up and assert their presence in Australia as a force for positive change. Community groups, government and non-government organisations should encourage the development of this mentality in projects with ABMY, to increase their feelings of belonging. Muslims need to stand up and assert themselves as true stakeholders in Australia’s future.

With regard to policy and policy making, CL2 pointed out that the experiences of young Muslims, who experience daily challenges, need to be heard by policy makers and the wider community. CL2 placed the responsibility of listening to ABMY on the whole community:

It is important to listen to the experiences of young Muslims who can provide firsthand experience and often have a range of ideas for how to tackle these issues. It is important to acknowledge that the whole community is responsible for coming up with solutions.

CL4 put forward a similar viewpoint, suggesting that said there was a need for better communication between ABMY and others:

Communication between key decision makers in our community with the ABMY of today – for them to hear the experiences of ABMY and how all levels of policy making in this country impact on the future well being of these young Australians.

Giving ‘voice’ to ABMY to have the freedom to talk about their place in contemporary Australian society is important; their contributions can assist them in being able to effectively contribute to the mainstream society in Australia.

CL3 emphasized the role of education in creating a context for solutions to these problems; it was her belief that successful solutions required ‘...education of people and production of leaders and role models. This is where Australian Muslims must invest Leadership’. The role of educational institutions in ensuring that young people have the opportunity to engage in leadership programs is central to establishing mutual understanding and harmony between members of different Australian communities. Among local Muslim communities efforts have been taken to establish weekend Islamic schools to teach religion and Arabic language; as well, they conduct many informal educational training forums or study circles for Islamic leaders.

Outside the Muslim community, recent efforts to run leadership programs for selected young Muslim are noted. One leadership program was organized in 2009 by the Centre for Dialogue, La Trobe University, in collaboration with the Islamic Council of Victoria, and with the support of the Institute for Advancing Community Engagement, Australian Catholic University. The cost of this project was met by the State Government of Victoria. This program provided opportunities for ABMY to immerse themselves in other cultures, faiths and traditions as well as to engage in interfaith dialogues and community. A final report written by Australian Catholic University (2009) declared that the session also reinforced the principle of diversity being a rich and valuable aspect of our Australian society.’

In summary the community leaders believed that addressing the problems and challenges faced by ABMY youth lies in a combination of active participation of ABMY in their communities, in interaction and integration with wider communities, and through education/ initiatives.

Expectations of ABMY: Community Leaders have their say

Having asked for the points of view of leaders on the problems faced by ABMY, community leaders were asked about their own expectations of ABMY. CL1, a non-Muslim, said:

I expect ABMY to voice their opinions, to provide us with information on the issues facing their community and to work together to come up with ideas for combating these.

She wanted ABMY to voice their opinions and views publically; then, and only then, would their situation and views be known to the community. By virtue of this participation, their views within the wider community will become visible. As a result, this participation will pave the way for ABMY to work within the wider community to resolve issues facing the Muslim community.

CL2, a community leader working closely with Muslim community youth, noted:

I expect them to achieve success and live as happy and harmonious lives as other Australians. I expect that the high value Muslim families place on the family, that in years to come, Muslim families will be looked up to as role models for other families.

This statement affirms the high value Muslim families place on providing role models for other families, as well as the need for cohesive interactions between people of different faiths and beliefs.

In similar vein, CL4 advocated interaction between the mainstream and the Muslim community, particularly in active involvement in a number of fields:

Greater interaction with the mainstream, through involvement in arts, science, communication (media), public office (local/state and fed politics) and education will help. We need more educated, articulate and well integrated practicing Muslims at the coal-face of our community, representing their faith and their country confidently and without compromise.

It is interesting to observe that the community leaders saw the importance of and the vital role that ABMY could play, in carrying out the task of linking their faith and country values without compromising Islamic and broader community values.

CL5 offered a word of caution: she does not want undue pressure to be placed on ABMY at the present time:

I have great hopes for ABMY, but I don't project expectations onto them, as expectations can lead to unnecessary pressures. I think hope is what I would like to emerge from ABMY as a social group in the next ten years.

Through her close collaboration with the Muslim community she has hopes for over the next decade they will emerge as a group that has a solid voice and a sense of agency in their interactions with other or social groups.

Meeting expectations of the community leaders?

The community leaders were asked their views regarding whether ABMY would fulfil the educational, social and political obligations that would be place on them in the next ten years; all, save one, answered very positively. The exception, CL3, a male community leader, warned against holding false expectations, saying he was '...expecting their fulfilment, but not necessarily always'.

Of those who spoke strongly in the affirmative, CL1, commenting on the enthusiasm of ABMY, was hopeful that they will fulfil the positive future expectations she has for them, stating, 'Yes, the young people we work with are very enthusiastic and engaged and excited about making a difference'. CL4 said that she was hopeful about the capabilities of the ABMY because they are

‘...collectively more politically acute, educated and motivated to advocate for change for their community – than their parents/previous generation ever were’.

The community leaders understood the social political challenges facing ABMY. Based on these understandings, the community leaders expect ABMY to come forward to voice their concerns, work together, and to represent their faith and country. The community leaders interviewed were both optimistic about the future and hopeful that their expectations would be met by the ABMY.

Expectations of Parents

Five parents of ABMY were interviewed and they were asked about the religious and social expectations they had for their children. Almost all of them said that they expect that their children would have ‘proper Islamic knowledge and morals’. One male parent, Ammar, said: ‘I have high expectations and wish that they will follow the best form of Islamic behaviour and the best Islamic model’

Another parent (Ahmad), elaborated on this point expecting his children to learn the religion properly and to have a correct understanding of Islamic values. He believes that the younger generation has failed to adequately learn about their religion, stating:

Our expectation is that they are raised with good Islamic values to practice and morals. We are not demanding or expecting our of them to be Islamic scholars but to make sure that deep inside them that they have the Islamic faith or *Aqeeda* and the proper faith and belief because it is paramount. There is nothing more important than this in a whole life of a Muslim. Then to have the true *Aqeeda*, the faith, the belief of the oneness of God and the belief in Islam in its proper format and that you fall within the true Islamic belief because they must see himself as a Muslim sometimes but he might be ignorant, have some funny beliefs about the *Quran* or about Islam in general and in reality truly not be a Muslim. That is what is scary about the younger generation because they don’t learn their religion properly to have the proper faith and *Aqeeda*. That is the fear.

He offers suggestion on how this expectation should be achieved:

The only way they can do that, mostly importantly, is if they learn the Arabic language and they understand the Arabic language for when they go to *Jumma* prayers, to this or that, this is probably the most important source of knowledge for them because they don't read at home most, unfortunately. So the language factor is the main factor to push itself to do something. And some children they got the attitude to learn by themselves and some children don't. And this is the biggest fear for a working parent in non-Muslim countries is that the *Aqeeda* of the children. Are they really within that Islamic circle or are they not?

This particular parent stressed the importance of learning Arabic language so his children might understand the Arabic sermons delivered at Friday prayers. In his view, parents fear a lack of fundamental Islamic belief in the minds of ABMY. He believed in the importance of having a strong Islamic faith, saying:

What's the use of anything you have gathered or collected in life in terms of wealth or knowledge or education: it is worthless compared to the faith which is the most important success in life.

On the other hand, some parents believed that their children had a better knowledge of the Muslim religion than they did. Rasha a female parent, said: 'I hope that they become better Muslims than their parents'; another female parent Amal, noted: 'I expect them to be a better Muslims, more knowledgeable and steadfast as compared to their parents'. It is evident, from these parents' voices that, for some, religious knowledge and its moral value were a dominating expectation; for others, it was not so dominating.

A number of parents were concerned that their children should not be carried away or influenced by distractions that might divert their attention from religion and its central place in their everyday lives. Ahmad, a male parent voiced his concern about this very theme as follows:

The problem is mostly it in this adolescent age where they can pick up some bad habits such as smoking and drugs and they can be hooked on to unwanted things. That is the major fear or they can be dragged into the ease of life. It is one thing to practice Islam, but they think that freedom, general freedom in society is all for me and that they don't have to pray. There are a lot of children here who are being slowly absorbed into the main stream society and they are not able to practice Islam. That's the concern. Again the children lose their faith in Islam, simply because they don't understand their religion properly. They don't read enough to understand the meaning of Islam, the importance of *Aqeeda*, the importance of being a Muslim, so these are the challenges. They could go and get a girlfriend, get into a bad situation which is contradictory to the Islamic practice and the teaching of Islamic practice. We want them to live as productive Australian Muslim citizens positively contributing to wider Australian community without losing the Islamic faith and its high morals.

In spite of the concerns expressed above, when these parents were asked whether their children were meeting their expectations, all but one said that they were. There was a need to investigate further these issues with ABMY to determine the extent of any inter-generational gaps or discrepancies that exist between themselves and their parents. Such concerns of parents and the stand of ABMY are discussed further in the next section of this chapter.

Conclusion

As far as expectations are concerned, the community leaders and parents highlighted one common and two slightly different areas. Community leaders want ABMY to do the following: interact more with the wider community; voice their opinions and views publically. The parents also want their children to live happy and successful lives while adopting Islamic values and morals so that they might make a positive contribution to Australian society. Parents are less concerned about interaction and integration with the broader Australian society.

Community leaders and parents agree that ABMY are achieving their expectations. Community leaders are not only positive about ABMY's integration

in their communities and the broader Australian context, but are optimistic about the ways in which ABMY can contribute in creating a better Australian society. Though challenges and difficulties have been identified by parents, community leaders hold positive hopes for the future of ABMY.

Part Two: Inter-generational Gaps and Expectations of Parents

Part one outlined the expectations of community leaders and parents. This section attempts to shed light on inter-generational gaps between parents and ABMY. . In particular this section provides insight into parents' expectations of their children around the following key themes:

- being a Muslim,
- understanding of Islam,
- culture and religion,
- integration into wider Australian Society,
- conflicts between being a Muslim and Australian and challenges,
- the future of Islam in Australia,
- devotion of time for religion,
- the sources used learn about religion.

This section sheds light on views expressed by ABMY and their parents and seeks to trace any inter-generational gaps between areas listed above.

Being Muslim

The central aim of this study is to examine how ABMY and their parents define notions of identity formation. The extent to which there is an inter-generational gap between the views and understandings of parents and their children will be discussed below.

Most of the participants selected from the ABMY and their parents unanimously said that being a Muslim means following the path of the Prophet and submitting themselves to the will of Allah. Furthermore, some participants indicated it was a way of life. With this in mind, there was not much difference noticed between the ABMY and their parents. Zaynab, a female ABMY participant commented:

It's a way of life. For me being a Muslim, I can't see myself any other way. The way I eat, drink, walk, everything, even how I act in the streets to strangers, I try to follow Islamic teaching.

The same tone was echoed in a parent's voice when one father said that being Muslim 'means I live all facets of my life as has been ordained by Allah and practiced by the Prophet'. Similarly, one parent, Ammar and an ABMY Aysha, associated their religious identity with the inner peace attained as a result of being Muslim. Aysha said:

Being a Muslim means the submission and obedience to Allah *Subhaanahu Wa Ta'aalah* in order to attain inner peace. Therefore, being a Muslim is my top priority in life. However, this isn't the easiest of tasks. Instead, it requires quite some sacrifice/struggle. But then again, nothing with such great value comes easy anyway. Being a Muslim, one's heart is filled with gratitude to Allah for blessing us with this priceless gift of Islam.

Another parent, Rana, spoke of her Islamic belief, emphasising the importance of being honest and tolerant:

I have lived in and visited 28 countries - by the time I was 19 years old. I have found that everywhere people are in utter confusion. They have tried ways to become happier, healthier and richer and every time they have failed miserably. Ultimately happiness is in being able to be kind, gentle, humble, honest and tolerant. The more one lists the attributes required to be happy the more one realizes that The Prophet (PBUH) and the Qur'an endorse and encourage exactly the same virtues. The rules laid down are extraordinarily clear and correct- the systems that they help to put in place paradoxically give Man ultimate Freedom – that which he strives for and finds ever elusive. So for me being a Muslim and abiding by Islamic principles means the opportunity to discover complete Happiness and Freedom.

Both of these parental responses indicate that they believe that in following their religion there is a greater likelihood of obtaining inner peace and happiness.

A second parent, Ahmad, drew a link between his religious belief and the afterlife, saying:

It means your life, your whole life should be guided by the teachings of the *Quran* and the prophet (PBUH) and you are bound by these rules and regulations so that you fulfil your role as a practicing Muslim in this life and in the end the ultimate result and that Allah Tha-lah would be pleased with you and forgive you and we end up in paradise.

While some parents pointed to inner peace and happiness, others pointed to paradise and God's acceptance as the meaning of being a Muslim. By way of contrast, Raashid, an ABMY included both in his interpretation of being a Muslim, commenting:

It means to follow the teachings of Islam (*Quran* and *Sunnah*) to the best of my abilities and practice what was prescribed to the Muslim Ummah. Whether that be following the rulings of my parents, respecting all those around me or praying five times a day. Being a Muslim is also a great honour which I try to fulfil.

He upholds Islamic worships and morals taught by Islam together as the meaning of being a Muslims. This young man considers all these aspects as the meaning for being a Muslim. It appears to me that there are many ABMY take similar meaning for Islam.

Understanding Islam

Whether Islam is regarded as a religion with some rituals or viewed as a complete life style, is an interesting question. How is Islam understood and practiced? The popular view gathered in this study was that 'Islam is a way of life' or 'a complete code of life'. This was the most common understanding of Islam among the ABMY participants and their parents. They further stressed, as they had indicated earlier, their commitment and submission to the teaching/prophesies of Allah. One female participant explained:

Islam is not just a religion, but a complete way of life. It is a faith that is not a new one but in fact, one that all the Prophets of the past from Adam (PBUH) to Muhammad (PBUH) came to spread through the land. The word 'Islam' is derived from the Arabic term '*aslama*' which means to submit and the word 'salaam' which means peace. Subsequently, Islam stresses on the belief of only One God (Monotheism) that Muslims submit and surrender to and in turn, reach a level of peace that can only be reached through their submission to God and their renouncing of this material world in desire of being those who are triumphant in the Hereafter (receiving Paradise as their reward). (Aysha)

Parents also expressed the similar meaning as they defined Islam in the following ways: "Islam is a peaceful religion"; "It asks us to respect others"; "It preaches no violence"; "I believe that Islam is a peaceful religion because it comes from the Arabic root word of Islam, which means peace".

Culture and religion

Balancing between religious guidance and traditional cultural values is an issue for many Muslims. The choice depends on their background and experiences of the Muslims. It is apparent that the generation of ABMY involved in this study is more interested in interpreting, or receiving, religious ruling directly from primary sources of Islam rather than interpretations of Islam steeped in culture. It has been highlighted in the literatures as Hussain (2004, para.7) points out that 'concerted effort must be put forward to help youth differentiate between Islamic culture and cultural Islam'. It is more likely that the Muslim parents will try to practice and live with the cultural values resulting from their ethnic origins than do the children born in Australia.

Of the people interviewed in this study, I came across few instances of a clash between culture and religion – except for Zaynab, a female ABMY who categorically pointed out that:

When you're looking at a small event as *Eid*, let's say for example, an Islamic celebration my parents will say, this is what you need to wear, this is what you

need to say, this is what you need to do and then you sort of, continue on that. In terms of expectations of the female my mom will tell you, Zaynab do this, do that, don't do this, and then you have the cultural aspects, which influence my parents a lot, e.g., dress code, my mom says, 'No, no, no, you can't wear that.

Here, Zaynab asserts that she has been told what to do by her parents and she further points out that her parents are influenced by their cultural traditions as opposed to religious traditions.

Aysha, a second female participant clearly differentiated between culture and religion and said that she has not been influenced by culture but by religion. She stated:

Before being anything else, I am a Muslim. Basically, it's not any cultural influence and practice that has made me who I am, but rather Islam has. Islam is not just a religion; it's a way of life... Hence, my entire life, including my studies, family affairs, my social life, my leisure activities, moral values and so forth revolve around the teachings of Islam.

It has been observed by Awdah (1981) that Islamic teachings have either been conveniently modified on many occasions by misinterpretations by 'unskilled jurists' or 'laymen', or by 'cultural values attached to religious rulings'. These eventually result in incorrect interpretations of the original message given by Islam. In this study, except for what has been explained above, no one spoke of clashes between culture and religion or the influence of culture over religion in their lives.

Integration into the wider Australian society

The integration of people from migrant communities and their offspring, into the host community is an interesting issue – wherever it takes place. Questions related to what, when, where, and how integration should take place cannot be precisely and unambiguously answered; this, of course, also applies to migrant communities in Australia. It is widely accepted that there is no specific 'Australian identity': it

cannot be defined, though many have attempted to define it (Phillips, 1998; Kabir, 2008). Because there are no agreed definitions, it is difficult to assess the level of integration of ABMY, Muslims or any other ethnic communities in the wider perspective of Australian society. While assessing the level of integration is not an easy task, the accusation of failure to integrate into the wider Australian community is often directed towards ethnic migrant communities. In this context, the integration of Muslims and ABMY into Australian society often surfaces as a controversial issue in Australia. In the past, some politicians, like a former Australian Prime Minister, John Howard (1996-2007), have openly claimed that ‘a small section of the Islamic population [was] very resistant to integration’ (Aly, 2006, p.24). This places Muslims under close scrutiny. While integration varies from person to person, this research has attempted to explore the ways and the level of success to which the integration of ABMY, and their parents, with the wider Australian community has occurred.

Nearly three-quarters of the ABMY indicated, in interviews, that being a Muslim does not affect their ability to integrate within Australian society. Many ABMY strongly argued that they did not have any problems integrating themselves into the wider Australian community. Zaynab, for example, said:

I don't think that because I am a Muslim I can't integrate in society. I applied for jobs in Jewish dominated areas, areas that have a majority Jewish population. I didn't even think twice about it and I got that job. But I do think being a Muslim does affect my experiences.

Zaynab further recalled following two incidents in which she was questioned about her identity. And she told me how confidently she responded and affirmed her Australian identity.

Recently I had an appointment and the receptionist kept on asking me: “So which country you were born, Lebanon?” I was thinking, I told her “I was born in

Williamstown; it's a little town in Melbourne". I have been spoken to like that on a couple of occasions.

On another occasion a medical professor (who actually discovered vaccine for skin cancer) asked me in a slow tone, "So, tell me how it is back in your country". At this point I hadn't spoken to him. I looked puzzled and I responded, "Excuse me, I was born here" and he said "really" and looked at me up and down. He said "Aaa, I wouldn't have guessed".

Having said this, Zaynab concluded that such experience "doesn't affect my ability to stand up, but it does hurt my feelings. I tend to overcome these". She has been determined and courageous to face challenges faced as a result of being a Muslim.

Sara, another female participant, said that at times she found being Muslim affected the integration process. However she accused people of being ignorant about Muslims. She is much annoyed as Muslims –at times- are expected to prove themselves before they could be accepted. She said:

People have very narrow assumptions of Muslims such as being uneducated. This limits our ability to be able to completely become involved immediately. I feel Muslims often have to prove themselves to the larger Australian society in order to become accepted.

She blames those people who have misunderstandings about Muslims. Further she believes that she should not have to prove herself to the larger Australian society in order to be accepted. Sara questions as to why this situation only applies to Muslims and not to other migrants or their children.

Tasneem, a third female participant, who differentiated herself as an ABMY from the wider Australian Muslim community, observed that members of the Islamic community have trouble integrating within a non-Muslim society. She discusses this below:

I personally have no problem with integrating with others. I think however members of the Islamic community generally have trouble integrating with non-

Muslim people and being part of the society is difficult as they feel they have no shared interest or values.

Tasneem states that she has no problem integrating with others – perhaps because of her background and current career as a solicitor; however, she thinks that other members of the Muslim community do not have the same view or experience as she does. She accepts that others may have some trouble integrating. This is discussed further at the end of this section along with the views of parents on integration.

Ashraff, a male participant, while commenting on acceptance by Australian wider society he said ‘it depends on the situation’ and gave the following justification:

Australian society I believe is starting to accept that having a diverse society greatly benefits the country as a whole. As far as how this affects my identity, it doesn't exactly change who I am or what I see myself as. I'm a Muslim and an Australian no matter what anyone says.... People in Australian society compared to other countries in most cases keep to themselves and therefore can be very judgmental about other societies and cultures. My ability to integrate into Australian society is wholly based me being a person and nothing to do with me being Muslim or not.

This highlights a very different perspective from other ABMY interviewed in this study on independence and confidence of an ABMY and his personality. He is very confident that his ability to integrate into Australian society depends on him and him alone. He excludes Islam from it, and instead, claims personal responsibility for his actions. This means he fails to consider the role of social agents in impacting upon his values and sense of identity. Of all the ABMY who participated in this study, he is the only individual who took this position.

Parents of ABMY were asked the same question regarding whether they have problems in integrating with wider Australian community; almost all of them were

very confident and positive. One male parent, Ammar, having stated that he had few problems in integrating in Australia:

No, not at all. Having lived here now for more than 30 years, I think I came to the point to be convinced that the more Muslim I am, the better able I would be to integrate to the wider Australian society.

Likewise, Rasha, a female parent, also denied any integration problems and as a result being a Muslim:

No. I believe that amalgamated communities that are based largely on immigrant populations are tolerant simply because they have absorbed and are still absorbing large and varied religious and cultural values.

Of the parents interviewed, only one male parent, Ahmad, answered this question differently. He said that being a Muslim affects, to some degree, the ability to integrate within the larger Australian society. He explained his situation, as follows:

In general you can integrate. There is nothing Islamically preventing you to my knowledge – being nice to neighbours, joking, you know, sitting having a cup of coffee together, whatever, - but there might be a specific situation where you might go into a restaurant maybe they want to have alcohol or have wine with their dinner. When there is a restriction on me, you can't be on that level. Yes, it is a minor. Overall, we interact in so many ways. We work together and contribute positively to the society. A lot of people respect that. When they see that from you, that you are honest, you are sincere and you work, you always positively contribute in terms of your work, in terms of your ethics, your honesty, your integrity, you always give advice to someone, if you see something wrong, you try to correct it like any normal citizen.

These findings suggest that both ABMY and their parents were very positive about their integration into the wider Australian community. The data discussed

support the notion that for ABMY and their parents in this study there is not much of an intergeneration gap in this regard.

In summary, the integration of ABMY within the wider Australian community is seen as an important factor in building harmony and peace. Being a Muslim does not stop ABMY's ability to integrate into mainstream Australian society. All ABMY interviewed in this study argued that they did not have any major problems with being accepted. Their responses were not much different from the responses given by the parents of ABMY, all of whom were positive about their ability to integrate into Australian society.

Conflicts between being a Muslim and Australian and its challenges

Being an Australian while practicing Islam is sometimes highlighted by politicians as problematic. This claim has come at a time when many Muslims believe that they can comfortably practice their religion while, at the same time, displaying loyalty to their Australian citizenship. In the past, there have been concerns voiced by notable Australian politicians pertaining to the ability of individuals to practice Islam while holding Australian identity. As pointed out in Chapter 1, in 2005 a comment by former federal Treasurer Peter Costello sparked discussions about practicing Islam and being an Australian. He said that those who want to live under *Shariah* law have no place in Australia (Jones (2005)). As this topic was in the media during the time of this research, I asked the participants their views on this comment. All of those interviewed, both ABMY and their parents, said that they did not experience conflict between practicing Islam and being an Australian. Some of the participants explored it further and highlighted other related issues such as how they are balancing being a Muslim as well as an Australian. Zaynab, a female participant, said:

Personally, no, I don't think so, I can continue wearing my Hijab and putting on my footy top to go to the footy. It's no problem. You don't let people bring you down and feel confident about being a Muslim and an Australian. We must

integrate in society but also not sacrifice practicing our religion. I don't find challenges much but I think overcoming people's opinions can be difficult at times.

A second female ABMY, Aysha, echoed this response:

No. I don't find any problem. The problems usually arise from others who are intolerant of Muslims and generate the conflict and tension. Otherwise I, personally, don't find any issue.

One male ABMY, Yassir, very confidently said that that he finds 'No conflict as the larger Australian community is beginning to understand Islam'.

These inputs from ABMY and their parents indicate that they had found no conflict between practicing their religion and being Australian. On this issue, I could not find any inter-generational gap between ABMY and their parents.

As far as challenges were concerned, ABMY participants highlighted a small number of issues, as follows: the negative portrayal of Muslims in the media; discrimination because of *hijab* or other visible signs of being Muslim; and finding prayer places to pray and the availability of *halal* food. One of the female ABMY, Aysha, said:

Being part of a minority, and one that's not portrayed in a very positive light, a challenge I may face is always being under the spotlight. I feel as though our every action is monitored and the public eye is constantly on us. But that awkwardness that arises at times in public doesn't affect the practicing of my religion Alhamdulillah.

A second ABMY, Tasneem, highlighted the same issue, linking her difficulties of finding work in the legal area with her being a Muslim. She believed, in fact, that she had been judged and stereotyped.

As a law graduate I have had some difficulty in terms of finding work partly because of the stigma of being visibly Muslim. People do not understand the

significance of the hijab they just interpret it as being an extremist and this can be difficult mentality to change. I am judged and stereotyped because of my choice of faith and this at many times has been used against me. Like I am not expected to understand what it is to be Australian or the values that are important to me as an Australian.

A third female ABMY, Nafeesa, specifically emphasized others' ignorance of the nature of Islamic prayers.

Wearing a *hijab*, although being more greatly accepted in today's world, is still a target of racism...Remembering the importance of eating halal food can also be difficult to explain...Praying the 5 daily prayers can often be hard living in an Australian society, as you often have to be excused from meetings, classes and lectures; and most people fail to understand the reasons why these prayers have to be conducted within certain periods of time.

When I asked the parents of ABMY about the challenges they faced as a result of their religious beliefs their focus was slightly different from those of their children. One parent, Ahmed, saw the freer Australian life-style as a challenge to their preferred way of bringing up their children. He said:

Because the extra freedom within the democratic society of here, you know, a lot of things we regards as Muslims, as being forbidden is quite not regarded as forbidden by the wider society. This can easily stuck someone young into being lost. Can drag him into the unwanted side of the law and unwanted circumstances like going out with gangs, and doing racing with the cars and cause himself a nuisance or accident or something or worse getting to school and meeting other school friends who smoke, do drugs.

Rather than finding challenges, some parents found that living in Australia places them in a positive environment to follow their religion and live as a practicing Muslim. It lets them re-learn their religion directly from primary sources, away from cultural attachments. One female parent, Rana, said:

I believe that it is easier here simply because Muslims have the opportunity to rediscover Islam for themselves. They have the opportunity to re-engage with their faith and to defend and re-evaluate it and different times in their lives. Such a re-immersion can help strengthen the individual- it can make them appreciate it anew. It is also easier to separate Islam from cultural practices that are bid'aa- hence purifying the faith.

Another parent, Rasha, said: 'Australia has a diverse culture and ethnicity. In such societies it's easier to practice your beliefs because people are more tolerant and open minded'.

In summary, there was no valid evidence supporting what was said by former Australian federal treasurer Peter Costello. There were no participants, neither ABMY nor their parents, who said that they want to live under Shariah law in Australia. They reported no conflicts related to being both Muslim and Australian. On the contrary, many of them said that they were very comfortable living in Australia. They did, nevertheless, discuss challenges they face, challenges which, in my opinion, are not specific to Muslim communities in Australia: they are challenges that a majority of citizens face in contemporary times.

Future of Islam

This research attempted to obtain the views of ABMY and their parents about their future in Australia and to see whether there were differences in how ABMY and their parents view their future in Australia. Data collected revealed that almost all ABMY participants were very optimistic about their future in Australia. They recognise that Australia is the country where they were born, live and possibly will die; it is their country. There were no significant differences found between the views of parents and their children. Statements by ABMY reflected that they were very confident about their future in Australia, even though there were challenges they experienced in their lives. As Zaynab commented, 'I think that the future of

Muslims here is positive so far, we have encountered challenges as a community, but we have overcome them’.

Similarly, Aysha, said:

I feel the future of Muslims in Australia will be better insha’Allah. More of the youth are grasping onto their religion and more and more facilities and organizations are being established for Muslims. People are learning more about Islam and many misconceptions are being cleared. Also, there is more unity between the Muslims – it still needs a lot of work, but efforts are being exerted Alhamdulillah.

As she found more unity among Muslims, it gave Aysha more hope for a bright future for Muslims in Australia. It is interesting to note that her father, in a subsequent interview with me, had a very different opinion. He was very much concerned about unity among Muslims. He commented that the Muslim community, and its impact on young people, was becoming weaker and weaker. The reasons behind the differences were not immediately apparent. It could be because of their different experiences and exposures between daughter and father contributed for this difference. It could be interpreted as generational gap as well.

Similarly when asked about unity among Muslims, Aysha was mainly referring to her peers who are predominantly ABMY, whereas her father was commenting on his peers who were migrants. Out of all those interviewed, he was the only person who responded in this way as Muslims are becoming weaker.

The education of ABMY gives hope and confidence to them for the future of Islam in Australia. As Tasneem said:

I believe that as the younger generation educate themselves more we will see an increase in positive role models and public identities. This will encourage and promote a more positive perception of Islam and we will no longer be viewed as a minority with no input into the undertakings of this great nation.

ABMY believe that the antagonism which was created after 9/11 against Muslims is fading. This is as a result of Muslim activism in Australia. They feel that this is breaking down barriers. Nafeesa, like Tasneem, was very optimistic about the future of Muslims and Islam in Australia. She said:

With the current active Muslims in the society who are breaking down barriers, it is great to see people who are willing to create a change in a society which had created antagonism against Muslims after 9/11.

Parents of the ABMY of this study had similar views about the future of Islam in Australia. Almost all were very optimistic. Ammar, one of the more optimistic parents, highlighted other issues related to this. He emphasized the urgency and importance of the interaction of the Muslim community with the wider Australian community however, as he states below, unless it is done properly, Muslims will become isolated:

I am optimistic, that is, *Insha Allah*, that Islam is here and Muslims are here to stay for centuries to come and I believe that Islam, *Insha Allah*, will flourish in this country more and I hope that Muslims will play a more effective role in explaining the message of Islam to the non-Muslims because unless we have an interaction with the wider non-Muslim society, Muslims then would be isolated and then they will not have a future.

Another parent, Rasha, predicted that the future of Islam in Australia should be quite bright. She supported her claim by commenting on the change in demography and moral bankruptcy of current society; she said:

Quite bright. The reason is simply due to the dramatic change in the country's demographics. The amount of migrants to this country will change how the country views not only its own citizens but also how the country views alternative ideologies. It is clear that moral bankruptcy can only survive for a limited period of time- it will not be long that Man will forage looking for viable alternatives/systems that can help to sustain his spiritual and practical life- he will come to submit *Inshallah*.

Fifth parent (Female) Rana, who also had very positive views on the future of Islam and Muslims in Australia said:

I see a prosperous and a very strong Muslim community in this country. The history of Muslim Immigrants is not very old. The momentum has just started. With the changing political and economic situation, I believe Muslims here will play a very important role in attracting Middle Eastern oil money to Australian commercial ventures. The way our population is growing and gaining strength, the day will come when we will be able to play an important role in the policy decision of this country.

Rana believes that as Muslims are a new addition to Australian community, they are going to play an important role in the commerce as the population and economy grows and strengthens.

Finally, a fourth parent, Amal, made a conditional statement about the future for Muslims, saying that it will be ‘Very bright if they are active citizens who contribute positively to society’.

Once again, there were few differences between ABMY and parents in their views about the future of Islam and Muslims in Australia. Almost all of them were optimistic that Muslims will have a bright future in Australia. They emphasised that Muslims would continue to make a positive contribution to Australian society in the future.

In summary, the future of Islam in Australia has been seen as very positive by ABMY. The key reasons for this confidence are as follows: Australian people have started to understand the religion of Islam and misconceptions being erased; facilities and organizations which provide facilities to practice the religion are being established; Muslim leaders who promote understanding and tolerance to dispel fears tied to Islam; education will continue to play a major role in giving hope to ABMY about their future as many Muslim youth are educated and entering universities; education for ABMY is not just restricted to universities – it is also found in work sites and cultural functions that take place in local communities.

Devotion of time to religion

Devotion to their religion and making time to learn religious teaching was one of the areas looked at, in order to see if there was an inter-generational gap between the views and experiences of ABMY and their parents.

Initially participants were asked whether they were devoting any time, and how much, to improving their knowledge about their religion. Without exception, all participants from both groups said yes. Four-fifths of them were allocating time to learn about and discuss their religion. As far as the parents are concerned, out of five parents interviewed two of them were learning about their religion on a daily basis and three of them were learning about it whenever they found time or needed to refer to something. The ABMY were spending more time learning about their religion than their parents.

Participants were also asked whether they were attending any study circles (*Halaqas*) in order to learn about their religion. All except one ABMY and two parents (who said that they are using the internet and CDs to listen to talks and participate in discussion), regularly attended non-formal study circles. I noticed no gap between these two groups in the frequency with which they attended study circles, which are held on a weekly, fortnightly and monthly basis. Those who attended study circles were asked what they did in them. All, without exception, said that they learnt the *Quran*, the sayings of the Prophet Muhammad, and morals and manners. In comparing the parents and ABMY regarding the dedication to deepen their understanding of Islam, once again there was no gap inter-generational gap between the two groups.

Devotion of time to learn and practice religion has its impact on notions of identity of ABMY. It would be very different if the participants of this study said 'I was born Muslim, but never attended any religious study circles or studied the religion'. In this study, those who claimed Muslim identity continued to learn and practice their religion by attending study circles. Their seriousness in these

endeavours to follow and adopt Muslim religious principles and values in their personal and family life was strikingly noticeable.

Sources used to learn about religion

I sought to find if there was an inter-generational gap in the resources used by both ABMY and their parents to learn about Islam. I have listed the responses in a table 32. Apart from the *Quran*, there is no single source favoured by all participants; they have mixed choices. It is obvious, however, that parents read classic books of non-contemporary scholars and listen (either face to face, Friday sermons, or through recordings) to specific scholars of their time. ABMY, on the other hand use online resources and attend face-to-face lectures organized by youth and other groups. They prefer modern scholars and speakers over the others. Nafeesa, a female ABMY said:

I usually do not re-read the same book regularly, but instead try to expand my knowledge by giving myself the option to read several different books...I try to give myself access to all types of authors and scholars, even the controversial ones.

Ashraff, a male ABMY similarly sought different sources:

Excluding the Qur'an there are none that I read regularly other than going on the Internet to look at a few topics here and there.

From the data presented in this section, it appears that ABMY prefer current local and international scholars and speakers. Current Muslim scholars speak the language of ABMY and proactively examine about current issues facing the environment they live. This obviously appeals to ABMY. Rather than learning or listening to religious sermons from the religious text without connecting to current realities, ABMY prefer those scholars who talk about religion while connecting religious beliefs to current realities and environment they live in.

Table 32: Sources of Islamic Education between Parents and ABMY

Sources of Islamic Education Between Parents and ABMY

	Quran	Hadith	Sunnah	Tafsir	Tafsir Maududi	Tafsir Muhi Shih	Qurb	Pegh Surah	Martia Laga	Mohamed Asad	Iqbal	Ben Tunjiyah	Hamas Yusuf	Bakille	Booth	Qandari	Local Lectures	Wahba	Takrot	Amir Ahmad	Bakawi	Sevaidan	Phillippe	Janus Thaman	Bilal Asad	Mohammad As Shad	Tawfiq Chowdhry	Yusuf Qadir	Banabas	Dr Kasal Fekari	Ghazali	Zachary Mathews	Vedey	Online Resources	Online Forum	Total		
Y1	X																																					2
Y2																									X	X	X	X							X	X		6
Y3	X	X		X	X		X								X	X									X	X	X	X		X								12
Y4					X																											X					2	
Y5	X																																				1	
Y6	X															X	X																				3	
Y7	X		X																			X															3	
Y8	X	X														X			X												X					5		
Y9																								X				X		X	X						4	
Y10	X																																X			2		
P1	X			X												X	X	X	X	X	X	X															8	
P2	X														X																						2	
P3				X	X	X	X	X					X																								6	
P4	X	X			X	X			X	X	X	X	X	X																							9	
P5	X	X		X	X	X					X												X	X												X	9	
Y	7	2	1	1	2	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	3	1	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	2	1	1	1	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1		
P	4	2	0	3	3	2	2	0	1	1	1	2	2	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1		
T	11	4	1	4	5	2	3	0	1	1	1	2	2	1	2	4	1	1	2	1	1	2	1	2	2	2	2	1	1	1	1	2	3	2	2			

Y= ABMY, P=Parents of ABMY, T= Total

Summary

This element of the study reveals that community leaders are positive about the integration and role of ABMY in their communities and the broader Australian context. These leaders are optimistic that the ABMY can contribute to creating a better society for Australia. The parents are also happy that their children are meeting their expectations.

Inter-generational considerations reveal that there are no major discrepancies in views about specific issues based on responses from ABMY and their parents. The data identified in this chapter supports the view that cohesiveness between the generations of Muslim families is being maintained; indeed, this can be viewed as a source of strength for Muslim families and their communities.

In summary, ABMY in Australian society feel comfortable living in Australia and meeting the expectations of their community leaders and parents amid the current turbulent political times.

CHAPTER SEVEN

Conclusions and Recommendations

Introduction

This study sought to research Australian Born Muslim Youth (ABMY), with at least one parent an immigrant to Australia. These ABMY, at the time of the research, lived in metropolitan Melbourne, Victoria, Australia and were aged between 18 and 30. The study looked at a specific group of ABMY; Muslim youth with a strong belief in the Islamic faith who practice the Islamic religion in their daily lives. To ensure that only ABMY who met this criteria were involved in this study, the questionnaire that was used for this study during data collection Stage 1 raised questions on both religious beliefs and religious practices. Initial data was collected through questionnaires then followed up with interviews with ABMY. Data were then collected from the parents of ABMY and community leaders.

The primary focus of the study was to investigate the notions of identity of ABMY and to find out their understanding of Islam. The secondary focus was to identify the contributions of the parents and community of ABMY in building their identity, and the expectations of parents and the community of ABMY.

Summary of the study

In order to comprehend the background of the major themes of this study which directly related ABMY, Chapter 1, provided a brief outline of Muslims in Australia along with their short history in Australia. This highlighted the roots of Australian

Muslims and the diversity of Australian Muslim society. Even though there have been many studies carried out among and about Muslims in Australia in recent times, there has not been any research work carried out on the focus group of this study – ABMY.

In order to provide the basic scale for religiosity, primary sources of Islam, the *Quran*, and the Sayings of Prophet Muhammad have been used as the primary measuring stick. This study acknowledges, however, that there is no single scale to measure religiosity; the literature and various interpretations differ from each other regarding this concept. As a result, a criterion, based on a definition of Islam as defined by the Prophet Muhammad, was introduced in the early part of this thesis as ‘if an individual states that s/he is a very religious person and his/her visible attitudes and behaviours do not contradict religious guidelines, that can be taken as an indication of their religiosity’.

Muslims in the West

Due to the scarcity of literature in this area, the literature review concentrated on Muslims in the West and reviewed literature on the themes of the thesis. Ramadan’s (1999, p. 149) definition of Muslims in the West and his advocating an ‘independent European Islam’ as well as his interesting definition of the West as ‘*Dar As Shahhadah*’, in contrast to the traditional Islamic definition of ‘*Dar al Kufr*’, have been highlighted. Overall the literatures pertaining to Muslims in the West presented.

Identity of ABMY

The primary research questions of this study of identity, has provided a number of issues. Most significantly, the majority of Muslim youth who participated in this study opted to be identified as ‘Australian Muslims’. Linking their Australian nationality with their religious affiliation was a consistent feature in identifying

themselves to the outside world. In fact, identifying themselves as ‘Australian Muslim’ rather than ‘Muslim’ or ‘Australian’ or Muslim Australian” indicated ABMY in this study are proud and comfortable with combining both factors in their identity; national affiliation and religious background. However, national affiliation has been placed before the religious belief. This is a significant finding. Being born in Australia to Muslim parents and having chosen to follow Islam in their lives were the reasons given for ABMY to identify themselves as ‘Australian Muslims’.

Not being accepted by Australians as a fellow Australian often led some of the ABMY more comfortable being around people from their ethnic community.

Another important feature noticed in this study is the existence of multiple identities among participants. This connects with the modern concept that people in the current world have many identities. This research draw attention to the fact that ABMY have highlighted that having multiple identities does not mean that they undervalue or ignore their connection with Australia. On the contrary, they are proud that they are Australians. They also realise that they carry multiple identities in addition because of their situations and background that arises from living in Australia.

Factors shaping the identity of Muslims were studied. Many factors have been identified by ABMY as contributing to shaping their identities: religion, family, culture, ethnicity, gender, personality, morals and nationality. The majority of ABMY, however, indicated that religion was the primary factor shaping their identity, followed by family and ethnicity.

Of the many factors shaping the identity of ABMY, the following were studied: the impact of Australian society, discrimination, isolation of ABMY, connection to Australian society, knowledge of ABMY about issues facing Australia, and government attitudes towards Muslims as seen by ABMY. Stereotypes and discrimination, not being accepted by fellow Australians, living a very comfortable life and misconception about Muslims by fellow Australian were indicated as

impacting ABMY. Perception and identity formation for positive impacts on the construction of healthy identity for ABMY were attributed to freedom of religion, democracy, multiculturalism, freedom of speech, integration and the friendly nature of 'Aussies'.

ABMY singled out discrimination as one of the factors contributing to shaping their identity. Discrimination types were mainly verbal, followed by religious, employment, emotional, physical and gender. When a comparison was made between both male and females, females were more highly discriminated against than men. This is likely to occur because of the clear visibility of Muslim women in their religious clothes, the *Hijab*. With respect to isolation from Australian community, the majority of ABMY indicated that they do not feel isolated from Australian community. Further, despite the media's portrayal of Muslims and suggested discrimination, most of the ABMY in this study felt strongly connected to Australian society. The majority of ABMY, nevertheless, consider that government attitudes towards them are not favourable. Negative government perceptions are linked to former Howard government's political management of Muslim issues.

Religion and Religious Knowledge/Education

The majority of ABMY indicated that religion plays a very crucial role in shaping their identity; they find no conflict between loyalty to Australia and their religion. Female participants showed more interest in religion than did male participants: a very high majority of females practiced religion in most areas of their lives. Males were less likely to do this. There were mixed views on parental influences in understanding their religion. While the majority felt that they were influenced by their parents, a considerable proportion of ABMY felt otherwise. This is evidenced by their independent study of Islam, and their involvement with Islamic educational opportunities and Islamic organizations.

Almost all of the ABMY in this study partook in independently learning activities tied to their religion, They accessed adequate resources in locally in Australia and internationally. Only a very small number indicated that they were not continuing with their religious learning. Most of them learnt their religion from their parents at a young age, and then joined Islamic study circles organized by individuals or Islamic organisations. They also use a variety of printed materials for their learning process. These include Islamic primary resources such as the *Quran* and Hadees, and books by both, the older and contemporary scholars/ authors.

The quality and content of Islamic study circles varies. All ABMY interviewed said they found these circles useful and supportive in the learning process. This does not mean that the quality of all the circles was the same. Not all of the instructors of these study circles had formal university qualifications. Since these study circles mostly take places in casual settings where ABMY meet their friends, the learning process was nested in a team learning process. A result was that formal qualifications of instructors were not questioned or placed in a critical light.

Future of Muslims in Australia

ABMY, wherever they live, are mindful of what they do; they show respect towards Islamic religious guidelines. ABMY have learnt how to live with Islamic ideologies while accepting a vast majority of most Australian values. ABMY in this study have never been forced by their parents to do things which they did not want to do.

The majority of ABMY find some challenges in their lives, however, they believe that the future of Muslims is bright. Only one participant said it was bleak.

Expectations of Community Leaders and Parents

Community leaders felt that the ABMY should feel free to express opinions on issues faced by their community and should work together in solving them. Aside from urging greater interaction with the mainstream community and hoping that their children would achieve success in their lives, few other parental expectations were expressed.

Parents were, however, very much concerned with their children should follow the Islamic moral code and behave appropriately by avoiding non-Islamic behaviours such as pre-marital sex and drinking alcohol etc. Islamic education and learning Arabic were also expectation of migrant parents for their children.

Limitations of the Study

The findings of this study were based on a limited number of participants who live in Melbourne. The practicality of finding candidates, as well as the time and cost involved, restricted participation. Finding candidates who fitted the criteria adopted by this study was not an easy task. This resulted in the involvement of a smaller number of ABMY than had been anticipated in both stages of data collection. As the data was collected from a small number of ABMY in Melbourne, it is not possible to generalize these findings to all ABMY in Melbourne – and even less so for the whole of Australia. Furthermore, as this study was restricted to only a select group of ABMY, the results of the data would only give some indications about this group of ABMY. People using this data should observe that it represents preliminary research in the area, nonetheless the data discussed provides important insights into elements that can either hinder or support identity formation of ABMY.

Another limitation of this study is that the definition of ABMY was associated with praying daily prayers regularly and not doing any obvious un-Islamic things in

their lives. This criterion may not be accepted by all, as many others have very different criteria for the identification of being a Muslim.

Suggestions for Further Studies

The results of this study indicate that there are a number of areas to be included for further studies and research, which would bring rich data for a better multicultural Australia. This study covers only Melbourne; if other Islamic groups were also included, it would bring richer comprehensive results. To do this, many ethnic Islamic organizations would have to be identified and contacted. Data would have to be collected from a wide range of youth on a bigger scale. A larger sample will always give richer information which would provide comprehensive results in this area. Future data collection should be done separately in metropolitan and country areas, as well as in all Australian states. Only then would be possible to do comparative analysis.

This study included only a limited number of community leaders and parents for feedback. It would be ideal if many community leaders, local politicians and educators were to be included in further research, thus providing a wider range of input. Efforts taken to include a politician in this study did not succeed which limit the scope of comments represented in this work.

More research is needed to provide suitable Islamic knowledge in the Australian context for ABMY. This might provide an alternative answer to irregular unstructured Islamic study circles currently found around Melbourne. Furthermore, a monitoring body of Islamic organizations needs be arranged to oversee the delivery of Islamic education by qualified Islamic educators.

Implications and Recommendations

Islam in the Western world and second or consequent generation of Muslims face a unique situation. The issues arising must be looked at from a very different perspective using a reformist (social and religious) approach to address them effectively. Ramadan (2010, p.2) elaborates and differentiates both literalist and reformist approaches, saying ‘Unlike literalists who merely rely on quoting verses, reformists must take the time to put things in perspective, to contextualize, and to suggest new understandings’ A reformist approach needs to be adapted by Islamic scholars, teachers and researchers of Muslims in the West and studied in depth to add value to multicultural Australian society. Otherwise its results will not be fruitful.

Ramadan (2010, p. 6), a Western-born Muslim, strongly urges that

Western and European societies their politicians and intellectuals, must look realities in the face and sometimes after four generations, stop speaking about “immigrant origin” of citizens who “need to be integrated”.

As indicated in earlier chapters, his bold argument is that those who were born in the West should go beyond the questions of ‘settlement’ or ‘integration’ to ‘participation’ and ‘contribution’ (Ramadan, 2010, p. 6). This is the exact message the ABMY of this study would like to say to the world.

CHAPTER EIGHT

A Personal Reflection

Introduction

This chapter outlines my reflections on how the research process has impacted on me as a researcher, academic and a member of the Muslim community in Australia. From the outset, I hoped that this research would provide me with opportunities to investigate and explore unknown facets about the Muslim community notably from young people's perspective.. This work has done more than this in that it has also enlightened and enhanced my own definition of what my Islamic faith means to me. The experience has taught me many things and has provided me with extensive opportunities that are truly valued.

My background

My background is diverse. I am a qualified teacher, social worker and youth worker and for 20 years I have been involved in many Islamic and social organisations. During my undergraduate studies I studied Arabic, Islamic sciences, culture and history. This provided me a solid grounding in which to understand the Muslim faith, alongside various interpretations of primary texts, Islamic norms and traditions.

I arrived in Australia in 1993 as an overseas student to do a Masters in Education at Deakin University. As an international student, I was actively involved with the campus student union and served as an executive member.

During this time I established a campus international students club and served as the founding president. This provided me the opportunity to experience diversity within Australian and Muslim communities of Australia. As a Muslim, born in Sri Lanka, my involvement with and exposure to a wide range of Muslim youth from many ethnic backgrounds has enabled me to become familiar with diverse religious practices, cultural values and traditions within the Islamic faith.

During 1998-2003 I was involved with Melbourne's Muslim community as a youth worker and teacher. During this time I was able to build a relationship of trust with the Muslim community in Victoria. This experience was instrumental to being able to successfully complete this study; it has also enabled me to understand how and why ABMY come to identify with their Islamic faith within an Australian terrain.

Awareness of emerging problems for Muslim youth

This study provided me an opportunity to better understand differences between ethnic groups of Muslims, significant gaps, or divisions between ABMY and variations in the ways they practice religion in their daily lives. These issues need to be examined more closely to ensure that ABMY are properly supported and understood.

This research sought to undertake a study of ABMY that explored their religious beliefs and practices of religion in their everyday lives. This insight adds value to existing research literature tied to the lives of young Australian Muslims. In Australia and beyond it is hoped that this body of work will strengthen insights into those practices that facilitate support and inclusion for ABMY. Such insights are needed to underpin a multi-cultural vision for our nation.

Changing Perceptions following this Study

Before embarking on this study, I had very different views on the themes of this thesis, with opposing ideas about many areas of the research. The media's negative portrayal of Islam and Muslim people were disturbing as were the political sentiments. I witnessed Pauline Hanson's statements; I saw and read about the stories of children allegedly being thrown overboard from refugee boats. There were other individual and negative stories during election campaigns. The treatment of asylum seekers and the case of Dr. Mohammad Haneef were few cases among many. Commenting on this, Hassan (2010) pointed out, "these debates have implied that Muslims are more inclined towards radicalism than are followers of other religions" (p.584).

Having now completed this work, this study has played a very significant role in my life as an academic, a Muslim, father, husband and an Australian citizen. As an academic, the results of this study have overturned my personal beliefs about ABMY: their identity, sense of belonging and their knowledge of Islam and practices in their lives. I am aware of the need to look objectively at issues tied to identity formation and not to judge the points of views on actions of others because of my own inherent beliefs.

As a Muslim

As a Muslim man, living as a member of minority community in Australia, the outcomes of this study have given me the strength and confidence to practice my faith freely. This study has given me new awakenings. I do not feel that Australia provides me with lesser opportunities compared to those born here. As a migrant to any country it is natural to look at their neighbours with fear and suspicions. This is no longer the case. Having had the opportunity and privilege to listen to the viewpoints of ABMY, I now realise the benefits of having an open mind when undertaking further study in this area.

The media

Negative comments in the media, led me to believe that ABMY were inactive and questioned their Australian connection. Previous to this study I believed that they would have very negative views about notions of identity, place and space. Even though I am a father of Muslim teenagers born in Australia, my views in these areas remained very negative until I formally commenced my research. I had assumed that ABMY's affiliation to Australian citizenship would be absent and that they would instead prioritise other notions of identity tied to their religious, linguistic and ethnic affiliations. Furthermore, I had believed that the cumulative effect of wide spread negativity (both national and international) directed against Islam and Muslims in contemporary Australia, would have a long-lasting effect on their construction of 'self'. Because of this negative view, I was unable to visualize how local Muslim community members, parents, family and friends played a role in the construction of identities for ABMY. I did not value, sufficiently, the influence of parents, family and friends. These views dramatically changed during and after this study as the analysis of the data collected indicated the importance of family, friends and local communities in shaping the identities of the ABMY participants in this study.

My personal growth

Since embarking on this study, I have attended many academic and non-academic conferences and seminars about Muslims in the West. I started to communicate constantly with people who are connected to these issues. The initial conferences I attended, as explained in Chapter 1, was a conference jointly organized by Murdoch and Monash universities under the theme of Islam and the West post September 11, 2001. I benefitted from this conference as it was the first academic conference I participated in the area of this study. From this conference I was able to identify issues to be researched further. For example, presentations relating to the education of Muslim youth, and a consideration of the text books used in

schools to teach Islamic studies, led me to think and relate to the theme of Muslims in the wider Australian context. Later, I included as one of my research questions to see how and what ABMY study about their religion.

Subsequently, I attended an annual youth conferences organized by Federation of Australian Muslim Students and Youth. Themes of their national conferences have always been the current issues related to youth. These conferences offered me contacts and opportunities to understand issues such as impact of current events on ABMY and their reactions to it. I was able to establish contacts with ABMY, active members of the community who assisted me later find my ABMY, parents and community leaders. I also attended many other conferences related to Islam and Muslims in the current world. It provided me an opportunity to meet experts in the area and share my views. It added my confidence in the focus area of my research as many other participants were somehow involved in similar areas in their respective countries or areas.

ABMY and Australian identity

On the primary question of identity, the ABMY in my study established and confirmed that their Australian identity was established beyond any doubt. Their affiliation to their Islamic faith was not compromised by their Australian identity; in fact, they regarded it as being strengthened. While ABMY were being widely criticised by media organizations, journalists and broadcasting companies, this did not force them into hiding. On the contrary, ABMY took this criticism as a challenge to be faced in their daily lives; it directed them further to identify who they are within an Australian and Muslim context, what they want and where they want to head. Their active involvement in community works such as blood donation drives or the support for flood victims during flood times in Australia affirms a willingness of ABMY in this study to want to contribute collaboratively and proactively in their citizenship.

As one of the elders in the community pointed out to me, it is true that contemporary ABMY are very different from their parents or previous generations. Contemporary ABMY in this study are born and brought up in Australia. They too care about fellow Australians (irrespective of their religious affiliation) and want to help people during natural disasters and other occasions. They do not differentiate between supporting Muslim and non Muslims; they are concerned to assist fellow Australians who are in dire need.

Islamic education

With respect to Islamic education, the ABMY in my study revealed an eagerness for and an interest in learning about the Islamic faith and practicing it in their lives. They were not forced by anyone to follow their religion. They took initiatives to attend and organize religious lectures, study circles and be actively involved in summer camps where they learned and practiced their religion. Most of themes of the conferences and activities were based on topics relevant to contemporary issues they face. In my view, they have many benefits by these activities.

Following Islamic religious teaching blindly is unlikely to appeal to today's ABMY living in the West. If they were forced to do this, they might continue for a while and then forget about it. By studying their religion and understanding its fuller message, rather being given pre-conceived notions of the Islamic faith ABMY can engage in a connection with their faith. In this instance ABMY can relate religion to the reality of life in Australia. They can adapt to their religion within Australian society in a peaceful way. A harmonious balance can be maintained when ABMY adopt their Muslim values to live peacefully and respectfully in an Australian world. All this and much more has changed my perception of ABMY. What I now know is that the ABMY in this research are prepared for, and comfortable with living in this country.

Muslim parents and community leaders

My research on the roles of parents and community leaders has revealed how much Muslim parents in this study value their children as well as the positive expectations the community leaders have of ABMY. None of the parents highlighted a 'victim attitude'. Rather, they asserted importance of bringing up their children with moral values that could assist them with a successful orientation to their lives. Community leaders emphasised interaction of ABMY with wider communities. The contribution of ABMY in a blood bank drive and in flood relief collections, mentioned above, affirms this.

Changes in perceptions

In my earlier previous involvement with ABMY, I believed they had a limited understanding and knowledge of Islam and what it meant to be a Muslim. I was unaware of ABMY's sources of Islamic knowledge and their motivations regarding how they wanted to be perceived by the Australian community at large. I also believed that the majority of ABMY learnt their religion at their weekly sermons at mosques, if they attended at all and that their attendance was largely due to forceful parents. Most of the mosques preach in Arabic, and since many ABMY do not converse in Arabic but in their own ethnic languages and English, I thought that they would not understand most of the sermons. I was of the opinion that ABMY were not committed to the cause and teachings of Islam. I did not have any knowledge of how parents and community members contributed to the construction of the identity of ABMY. I was also unaware of the expectations of parents and community leaders for ABMY within a religious and cultural framework.

Once I began to talk to a range of participants in my study I soon realized that ABMY were willing to learn about their religion from a wider range of sources. These included parents, social groups literature, conference participation and community activities.

I consider this to be a very positive approach, and it has changed my views completely. Previously, I had had the belief that ABMY were living ‘ghetto lives’ and that they were unwilling to contribute towards national issues affecting the wider Australian community. I had questioned how ABMY were going to build a future in this country. What I have noticed disproved these beliefs: I had to change my views on this as ABMY showed me that they are communicating and collaborating with the wider Australian community. While the level of collaboration may need to be widened, I consider this involvement to be very positive; it is needed for, and contributes to the development of a harmonious and healthy multicultural society.

Final Reflections

Through this long and difficult, but enjoyable research journey, I have rediscovered myself as a member of the Australian Muslim community. I am now a re-defined and strong husband, father and academic. Now, at the completion of my research, I feel I am reborn with many new ideas and experiences as I understand the world around me very differently from the previous understandings. I feel extremely fortunate in having worked with variety of participants in this study. In doing this, I trust that I have opened a new area of research, previously unnoticed, that will continue to focus on this specific group of young people.

I have dramatically benefitted from completing this research; my hope is that this work will contribute towards further understandings of the construction of identity. This is especially the case for young Australians who have the complex task of building links between diverse faiths and cultures.

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APPENDICIES

APPENDIX 1: Questionnaire –ABMY

YOUTH, COMMUNITY AND EDUCATION: A study on Australian Muslim Youth

Dear Participant,

You are invited to participate in the above research project, which is being conducted by Victoria University, Melbourne. This will require you to share your thoughts and opinions on your beliefs and experiences as an Australian born Muslim youth (ABMY). For the purpose of this research, you are requested to fill the attached questionnaire.

The aim of this investigation is to focus on identity formation, impact and or relations between family, friends and the community, Muslim Youth perceptions of identity and religious faith and to use this data to inform and enhance ongoing work with Muslim community leaders.

It is important for the researcher to capture the perceptions of ABMY. Therefore, your contribution to this research is valuable data. The utmost care will be rendered to protect your information. The records will be kept for five years subject to any legal requirements. Your views will remain anonymous and your name will not appear in any of the documents. We will remove any references to personal information that might allow someone to guess your identity.

Your involvement in this project is entirely voluntary and you may withdraw at any time. The information you give us will be confidential and your name will not be used on any of the reports.

We would appreciate the opportunity to work with you. If you wish to be involved please don't hesitate to contact me on the number below.

Yours Sincerely

Seyed Sherifdeen
Doctor of Education student

14 July 2007

Any queries about your participation in this project may be directed to the researcher (Name: Seyed Sherifdeen (Phone no: 0432 223371) or Prof. Nicola Yelland (Phone no: 03 9919 4904) If you have any queries or complaints about the way you have been treated, you may contact the Secretary, University Human Research Ethics Committee, Victoria University, PO Box 14428 MCMC, Melbourne, 8001 (Phone no: 03 9919 4710).



CONSENT FORM

CERTIFICATION BY Participant

I,
of

certify that I am at least 18 years old* and that I am voluntarily giving my consent to participate in the study entitled:

YOUTH, COMMUNITY AND EDUCATION: A study on Australian Muslim Youth

being conducted at Victoria University by: Seyed Sherifdeen

I certify that the objectives of the study, together with any risks and safeguards associated with the procedures listed hereunder to be carried out in the research, have been fully explained to me by: Seyed Sherifdeen

and that I freely consent to participation involving the use on me of the following procedures.

Procedure: Questionnaire

I certify that I have had the opportunity to have any questions answered and that I understand that I can withdraw from this study at any time and that this withdrawal will not jeopardise me in any way.

I have been informed that the information I provide will be kept confidential.

Signed: }

Witness other than the researcher: }

Date: }

Any queries about your participation in this project may be directed to the researcher (Name: Seyed Sherifdeen (Phone no: 0432 223371) or Prof. Nicola Yelland (Phone no: 03 9919 4904) If you have any queries or complaints about the way you have been treated, you may contact the Secretary, University Human Research Ethics Committee, Victoria University, PO Box 14428 MCMC, Melbourne, 8001 (Phone no: 03 9919 4710).

Questionnaire on the Experience of Australian Born Muslim Young People
(Please use the last page if space provided is not enough for your response)

A. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

1. Gender: MALE/ FEMALE

2. What is your age group

18-21

22-24

25-27

28-30

3. Were you born in Australia?

YES

NO

If yes, which city/ state?

If no, where were you born?

4. Are you an Australian citizen?

YES

NO

5. Do you have citizenship of any other countries?

YES

NO

If yes, what are the countries?
.....

6. What is your occupation?

FULL TIME STUDENT Specify: SCHOOL/ UNI / TAFE COURSE:...

PART TIME STUDENT Specify: SCHOOL/ UNI / TAFE COURSE:...

WORKING-FULL TIME specify the work you do:

WORKING- PART TIME specify the work you do :

UNEMPLOYED

Other specify:

7. What language/s do you speak at home? (please write in order of its usage)

.....
.....

8. We want to know who you are living with. Please select from the list below.

- I live with my biological father and biological mother.
- I live with only my biological mother.
- I live with only my biological father.
- I live with relatives.
- I live with friends
- Other (Specify)

9. What is the ethnic background of your parents/ guardians?

Father: Mother:
Any comments:.....
.....

B. IDENTITY

10. How do you identify yourself? (you can choose more than one answer or include a written description below)

- AUSTRALIAN
- MUSLIM
- AUSTRALIAN MUSLIM
- OTHER please specify:.....

Why do you describe yourself in this way?

.....
.....
.....

11. Do you see yourself as having one or more identities?

- YES
- NO

If yes, what are they? Of the identities you have included which one do you most relate to?

.....

- Are you experiencing tensions in having to take on multiple identities? If so could you please explain what these tensions might be and why you are faced with them?

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

12. What is the impact of being a Muslim in contemporary Australian society?

.....
.....
.....

13. List two factors that shape your identity as a person. (Eg Religion, ethnicity or family)

.....
.....
.....

14. What aspects of Australian social and cultural life have had the biggest impact on you? Please describe the nature of the impact.

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

15. Do you speak Arabic?

- YES
- NO

If yes, how well do you speak this language?

.....
.....
.....

C. HOST SOCIETY, ACCEPTANCE AND BELONGING

16. In your view what are the positive aspects within Australian society that assists in welcoming and celebrating your religious and ethnic diversity?

.....
.....
.....

17. Have you faced discrimination as a Muslim in Australia? YES NO

If YES, what sort of discrimination (you may choose more than one)

- VERBAL
- PHYSICAL
- DENIAL OF EMPLOYMENT
- EMOTIONAL
- RELIGIOUS
- GENDER
- AGE

OTHER SPECIFY:.....

18. Do you think being a Muslim youth isolates you from the rest of Australian community?

- YES NO NO COMMENTS DON'T KNOW

19. Do you feel that you are connected to Australian society?

- YES NO NO COMMENTS DON'T KNOW

Explain, how and why:

.....
.....
.....
.....

20. Do you think your local community accommodates your needs as a practicing Muslim?

- YES NO NO COMMENTS DON'T KNOW

21. What are the most important issues facing you as a member of Australian society today?

- 1
- 2
- 3

22. Overall what is your opinion about the Australian government's attitude or policies towards Muslims?

- VERY FAVORABLE FAVORABLE UNFAVORABLE
 NOT SURE

D. RELIGION

23. Are you a practicing Muslim? YES NO

If you are a male do you have a beard for religious reasons? YES NO

If you are a female do you wear a Hijab or Niqab YES NO

24. How important is religion in your daily life?

- VERY IMPORTANT IMPORTANT NOT VERY IMPORTANT
 DON'T KNOW

25. Do you practice Islam in your daily life?

- IN EVERY THING IN MOST THINGS IN FEW THINGS
 IN NOTHING

26. Do you pray daily and fulfill other religious obligations?

- YES
 NO
 SOMETIMES
 NOT AT ALL

27. What are your daily religious obligations?

.....
.....
.....

28. What helps you to achieve your religious obligations in your daily life?

.....
.....
.....

29. Do you think you can practice your religion freely in Australia?

- YES NO NO COMMENTS DON'T KNOW

30. Are there facilities offered to you where you can access the learning and teaching of your religion? YES NO

If yes, what are those facilities?

.....
.....
.....

If no, what sorts of facilities you think, are needed to access the learning and teaching of your religion?

.....
.....
.....

31. Do you currently learn about your religion on a regular basis?

YES NO SOMETIMES RARELY

If yes, explain the background and qualifications of the teacher and how s/he teaches?

.....
.....
.....

How do you find these classes or discussion groups?

.....
.....
.....

Do you have sufficient resources to help you increase your knowledge of Islam?

YES NO

32. Do you see a conflict between your loyalty to your religion and your loyalty to Australia?

YES NO

please explain?

.....
.....

33. On the following scale how would you rate the general public perception of Islam in Australia? 1 (negative) ... 10 (positive), circle your choice.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	----

34. How do you think the future looks for Muslims in Australia?

- HOPEFUL
- THE SAME
- CHALLENGING
- BLEAK
- VERY BLEAK
- DON'T KNOW

35. What are the most important issues facing the Australian Muslim community today?

- 1.....
- 2.....
- 3.....

36. In your opinion, what are the needs of Muslim youth in Australia?

.....

.....

.....

E. PARENTS/ GUARDIANS

37. Is there a conflict between the transmission of language, culture and religion your parents/ guardians gave with Australian society? If so, please explain.

.....

.....

.....

38. Is there an element of tradition that influences your parents/ guardians understanding of Islam?

- YES NO DON'T KNOW

39. Is there an element of tradition (rather than Islamic teaching) that influences you in your understanding of Islam?

- YES NO DON'T KNOW

If yes, please explain

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....



Follow up interview

Please indicate below if you are willing to participate in a follow up interview of approximately 45 minutes to discuss some of these issues in more depth. We would also like to talk to your parents on a separate occasion for the same amount of time in order to understand more clearly the role of your religion in your family.

I (Name).....am willing to participate in an interview as part of the study on Australian Born Muslim Young People.

Name :.....

Phone H :.....

Phone M :.....

Email :.....

Thank you again for your co-operation.

Seyed Sherifdeen

APPENDIX 2: Invitation to ABMY for Interview

YOUTH, COMMUNITY AND EDUCATION: A study on Australian Muslim Youth

Dear Participant,

You are invited to participate in the above research project, which is being conducted by Victoria University, Melbourne. This will require you to share your thoughts and opinions on your beliefs and experiences as an Australian born Muslim youth (ABMY). For the purpose of this research, you will be interviewed individually for approximately 45 minutes. With your consent the interview will be tape-recorded and when the tape has been transcribed you will be transcribed and returned to you. You will therefore be given the opportunity to reflect upon the transcript and any changes that you would like to make.

The aim of this investigation is to focus on identity formation, impact and or relations between family, friends and the community, Muslim Youth perceptions of identity and religious faith and to use this data to inform and enhance ongoing work with Muslim community leaders.

It is important for the researcher to capture the perceptions of ABMY. Therefore, your contribution to this research is valuable data. The utmost care will be rendered to protect your information. The records will be kept for five years subject to any legal requirements. Your views will remain anonymous and your name will not appear in any of the documents. We will remove any references to personal information that might allow someone to guess your identity.

Your involvement in this project is entirely voluntary and you may withdraw at any time. The information you give us will be confidential and your name will not be used on any of the reports.

We would appreciate the opportunity to work with you. If you wish to be involved please don't hesitate to contact me on the number below.

Yours Sincerely

Seyed Sherifdeen
Doctor of Education student

14 July 2007

Any queries about your participation in this project may be directed to the researcher (Name: Seyed Sherifdeen (Phone no: 0432 223371) or Prof. Nicola Yelland (Phone no: 03 9919 4904) If you have any queries or complaints about the way you have been treated, you may contact the Secretary, University Human Research Ethics Committee, Victoria University, PO Box 14428 MCMC, Melbourne, 8001 (Phone no: 03 9919 4710).

CONSENT FORM

CERTIFICATION BY Participant

I,
of

certify that I am at least 18 years old* and that I am voluntarily giving my consent to participate in the study entitled:

YOUTH, COMMUNITY AND EDUCATION: A study on Australian Muslim Youth

being conducted at Victoria University by: Seyed Sherifdeen

I certify that the objectives of the study, together with any risks and safeguards associated with the procedures listed hereunder to be carried out in the research, have been fully explained to me by: Seyed Sherifdeen

and that I freely consent to participation involving the use on me of the following procedures.

Procedure: Interview

I certify that I have had the opportunity to have any questions answered and that I understand that I can withdraw from this study at any time and that this withdrawal will not jeopardise me in any way.

I have been informed that the information I provide will be kept confidential.

Signed: }

Witness other than the researcher: }

Date: }

Any queries about your participation in this project may be directed to the researcher (Name: Seyed Sherifdeen (Phone no: 0432 223371) or Prof. Nicola Yelland (Phone no: 03 9919 4904) If you have any queries or complaints about the way you have been treated, you may contact the Secretary, University Human Research Ethics Committee, Victoria University, PO Box 14428 MCMC, Melbourne, 8001 (Phone no: 03 9919 4710).

Interview Questions – ABMY

Script No:

YOUTH, COMMUNITY AND EDUCATION: A study on Australian Muslim Youth

Q1a	Do you identify yourself as being a Muslim?
A1a	
Q1b:	Why?
A1b	
Q2	What does being a Muslim mean to you?
A2	
Q3a	How does contemporary Australian society affect the construction of your identity? That is how you feel about yourself and who you are?
A3a	
Q3b	Please explain?
A3b	
Q4a	Do your parents contribute to the construction of your identity?
A4a	
Q4b	Please explain?
A4b	
Q5a	Does the local Muslim community contribute to the construction of your identity?
A5a	
Q5b	Please explain?
A5b	
Q6	Do your friends (including Muslim and Non-Muslim) influence your actions and notion of identity? Who and how?
A6	
Q7	Briefly explain what Islam means to you? (Or your definition of Islam, what do you understand about Islam, what is it?)
A7	
Q8	What do you understand about Islamic knowledge and behaviors?
A8	
Q9	Please name some books you may regularly read to improve your religious knowledge?
A9	
Q10	Name few scholars or authors whose audios/videos or books you listen, watch or read to improve your knowledge about Islam?
A10	
Q11a	Do you devote sometime for improving your knowledge about your religion?
A11a	
Q11b	If yes, how much time you spend on this?
A11b	
Q11c	how often? (daily/weekly/ fortnightly/ monthly/ occasionally/ Not at all)
A11c	
Q11d	What would you do during this time?
A11d	
Q12a	Do you attend any classes or lecturers to learn about your religion?

A12a	
Q12b	If yes? (daily/weekly/ fortnightly/ monthly/ occasionally/ Not at all)
A12b	
Q12c	If you do, how do you find these classes in term of its value in educating you about your religion? (Very useful/ useful/ not useful)
A12c	
Q12d	If not, why don't you attend?
A12d	
Q13a	What qualifications has the teacher got? (Self trained / University qualified/ or Qualified under a Imam/Traditional Schools)
Q13a	
Q13b	Are you satisfied with his/her teaching/Knowledge?
Q13b	
Q13c	Do you want him/her to have any other qualifications/skills?
Q13c	
Q13d	If yes, what are they?
Q13d	
Q13e	Do you want to see any changes in the content and delivery?
Q13e	
Q13f	If yes, what are they?
Q13f	
Q14a	What is your relationship with your religious teacher?
A14a	
Q14b	Is it friendly/ Mentor or teacher-student relationship.
A14b	
Q15a	Do you think being a Muslim affects your ability to integrate within the larger Australian society?
A15a	
Q15b	If yes, please explain?
A15b	
Q16a	Are there any areas of conflict between practising your religion and being an Australian?
A16a	
Q16b	If yes, please explain?
A16b	
Q17a	Are there any challenges you face to practice your religion in Australian society?
A17a	
Q17b	If yes, please explain?
A17b	
Q18	How you see the future of Muslims in this country?
A18	
Q19	Do you want to say anything?
A19	

APPENDIX 3: Invitation to Parents

YOUTH, COMMUNITY AND EDUCATION: A study on Australian Muslim Youth

Dear Participant,

You are invited to participate in the above research project, which is being conducted by Victoria University, Melbourne. This will require you to share your thoughts, opinions and expectations on your child (as an Australian born Muslim youth) who has been interviewed for this project. You will be interviewed individually for approximately 45 minutes. With your consent the interview will be tape-recorded and when the tape has been transcribed you will be transcribed and returned to you. You will therefore be given the opportunity to reflect upon the transcript and any changes that you would like to make.

The aim of this investigation is to focus on identity formation, impact and or relations between family, friends and the community, Muslim Youth perceptions of identity and religious faith and to use this data to inform and enhance ongoing work with Muslim community leaders.

It is important for the researcher to capture the perceptions of ABMY. Therefore, your contribution to this research is valuable data. The utmost care will be rendered to protect your information. The records will be kept for five years subject to any legal requirements. Your views will remain anonymous and your name will not appear in any of the documents. We will remove any references to personal information that might allow someone to guess your identity.

Your involvement in this project is entirely voluntary and you may withdraw at any time. The information you give us will be confidential and your name will not be used on any of the reports.

We would appreciate the opportunity to work with you. If you wish to be involved please don't hesitate to contact me on the number below.

Yours Sincerely

Sayed Sherifdeen
Doctor of Education student

14 July 2007

Any queries about your participation in this project may be directed to the researcher (Name: Sayed Sherifdeen ph 0431 639 164 or Prof. Nicola Yelland (03 9919 4904) If you have any queries or complaints about the way you have been treated, you may contact the Secretary, University Human Research Ethics Committee, Victoria University, PO Box 14428 MCMC, Melbourne, 8001 (telephone no: 03-9919 4710).

Interview Questions – PARENTS

Script No:

YOUTH, COMMUNITY AND EDUCATION: A study on Australian Muslim Youth

Q1a	Do you identify yourself as being a Muslim?
A1a	
Q1b:	Why?
A1b	
Q2	What does being a Muslim mean to you?
A2	
Q3	Does consensus of the Australian society contribute to the conception of how you view or regard yourself?
A3	
Q4	Briefly explain what Islam means to you? (Or your definition of Islam, what do you understand about Islam, what is it?)
A4	
Q5a	About your understanding of Islamic knowledge and behaviours, please name some books you may read regularly to improve your religious knowledge?
A5a	
Q5b	Are these the books you regularly read?
A5b	
Q6	Please name some books you may regularly read to improve your religious knowledge?
A6	
Q7	Name few scholars or authors whose audios/videos or books you listen, watch or read to improve your knowledge about Islam?
A7	
Q8a	Do you devote sometime for improving your knowledge about your religion?
A8a	
Q8b	If yes, how much time you spend on this?
A8b	
Q8c	How often? (daily/weekly/ fortnightly/ monthly/ occasionally/ Not at all)
A8c	
Q8d	What would you do during this time?
A8d	
Q9a	Do you attend any classes or lecturers to learn about your religion?
A9a	
Q9b	If yes? (daily/weekly/ fortnightly/ monthly/ occasionally/ Not at all)
A9b	
Q9c	If yes, do you share the knowledge with your children? If yes how do you do it?
A9c	

Q10a	What expectations do you have for your children to follow or adhere to the rules that you follow?
A10a	
Q10b	Do your children currently meet your expectations?
A10b	
Q10c	Do you have any other concerns about your children?
A10c	
Q10d	If yes, what are they?
A10d	
Q11a	How important is it for you that your children share your belief and understanding?
Q11a	
Q11b	Why
Q11b	
Q12a	Do you think being a Muslim affects your ability to integrate within the larger Australian society?
Q12a	
Q12b	If yes, why?
Q12b	
Q13	Are there any areas of conflict between practising your religion and being an Australian?
Q13	
Q14a	Are there any challenges you face to practice your religion in Australian society?
Q14a	
Q14b	If yes, what are they?
A14b	
Q15a	Are there any other areas of concerns you have with regard to your children continuing to practice Islam in Australia?
A15a	
Q15b	If yes, please explain?
A15b	
Q15c	Do you feel that Australia is a country where your child/ren can prosper and become effective citizens?
A15c	
Q16	Do you want your children to become adults who have similar values that you hold?
A16	
Q17a	How you see the future of Muslims in this country?
A17a	
Q17b	Do you want to say anything?
Q17b	

APPENDIX 4: Invitation to Community Stakeholders

YOUTH, COMMUNITY AND EDUCATION: A study on Australian Muslim Youth

Dear Participant,

You are invited to participate in the above research project, which is being conducted by Victoria University, Melbourne. This will require you to share your thoughts, opinions and expectations on Australian born Muslim youth with whom you interact as a community leader. You will be interviewed individually for approximately 45 minutes. With your consent the interview will be tape-recorded and when the tape has been transcribed you will be transcribed and returned to you. You will therefore be given the opportunity to reflect upon the transcript and any changes that you would like to make.

The aim of this investigation is to focus on identity formation, impact and or relations between family, friends and the community, Muslim Youth perceptions of identity and religious faith and to use this data to inform and enhance ongoing work with Muslim community leaders.

It is important for the researcher to capture the perceptions of ABMY. Therefore, your contribution to this research is valuable data. The utmost care will be rendered to protect your information. The records will be kept for five years subject to any legal requirements. Your views will remain anonymous and your name will not appear in any of the documents. We will remove any references to personal information that might allow someone to guess your identity.

Your involvement in this project is entirely voluntary and you may withdraw at any time. The information you give us will be confidential and your name will not be used on any of the reports.

We would appreciate the opportunity to work with you. If you wish to be involved please don't hesitate to contact me on the number below.

Yours Sincerely

Seyed Sherifdeen
Doctor of Education student

14 July 2007

Any queries about your participation in this project may be directed to the researcher (Name: Seyed Sherifdeen (Phone no: 0432 223371) or Prof. Nicola Yelland (Phone no: 03 9919 4904) If you have any queries or complaints about the way you have been treated, you may contact the Secretary, University Human Research Ethics Committee, Victoria University, PO Box 14428 MCMC, Melbourne, 8001 (Phone no: 03 9919 4710).

CONSENT FORM

CERTIFICATION BY Community Stakeholders

I,
of

certify that I am at least 18 years old* and that I am voluntarily giving my consent to participate in the study entitled:

YOUTH, COMMUNITY AND EDUCATION: A study on Australian Muslim Youth

being conducted at Victoria University by: Seyed Sherifdeen

I certify that the objectives of the study, together with any risks and safeguards associated with the procedures listed hereunder to be carried out in the research, have been fully explained to me by: Seyed Sherifdeen

and that I freely consent to participation involving the use on me of these procedures. I agree to the interviews being audio taped.

Procedures: Individual Interviews – of 45 minutes in duration.

I certify that I have had the opportunity to have any questions answered and that I understand that I can withdraw from this study at any time and that this withdrawal will not jeopardise me in any way.

I have been informed that the information I provide will be kept confidential.

Signed: }

Witness other than the researcher: }

Date: }

Any queries about your participation in this project may be directed to the researcher (Name: Seyed Sherifdeen (Phone no: 0432 223371) or Prof. Nicola Yelland (Phone no: 03 9919 4904) If you have any queries or complaints about the way you have been treated, you may contact the Secretary, University Human Research Ethics Committee, Victoria University, PO Box 14428 MCMC, Melbourne, 8001 (Phone no: 03 9919 4710).

Interview Questions – COMMUNITY STAKEHOLDERS
YOUTH, COMMUNITY AND EDUCATION: A study on Australian Muslim Youth

Q1	What is your profession?
A	
Q2a	In what official capacity are you connected to Muslim young people?
A	
Q2b	If not in official capacity how you are connected to ABMY?
A	
Q3a	Do you find any major differences between ABMY and other Australian young people in integration into wider Australian community?
A	
Q3b	If yes, what are they? If no, why there are no differences?
A	
Q4a	In your view, are there any areas of conflict between practicing Islam and being an Australian?
A	
Q4b	If yes, what are they? If no, why there are no differences?
A	
Q5a	Are there any challenges faced specially by ABMY?
A	
Q5b	If yes what are they?
A	
Q6	How do these challenges impact upon them?
A	
Q7a	In your view, where does the solution lie?
A	
Q7b	In the society or with the individual? Please explain
A	
Q8	In your role what do you expect from ABMY as Australian citizens?
A	
Q9a	Do you think ABMY are able to fulfill your expectations?

A	
Q9b	If yes, explain how? If no, explain why not?
A	
Q10	How do you think that ABMYP can contribute to Australian society?
A	
Q11	How you see the future of Muslims in this country?
Q12	How do you see the future of this country?

APPENDIX 5: Online Islamic Resources

In Australia

<http://www.famsy.com/>

<http://www.aim.org.au/aim.asp>

<http://www.alkauthar.org/>

<http://www.sydneyic.org.au/>

<http://www.irca.org.au/Jamiataweb/>

<http://www.une.edu.au/study/islamic-studies/>

http://www.sydneyic.org.au/web.php/distance_learning

<http://www.nceis.unimelb.edu.au/node/206>

<http://www.hilalplaza.com/islamic-education/islamic-online-education.html>

<http://islamiceducationonline.com/index.php>

Overseas based

<http://www.akacademy.eu/>

<http://www.sunnipath.com/>

<http://islamiconlineuniversity.com/>

<http://www.free-islamic-course.org/>

<http://www.onlineislamicinstitute.com/index.html>

<http://www.cordobaacademy.com/>

<http://www.iqraacademyonline.com/index.html>

<http://www.islamiclearningfoundation.com/ilf/index.php>

<http://www.islamicau.org/static/Home/tabid/36/Default.aspx>

<http://www.albaseerah.org/course/>

http://www.islamicknowledge.co.uk/index.php?option=com_weblinks&catid=68&Itemid=23

<http://bais.islamiconlineuniversity.com/enrollment.php>

http://www.oxfordislamicstudies.com/Public/subscribe_how.html

<http://www.albaseerah.org/>

<http://www.shariahacademy.com/index.html>

http://darululum.org/index_files/doc/curriculumnew.html

<http://www.onlineislamicinstitute.com/>

<http://www.islamicau.org/static/>

<http://www.cordobaacademy.com/>

<http://trueword.wordpress.com/2010/08/03/islamic-studies-online-al-madinah-international-university/>

<http://www.kalamullah.com/>

<http://www.quranexplorer.com/>

APPENDIX 6: NATIONAL MUSLIM YOUTH SUMMIT Communiqué

NATIONAL MUSLIM YOUTH SUMMIT

The Australian Multicultural Foundation, in collaboration with the Federal Government's Muslim Youth Sub-Group and the Department of Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs, invited 66 young Australian Muslims from every state and territory, who came together to discuss those issues concerning young Australian Muslims. Most importantly, the Summit has focused on finding practical solutions to key issues such as: identity, relationships, employment/education and training, and discrimination.

These young Australians have come together in a spirit of inclusiveness to develop strategies and solutions that will also benefit the wider Australian community. We are encouraged by the many honest and positive contributions of today's Summit delegates. The young people themselves are confident in their commitment to take on the continuing role of advocating for the positive changes envisaged at the Summit.

The Summit identified the following key issues and solutions to be presented to Government for its National Action Plan:

1. The perceived conflict between Muslim and Australian identity

Solutions:

- Government sponsored education for the public on what Islam is.
- Media campaigns promoting anti-discrimination including TV ads (similar campaign to the anti domestic violence campaign).
- Grass roots communication between Muslims and non-Muslims through social groups,
- sporting groups, activities, and camps, etc.
- Better education for Muslims about Islam.
- Better education about the compatibility between Australian law and Islamic values.
- School and university based interfaith activities.
- A more proactive approach to promoting multiculturalism should be taken in schools.
- Programmes for Muslims to experience and understand Australia's Indigenous heritage.
- Programmes and activities that increase the self-esteem of young Australian Muslims so they feel confident about their identity.
- Identifying more successful and high profile Australian Muslims who can act as Ambassadors.

2. Inter-generational conflict between parents and children, especially when parents are migrants and children have been born in Australia

Solutions:

- Providing parent support groups.
- Educating parents about Australian laws.
- Providing activities that include both children and parents such as camps, sporting and camping activities (i.e. father/son and mother/daughter events).
- Parents to be more involved in the child's schooling by being more active in school councils and committees.
- Islamic education that clarifies the differences between religion and culture.
- Improving literacy and English skills among older Muslims so they are better able to communicate outside their immediate community.
- Mentoring programmes at schools.
- More interaction between Islamic schools and other denominational schools through school events and projects to break down barriers and misunderstanding.
- Pre-marriage counselling with marital workshops and parenting seminars.

3. Belonging versus marginalisation

Solutions:

- Improve networking among Muslims.
- Improve Muslim representation in politics, public service and community service organizations.
- Funding for Islamic friendly youth services.
- Funding for youth camps.
- Increased training for service providers in cultural/religious sensitivity.
- Increase funding and training available for current youth workers – most of them are volunteers.
- Address bullying and discrimination against Muslims in public schools.
- Building relationships with local councils and Muslim youth centres.
- Fund further programmes to prevent or break the social isolation of Muslim youth.
- Promote the duty of community service/volunteerism among young Australian Muslims so that they can continue to engage in the wider community.
- Appeal to religious leaders and Islamic organisations to improve a sense of unity among the Australian umma.

4. Unemployment

Solutions:

- Gain Government commitment to implementing legislation on non-discrimination in the work place.

- Provide an information pamphlet to employers about what Muslims require in the work place and why.
- Increase funding support for apprenticeships for Muslims.
- Increase funding for TAFE training for Muslims.
- Introduce Muslim workers in employment services.
- Fund Muslim employment services in major cities.

5. Muslims and the media

Solutions:

- Increased training of Muslims who can work in the media (including scholarships).
- Funding for documentaries on Australian Muslims.
- Awards for constructive media representations of Islam.
- A monitoring body to prevent Islamophobia in the media.
- Using media campaigns to raise awareness of the impact of discrimination against Muslims and the illegality of religious discrimination in Australia.

6. Community building

Solutions:

- Opening community centres at mosques.
- Imams to encourage connections between different groups.
- More childcare for Muslim women.
- Children play groups for Muslim women to meet with other women from diverse backgrounds.
- Addressing drug use and its impact on the community and not hiding it.
- Addressing family violence and not hiding it.
- Funding for Muslim women's support centres and extended programmes for existing centres.
- The actual contents of the Anti Terrorist laws need to be more transparent and available for young people to read and understand in simple language.
- More recruitment of Muslim police in police jurisdictions.
- More positive interaction between police and young Australian Muslims through organised meetings, social, sporting or cultural events.