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EXPERIENCES OF LIFE IN BRITAIN: YOUNG BRITISH MUSLIM WOMEN NEGOTIATING THEIR IDENTITIES

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A thesis submitted to the University of Huddersfield

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the degree of Master of Science

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Abstract

British-Muslims negotiating their identities in a multicultural society continues to be of academic interest. As a group, these women are often believed to be leading dual and parallel lives as a result of a clash of two conflicting cultures. The research sought to examine the lived experiences of young British-Muslim women in negotiating and constructing their national, cultural, religious and gender identities. Furthermore, the research aimed to investigate whether young British-Muslim women experience a conflict of culture in their everyday lives. The study used interview data collected with 12 young women aged 16-33 years from a variety of backgrounds and current lifestyles. The sample included young women in high school, at university, in employment, and 'home-makers'. Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) of the data revealed three main themes of 'family'; 'independence' and 'religion', all of which were linked to the core theme of 'identity' Family and the home environment is particularly influential in shaping the identity of young British-Muslim women, with parents exerting their control by imposing restrictions in an attempt to uphold traditional cultural and religious values. It was reported that Muslim families have undergone change, whereby they are adapting to British society and allowing more freedom for their daughters. This, in turn, gives rise to greater educational opportunities, socialising and freedom of choice, all of which were crucial to the women in the study. These women believed they had adapted to western society and were an integral part of it, and they prioritised their British identity. The women, although acknowledging their British status, still felt connected to their culture, religion, and traditional morals and values. The current study has highlighted the experiences of young British-Muslim women's life in Britain, providing insight into the many factors that influence their identities which need to be considered by family members, UK policy-makers and media corporations.

List of Contents

Acknowledgements ii

Abstract iii

List of Contents iv

List of Figures iv

Introduction 1

Literature Review 2

Methodology 19

Analysis 26

Discussion 94

References 102

Appendix 1: Letter of Information 109

Appendix 2: Consent Form 110

Appendix 3: Interview Schedule. 111

Appendix 4: Risk Analysis. 112

Appendix 5: SREP Application. 113

Appendix 6: Approved SREP Submission. 114

Appendix 7: Extract of Interview Transcript. 115

Appendix 8: List of Coding. 116

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1 Diagram of themes 26

1. Introduction

According to the Office for National Statistics (2012), the Muslim population of the UK rose from 1.5 million to 2.7 million between 2001 and 2011 and it is estimated that half are born Britons (Census, 2001). Furthermore, it was estimated that the Muslim population in the UK will almost double to 5.5 million within 20 years. Doughty (2011) wrote for the Daily Mail that "nearly one in ten Britons will be Muslim by 2030, according to a worldwide study about the spread of Islam." The increase in the Muslim population may be attributed to immigration and high birth rates (Doughty, 2011) and perhaps an increased willingness to self-identify as Muslim in reaction to the 'war on terror' (Gilliat-Ray, 2010).

British-Muslims negotiating their identities in a multicultural society continues to be of academic interest. As a group, British-Muslim women are often believed to be leading dual and parallel lives as a result of a clash of two conflicting cultures (Joly, 1995; Lewis, 2007). Jawad and Benn (2003) argue that Muslim women are misrepresented and often portrayed – particularly in the media – as oppressed and powerless; however there is an absence of the women's voices in academic research. Thus, it is important to investigate the experiences of Muslim women negotiating their identities in a western society. The current study is qualitative in nature and explores the lived experiences of young British-Muslim women, in particular, in negotiating and constructing their identities. Furthermore, the research aims to investigate whether young British-Muslim women experience a conflict in culture in their everyday lives.

The first section of the thesis will consider existing literature around the experiences of British-Muslim women in a western society. Issues of identity will be explored in context of the many factors have may impact these women. First, the section will consider ethnic identity development in order to conceptualise the ways in which individuals form and manage their identities. Second, literature pertaining to the home environment in relation to family, cultural and community influences on young British-Muslim women's identity will be

reviewed. Then, the cultural and religious constraints on British-Muslim women will be explored as well as literature surrounding “the veil” in order to gain understanding of traditional expectations of these women. Much has been written in the media about Muslim women; therefore the media portrayal of British-Muslim women will be examined. Additionally, literature surrounding nationality and citizenship will be reviewed. Finally the section will review studies carried out on Muslim women’s experiences of school, work and the western society. All of the above factors are integral to identity; therefore, they form the basis of this study.

The next section of the thesis will explore the methodological approach of the study, the sampling of the young women and the method of data analysis. This section will be followed by an exploration of the analysis and the findings from the data. Finally, the findings will be discussed in the context of the literature.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Ethnic Identity Development

Ethnic identity refers to an individual's sense of membership in an ethnic group (Phinney, 2000) and includes knowledge and evaluation of one's membership in that group (Tajfel, 1981). Ethnic identity emerged in social psychology out of Social Identity Theory (Tajfel, 1981) which posits that interactions and belonging to social groups has implications on identity formation. Phinney's (1989) model of ethnic identity development adopts theoretical underpinnings from Erikson (1968) and Marcia (1980) with a focus on the adolescent, stipulating that significant changes occur during this period. Consequently, the individual's ability to discern ethnic identity and exposure to other cultures is given importance.

Juang and Syed (2010) examined how family and socialisation relate to the ethnic identity of college-going students. The authors focus on emerging adults (roughly aged between 18-30 years) as a period characterised by a focus on self, thus claim it to be a critical time for identity work (Juang and Syed, 2010). The authors argue that the developmental contexts for ethnic identity can range from macro-level factors, such as societal prejudice and ethnic representations, to micro-level factors involving peers and family. This is in line with Erikson (1968) who posits that identity develops through interactions with others, first with family members and, subsequently, with peers and members of the community and larger society. Erikson (1968) emphasised the role of the parents in shaping children's identity, giving them a sense of identification to an ethnic group (Juang, 2010).

Scholars recognise that ethnic identities are created and reinforced by the family (Basit, 1997; Leonard and Speakman, 1986), whereby children are more likely to identity with their ethnicity if their family holds strong traditional values (Juang, 2010). Thus, individuals learn about their ethnic heritage through as food, language, dress, rituals and traditions (Modood, 2005). However, Butler (2001) argues that studies of ethnicity are faced with problems resulting from

the changing nature of ethnic affiliations over time. Thus, a great deal of attention is paid to the second generation children of migrant parent. These young people, educated and socialised in the British society, are exposed to two distinct cultures, at home and at school. Therefore, it is necessary to examine the extent to which these young people preserve their parents' traditional cultures, and to what extent they adopt more liberal, 'western' cultural values.

First generation migrant Muslims, upon arrival in Britain, sought residence near fellow villagers in a bid to maintain cultural values (Ballard, 1987). Anwar (1979) suggests that the aim of residential clustering was not only to seek security and support but also to recreate Indian or Pakistani village life in Britain. As such, according to Robinson (1986):

> 'The interaction of Indian and Pakistani migrants is controlled by norms, sanctions, and values which are derived directly from those currently prevailing within the village of origin. Migrants seek to create an environment that will strengthen, rather than challenge, these values' (pg. 79).

Thus, first generation migrants, worried at the loss of their cultural identities (Mohammad-Arif, 2000), have used faith as a way of uniting their community and socialising their children into traditional customs (Butler, 1999). It is stated that migrant parents exert significant amounts of influence in all aspects of their children's life (Segal, 1991), whereby the children are socialised to remain emotionally dependent on their parents well into adulthood (Almeida, 1996; Segal, 1991). Dosanjh and Ghuman (1998) suggest that adolescent autonomy is not encouraged by migrant parents, as this is often perceived as a loss of parental control. Consequently, subsequent Muslim generations have been purported to experience conflicting identities between the values prescribed within the home environment and values of identity attained through socialisation in western society (Joly, 1995; Abbott, 1998; Lewis, 2007).

It is suggested that this conflict is the cause of the "culture clash" that many second generation Muslims experience. Today's British entertainment media is brimming with programmes highlighting "western culture" such as '*The Only Way is Essex*' and '*Geordie Shore*' to name a few, all of which portray partying, alcohol consumption and premarital sex. Young British-Muslims are claimed to experience pressure from their family and the community to behave according to religious and cultural norms, prohibiting alcohol consumption and sexual relations before marriage (Basit, 1997; Butler, 2001). Fearing western influences, Muslim parents often exert control by imposing restrictions on their children. This is especially prominent for young British-Muslim women, who experience increased control through prohibition on socialising and mixing with the opposite sex (Basit, 1997) as well as high expectations to uphold the family honour (Azam, 2006), religious integrity (Dwyer, 2000) and cultural values (Anwar, 1998). In addition, parents are stated to have a preference for their daughters to wear traditional clothing (Anwar, 1998) and expect their daughters to fulfil family-related obligations and responsibilities (Afshar, 2005). As a consequence, many young British-Muslim women are stigmatised as rebelling against their parental values and experiencing an "identity crisis". Jawad and Benn (2003) argue that "Muslim women form a highly diverse and complex group, and that assumptions about them are often ill-conceived, misinformed and grossly misrepresented" (Pg.15). Thus, it is particularly important to examine the lived experience of young British-Muslim women and the influences on constructing and negotiating their identities. In addition, to investigate if these young women experience a conflict in culture, between the values prescribed to them by their family at home and those they attain from the British society.

2.2 Family and community influences

The family is the cornerstone of Islamic society, with high regard given for loyalty, obedience and deference (Dhami and Sheikh, 2000). Muslims adhere vigilantly to the rules and regulations of the *Qur'an* (Islamic Holy book) and *hadith* (texts containing the sayings and life of the Prophet) concerning matters

such as the relationship between men and women (Butler, 2001), prohibiting inter-mixing of the sexes (Basit, 1997) and covering the body (Mir- Hosseini, 2006; Winter, 2006). Furthermore, respect of parents and elders is paramount and strongly upheld (Butler, 2001). It is believed that the preservation of Islamic values in second-generation British-Muslims has been aided by the preservation of family loyalty and family networks within the Muslim communities (Joly, 1987).

Home life and the family are key in moulding the identity of young people (Khan 1979), whereby parents transmit values around cultural beliefs (Abu-Ali and Reisen, 1999). Anwar (1985) has suggested, however, that the family has also been the source of conflict between the first and second generation. Migrant parents hold dear the strong traditional customs and values of their country of birth and despite living in Britain, expect their children to uphold those same values of respect, obedience and chastity. However, second-generation Muslims are educated and socialised in a British society, thus experience western culture and liberal values (Joly, 1995), causing conflict between parents' expectations to that of their own (Abbot, 1998). As a result of this, it is argued, many second generation British-Muslims find themselves 'caught between two conflicting cultures' (Abbott, 1998; Din, 2006; Kabir, 2008). According to the Community Relations Commission (CRC, 1976), resulting from their exposure to British norms and values, children not only undermine their parent's traditional authority but also question their culture.

Naidoo (1984) suggests that south Asian adolescent girls living in western countries are raised in far more protected, controlled and sheltered home settings than their white counterparts. On investigating the strategies used by families to maintain traditional female roles, Talbani and Hasanali (2000) administered semi-structured interviews on 22 second-generation south Asian females in Canada, aged between 15-17 years. They found that second-generation females acknowledged the differential treatment of boys and girls at home, while parents restricted girls intermingling with the opposite sex. Due to such heightened parental control, the participants felt a lack of power to make

their own decisions. Talbani and Hasanali (2000) concluded that second-generation south Asian females perceived that greater control is exercised in their culture than other cultures, especially when compared to western cultures. This study highlights the effects of family control over second-generation females living in a western society, with a clear emphasis on the social and cultural expectations of south Asian females.

Therefore, it is claimed that Asian girls have a great deal of restrictions imposed on them. Ghuman (1994) argued that tension between Asian females and their parents emerge when Asian females demand the same level of freedom as their male counterparts. Hill and Bhatti (1995) reported similar findings, whereby second-generation British Asian girls from the most 'traditional' families were likely to experience most 'culture clash.' The discord between two conflicting cultures is purported to lead to difficulties over control issues between parent and child (McCourt and Waller, 1996). However, in the aforementioned studies, the researchers assess south Asians as a homogenous group, not taking into account the religious differences and the consequential effects of such differences.

Existing literature (Afshar, 2005; Shariff, 2009; Azam, 2006; Lewis, 2007) show that both religion and culture are important influences on many aspects of Asian women's lives. Thus, it is imperative to investigate the different influences, rather than categorise all second-generation south Asians as experiencing the same pressures. For example, alcohol consumption and dating are not prohibited as stringently in Hindu and Sikh cultures as they are in Muslim cultures. Hennink, et al (1999) identified that the behaviour of British Asian women is influenced by the family and the wider community. Hennink, et al (1999) aimed to gain an understanding of the social and sexual relationships of young Asian women and the extent to which their behaviour is influenced by cultural traditions, religious beliefs, family and community expectations. They conducted interviews with 36 Asian teenage girls (and a comparative group of 25 White British students) as well as 10 young, unmarried Asian women in employment or higher education. The authors found that the over-riding

influence was that of religion and the associated behavioural expectations. Although there are many similarities among Asian women, there is also evidence of heterogeneity in behaviour between Asian women of different religious or ethnic backgrounds. Most notably, Muslim and Sikh women reported more social restrictions and limited experience of relationships than their Hindu counterparts. As such, it is clear that the differences due to religion cannot be overlooked, and categorising Asian women as a homogenous group can be problematic.

Stopes-Roe and Cochran (1990) argue that young Asian girls do not enjoy life at home due to parents restricting their behaviour. However, the restrictions on second-generation Muslim girls are not only from parents. Previous literature has noted the role of the community or Biraderi (wider kinship network) that has further confounded the position of young British-Muslim women, with additional pressure to behave according to expectations (Azam, 2006; Hennink et al, 1999).

Hennink, et al (1999) noted a similar issue that even in families where the immediate relatives may have more liberal views, they were still concerned with how certain behaviour would be judged by the community, and could potentially impact the family honour. Parents therefore often influenced their daughters to behave according to community expectations and uphold the family honor and religious and cultural integrity. Azam (2006) in her study of British Pakistani Muslim women, found similar results, where, not only were the women aware of the expectations imposed by the community, they felt the pressure to adhere to its cultural norms and values, and inevitably felt this influenced their behaviour. As such, young women's adherence to religious values can lead to a religious identity which manifests itself through the veil.

2.3 Religion, culture and 'the veil"

With an increasing number of headscarf or hijab wearers, it remains a hot topic in the media and, more than any other single issue, has become the source of controversy (Hancock, 2008). It is a visible symbol that reflects certain views

about women's place in society as well as signifies religious zeal (Winter, 2006). Ryan (2011) acknowledges that public discourses about Muslims are heavily gendered, presenting Muslim women as either passive victims of traditional patriarchy or as cultural outsiders stubbornly refusing to engage with British society (Meer, Dwyer and Modood, 2010). Therefore, the hijab not only plays a part in shaping the self-identity of British-Muslim women, but also the perceived identity and status.

The term "hijab", originally meant "curtain"; its modern day uses refers to a headscarf that fully covers the head and neck of Muslim women (Winter 2006). The hijab is prescribed for Muslim women once they reach puberty; however, prepubescent girls in more conservative communities will often wear some form of headscarf (Winter, 2006). In addition to a hijab, some women wear niqab which is a piece attached at either side of the face, covering the face, but not the eyes. Niqab wearing women are often confused with burka, but the burka differs from a niqab in that it conceals a woman's entire body and face, as well as covering the eyes with a mesh screen. An abaya is a long outer-garment that covers a woman from shoulders to toe and is usually worn with a matching hijab.

The French law banning 'conspicuous' religious insignia has instigated many divisive debates for international media, activists and scholars alike (Winter, 2006). In the western world, hijab and niqab wearers are purported to pose a threat to security and 'our way of life' (Moore, Mason and Lewis, 2008) and seen as threatening to the most advocated of western values – that of freedom (Carland, 2011). Bhutto (cited in Sheikh, 2011) argues that "the ban on hijab in France manifested the conflict of civilizations and intolerance which was fast spreading in European countries" (TheNation newspaper, online). Bhutto advocates that the West had conceived a model project through which they wanted to impose western culture on everybody (cited in Sheikh 2011).

Heightened suspicion and anti-Islamic stereotype in the post 9/11 and 7/1 era has led Muslim women, and especially those who wear the hijab or niqab, to be

stigmatized. In exploring how women from a diverse range of Muslim backgrounds encounter and resist stigma, Ryan (2011) raises interesting points about the different ways of claiming Muslim 'normality' in British society today, suggesting that normality is markedly differed for Muslim women, illustrating the diversity of views and lifestyles. For many, being 'normal' meant being good Muslims and abiding by particular dress such as hijab reinforced otherness and exposed them to additional stigma. Furthermore Muslim women felt a sense of identity towards those who were stigmatised even if the participant did not personally experience stigma. Identity of British-Muslim women is constructed not only by their experiences of home life and pressure of cultural norms but also how the self is presented and understood in the mainstream society (Ryan, 2011; Fortier, 1999).

The British media largely depict negative representations of the niqab, with niqab-wearers often portrayed as oppressed. Namniece (2012), attempts to demystify the rumours about niqab-wearing women, and challenges the negative representations of the niqab. She conducted in-depth interviews with three British-Muslim women who wore the niqab, utilising the narrative approach to carry out an analysis. Namniece (2012) concludes that women emphasised the religious importance the practice of wearing the niqab had for them, as well as liberation from unnecessary worries about appearance. Thus, the practice of wearing the niqab stemmed from religious and personal reason, rather than due to Muslim women's refusal to integrate into western society. This emphasises the decisive role of Islam in shaping the identities of Muslims, as a result of which even when they live in a non-Muslim society, they wish to adhere to the Islamic way of life.

Young British-Muslim women are increasingly taking a greater interest in Islam. Lewis (2007) uses the term 'exploratory religious identity' to explain that many young British-Muslim women are exploring and questioning their religion, seeking to interpret Islam as relevant to their lives. He suggests that Muslim females were more likely to seek religious knowledge, in part as a response to

the control to which they are exposed to at home and within their communities. Thus, the increase in hijab-wearers in Britain may be as a result of the increase in religious knowledge for young women. Butler (1995) also comments that respondents in her study believed that gaining better religious understanding enabled them to create a new identity combining religious values with western affiliations. By making themselves aware of their rights in relation to Islamic law, Muslim women were better equipped to challenge some of the restrictions which aspects of their parents' culture imposed on them.

Conversely, some scholars have reported that second-generation Muslims were less likely to place importance on religion or observe its rules (Modood, 1994). It was claimed that young Muslims performed religious observance either under pressure from parents or in a bid to avoid arguments (Modood, 1994). However, Azam (2006) found that the intergenerational differences between first and second generation British Mirpuri Muslim women were in relation to marriage, caste and the relationship with the biraderi. However, there were overwhelming similarities in terms of religion and religious observance. Bains and Johal (1998) found that young Muslims use their religion to assert their identity and use different language codes depending on whom they were talking to, which he called 'code-switching'. Similarly, Sahin (cited in Lewis, 2007) comments that Muslims feel the need to initiate meaningful dialogue among different cultural practices they have internalised.

Many Muslim women are able to achieve cultural-hybridity (Butler, 1995) in that they participate in institutions such as education and employment and yet retain their religious values. Butler (1995) found that young Muslim women were confident in demanding respect when wearing the hijab and their right to perform prayers during work-time, without becoming isolated from their workmates. The key perception here is that young Muslim women are active members of British society without compromising their religious commitment. However, the confidence and independence of young Muslim women are not often portrayed in the British media.

2.4 Media portrayals of Muslim women

The influence of media on the perceptions of Muslim women in Britain has been substantial. Moore, Mason and Lewis (2008) examined the print media representations of British-Muslims and Islam in Britain. They found that the coverage of British-Muslims in the media increased significantly since 2000, peaking in 2006, and remaining at high levels in 2007 and 2008. This rise is partly explained by the increase in coverage devoted to terrorism and terrorism-related stories. An increasing importance of stories has focused on religious and cultural differences between Islam and the British culture. By 2008, the coverage of religious and cultural issues had overtaken stories pertaining to terrorism. As such, stories have focused much more on controversies surrounding wearing of veils, Muslim dress code, forced marriages and the role of Islam in Britain. By contrast, coverage of the increase in attacks on British-Muslims has steadily declined, dropping from 10% in 2000 to 1% in 2008. These stories generally highlight the cultural differences between British-Muslims and other British people and further exacerbate the position of Muslim women in Britain, as a result of stereotypes and discrimination (Moore, Mason and Lewis, 2008). Although this study highlights the representations of Muslims in the media, it does not elucidate their experiences or the subsequent effects of these media portrayals.

Increasingly, Muslims are being presented in a negative manner in the media and evidence suggests that Muslims themselves reject such media portrayals, deeming them unfair misrepresentations and contributing to discrimination and creating barriers between communities (Ahmed, 1992; Armeli et al, 2007; Fekete, 2006; Weller et al, 2001). However, whilst the news media is often cited as a likely contributor to the tensions and hostilities Muslims experience, it is very difficult to establish the extent to which it is directly responsible for constructing them (Moore, Mason and Lewis, 2008).

Media stories increased focus on stories concerning the social, cultural or political role and experiences of Muslims in Britain has sparked fresh debate about women's oppression and freedom of choice. More recent stories have

emerged involving niqab-wearing women's differential treatment, such as "Muslim woman told to 'remove face covering or get out' of New Jersey shopping mall" (Daily Mail, 2012). Until recently, the UK has avoided the controversies surrounding Muslim dress code and the veil. In the UK, Muslim women's dress remains unregulated via means of law (Shirazi and Mishra, 2010). In August 2013, however, the news coverage of a judge allowing a Muslim woman to appear in the dock wearing a niqab (BBC News, 2013) has led many commentators to depict niqab-wearing women as a threat to the 'British way of life'. Philip Hollobone, Conservative MP for Kettering, has proposed a bill to ban face coverings in public, claiming it goes against British culture and British 'way of life'. He states that people feel insecure and goes as far as saying that face covering is offensive. In response, Mussarat Zia, general secretary of the Muslim women's network, calls for religious freedom, allowing private religious expression in public places (BBC News, 2013).

The media has positioned niqab-wearing British-Muslim women as subservient, cut off from social life and deprived of identity. Muslim families are purported to care more for family honour and reputation than their daughters, with the family home being a restrictive arena. Young Muslim women are often portrayed as prisoners; suffocated by overprotective parents and generalised to desire greater western identities. Thus, it is important to understand how the media portrayal of Muslim women in Britain influences the identities of young British-Muslim women. It is equally important to explore the subsequent effects of potential discrimination and stereotyping by the media.

Another highly reported topic in the media is that of the 'honour killings' of young Muslim women by family members. An increasing number of stories refer to young British-Muslim women as living a double-life (Iqbal and Subedar, BBC, 2012), or who resist forced marriages or who were too 'westernised' as becoming honour killing victims (BBC News, 2012). Media coverage has often depicted young British-Muslim women as struggling to develop their own identities while under the pressures of family expectations as well as mainstream society. However, the media's emphasis on a "culture clash" and

assumptions based on misunderstood and misrepresented religious practices detract from the underlying issue of gender-based violence. Contrary to the media portrayal on women, which depicts them as cultural outsiders, young Muslim Women felt comfortable with their British identity.

2.4 Nationality and citizenship

Marshall (1950) defined citizenship as ‘‘a status bestowed on those who are full members of a community’’ (pp. 87). Rosie et al (2006) examine the relationship between citizenship and the media; the way in which the media establish, define or reinforce, the boundaries of communities and membership in those communities. It is suggested that newspapers, among other media, play a prominent role in mediating national communities and reinforcing a national identity (Rosie et al, 2006). It is clear that media stories positioning British-Muslims as ‘others’ who are opposing British way of life can be especially damaging to their national identities and belonging.

Contemporary debates on allegiance and faithfulness link to discussions on understanding when an individual has a sense of belonging to a community (Ahmed, 2009). In addition to facing questions and challenges to their loyalty, young British-Muslims are also facing the complex concepts such as being pressed to define their identity in light of national and international events. Ahmed (2009), in her report for the Policy Research Centre, found that many young Muslims feel comfortable with their British identity, and that their religious values are in unison with their national identity. They stress that we should not regard them as living contradictions between their religious and national identities (Ahmed, 2009).

Ryan, Kofman and Banfi (2009) conducted a study which aimed to explore how young Muslims categorise their identities within British society. A total of 37 participants took part, containing a mixture of Muslims who were born in the UK and abroad. The study found that the majority of participants used hyphenated categories such as ‘British-Muslim’ to capture the complexity and multifaceted

nature of their identities. These categories combined nationality (British), with religion (Muslim) and family background. While feeling generally positive about living in Britain, most participants did not 'feel' British. In giving reasons for their answers, most pointed to discrimination and racism. Women in particular noted verbal abuse due to identifiable symbols of religion – such as the hijab. Modood (1997) argues that most second-generation Muslims regarded themselves as British; however, they were not comfortable with a British identity as they felt that the indigenous population did not see them as British.

A more recent study by Nandi (2012) named Understanding Society, explored the relationship of the expressed identity and claims to Britishness. The study suggests that there is a discrepancy between how non-Muslims often perceive Muslims and how Muslims typically perceive themselves. Moosavi (2012) claims this mismatch is as a result of misinformed assumptions by non-Muslims that Muslims struggle with their British identity. Nandi's (2012) study challenged these misconceptions and reported higher prevalence of Muslims identifying with Britishness than any other Britons. Thus, the implications of this research are that "expression of minority identity does not imply alienation from national identity ('Britishness') nor does majority ethnic affiliation bring with it a stronger endorsement of national identity" (Nandi, 2012; online). This sense of Britishness and integration into mainstream western society conflicts the traditional 'woman's' roles that are expected of young British-Muslim women.

2.6 Muslim women in "the West"

A Muslim woman's social position had traditionally been regarded in terms of her responsibilities towards the home and children (Afshar, 2005) and strongly bound up with the ascribed role of 'mother' and 'nurturer' (Philips, 2009). The homemaking role constructed for Muslim women can exacerbate pressures and expectations of conformity to cultural norms (Philips, 2009) as these gendered roles are often reinforced by parents rather than challenged (Dwyer, 2000). Conflict can arise when young British-Muslim women, who are British born, or at

least British educated, seemingly reject these roles and demand more freedom (Afshar, 2005).

Previous literature indicates that British-Muslim women were encouraged by parents to wear the traditional shalwaar kameez (tunic and pants) rather than western clothing (Anwar, 1998). Dwyer (2000) found that wearing western clothing was associated with rebelliousness and seen as a threat to ethnic or religious values. Dwyer (2000) discusses gendered parental expectations, whereby young Muslim women are considered the guardians of cultural and religious integrity. Not only is dress an important means through which young Muslim women negotiate their gendered identities, but parental expectations of 'appropriate femininities' are equally important. Thus, gender plays a role in identity negotiation for many young women; with parents ensuring that their daughters' behaviour and attire are strictly monitored (Dwyer, 2000).

Basit (1997) notes that teachers struggle to make sense of the social world of their ethnic minority pupils and often misinterpret religio-cultural values. The teachers perceive these young women as living dual and parallel lives; behaving differently in school than at home, and have a lack of freedom. Basit (1997) comments that young Muslim girls are quiet and submissive at home out of respect and insists that the lack of freedom is borne from parents' love, care and concern for their daughters' safety. The author notes that the hopes and aspirations of these women are positive as they are engendered by strong, secure, loving bonds within their families.

Earlier research suggests that young Muslim females use school as a means to escape the restrictive environment at home (Din, 2001). Such authors claim that school not only allowed Muslim girls the freedom away from parents but also to behave in ways with which their parents may disagree. Din (2001) suggests that young Muslim women are more likely to rebel against parents than Muslim boys, even if it is in a covert manner. However, Ahmad (2001) highlights the potential problems with research studies focus on Muslim schoolgirls, citing them to have relatively little life experience to be 'representatives' for their culture. In exploring the motivations and aspirations of young British-Muslim

women graduates, Ahmad (2001) found higher education was increasingly viewed as an important and necessary aspect to integrate into western society. Furthermore, young British-Muslim women play an active role in the construction and reconstruction of their social and personal identities, in both public and private domains.

The Muslim family and wider community are influential in shaping the identities of young British-Muslim women. In addition, the expectations from parents and teachers can impact not only the educational aspirations, but ultimately the negotiation and construction of identities of these women. Shaw (2000) argues that there is a double-sided stereotype about Muslim females – that as women and that as Muslims. Gender is especially significant for British-Muslim women, as they marginalised by sexist assumptions from within their own communities as well as from British society as a whole. Such assumptions distort the position of women in society, by depicting them as oppressed or subjugated Muslim women, or incompetent and inferior to men in general. Thus, while cultural or religious expectations may place restrictions on British-Muslim women, the sexist stereotypes that exist in British society restrict them even further.

Global events have also had a major impact on shaping the experiences of Muslim women in Britain. The sight of planes flying into the Twin Towers in New York on September 11th 2001 will remain an iconic image that changed the way Muslims were viewed – not only in their own neighbourhoods but also all around the world (Shariff, 2009). In the media, Muslim women in Britain began to take centre stage, with the hijab becoming a symbol for political debates on integration, cohesion and radicalisation. Previous studies have portrayed Muslim women as ‘submissive’, subjugated victims of patriarchal cultures (Anwar, 1998; Shariff, 2009). However such public discourses about Muslims are heavily gendered, with the voices of Muslim women frequently absent from these public debates (Bilge, 2010; Diehl, 2009; Jawad and Benn, 2003).

In a bid to give voice to young Muslim women, Butler (1995) conducted her study on second-generation Asian Muslim women living in Bradford and

Coventry. She conducted semi-structured interviews with women aged between 18 and 30 years old. Butler (1995) concluded that “Asian Muslim women in Britain are seeking new roles for themselves, ones, which give them more independence and choice, yet, at the same time, supporting and strengthening their commitment to Islam” (online). Thus, the identities of young British-Muslim women are made up of many important attributes including religion, culture, their family, education, aspirations and their exposure to living in Britain (Azam, 2006).

It can be seen that many studies have explored the experiences of British-Muslim women in an attempt to explain the many factors which contribute in shaping their identities. It is apparent that the literature has emphasised a “culture clash” between migrant parents and their children (Joly, 1995; Abbott, 1998; Din, 2001; Lewis, 2007). However, most previous research studies have focussed on Asian women in general, by examining conflicting identities of British Asian women (Naidoo, 1984; Talbani and Hasanali, 2000; Stopes-Roe and Cochran, 1990). Moore, Mason and Lewis (2008) highlight the representations of Muslims in the media, as can be seen the newspaper articles (Daily Mail, 2012; BBC News, 2012; BBC News, 2013). However there is an absence of the voices of British-Muslims illuminating their experiences of these representations. Previous research studies pertaining to British-Muslim women have emphasised the negative experiences (Shaw, 2000; Din, 2006; Ryan, 2011), and have often been represented by males (Ghuman, 1994; Anwar, 1998; Din, 2001; Modood, 1997; Lewis, 2007). Indeed, the position of Muslim women is often misinformed and grossly misrepresented (Jawad and Benn, 2003).Thus, it is important to investigate the experiences of second-generation Muslim women negotiating their identities in a western society.

When considering the existing literature on British-Muslim women, family and community influences, expectations and restrictions, religious and cultural constraints, hijab, media portrayal, nationality and citizenship as well as western socialisation, education and aspirations are important attributes in constructing young British-Muslim women’s identities. Thus, in order to gain a better

understanding of the experiences of British-Muslim women, the current study aims to explore the many factors which influence the negotiation and construction of these women's identities. Furthermore, the study will explore young British-Muslim women's views on the media portrayal of Muslim women.

Research questions:

1. To investigate whether young British-Muslim women experience a conflict in culture in their everyday lives.

2. To examine how these women negotiate their identities as young British-Muslim women.

3. Methodology

3.1 Theoretical Framework

This research adopts a critical realist approach which advocates that there are features of reality that exist independently of human consciousness (Fade, 2004; Sayer, 2000; Maxwell, 2012). Critical realism acknowledges that social phenomena are intrinsically meaningful (Sayer, 2000). Individuals experience different parts of reality, therefore attach different meanings to experiences, and these individual differences in meaning are reflected through human speech and behaviour (Fade, 2004). Thus, an individual's description of an event may be limited to their own subjective experience of reality. As such, analysis of data cannot produce an accurate account of the participants' subjective experiences of reality, however, some insight can be offered into how each experience their own reality (Smith, 2010). The analysis will therefore be considered to be an account of me making sense of the participant making sense of an actual reality and thus 'critical realist knowledge'. Therefore critical realism informed the question of experiences of young British-Muslim women in Britain and the influences on constructing and negotiating their identities.

Phenomenology is concerned with human understanding according to Husserl (1970), who believed that the core meaning of entities can be understood by intuition (Fade, 2004). Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) as outlined by Smith (1995) is theoretically rooted in critical realism (Bhaskar, 1978) in that meaning has to be understood and cannot be measured or counted (Sayer, 2000). IPA is phenomenological in that it seeks to explore the lived experiences of individuals and is interpretative in that it accounts for the researcher's perspective (Larkin et al, 2008) and embraces the view that understanding requires interpretation (Fade, 2004). As Larkin et al (2008) comment, IPA is concerned with the ways in which humans experience and gain knowledge of the world around them (Wilig, 2001). IPA is epistemologically rooted in 'minimal hermeneutic realism', which accepts that reality is dependent on context (Larkin et al, 2008). Thus, IPA is appropriate for my epistemological position, providing a coherent methodological approach.

3.2 The Feminist Critique

Feminist researchers have scrutinised the value of traditional methods of social research in the analysis of gender (Bernard, 1979; Ward and Grant, 1985). The feminist critique was a reaction against existing sexist bias within social sciences (Spender, 1981 cited in Stanley and Wise, 1990), which either ignored or distorted the position of women in society (Stanley and Wise, 1990). Traditional research methods advocate maintaining a distance, however, it is suggested that such notions of objectivity are not effective when conducting research on women (Oakley, 1981). Thus, gender plays a great part in obtaining richer, more detailed data from women when the researcher is female. Stanley and Wise (1990) suggest feminist research is defined "as a focus *on* women, in research carried out *by* women, *for* other women" (pp. 21).

According to Oakley (1981), the woman-to-woman interviews encourage a conversational communication, and subsequently yield more detailed and comprehensive data (Harding, 1988). Thus, traditional methods of research are deemed inappropriate when conducting research on women, instead adopting a less-structured research procedure would yield richer data (Oakley, 1981). Thus, 'woman' is regarded as a valid and necessary category because all women share, by virtue of being women, a set of common experiences (Stanley and Wise, 1990). These shared experiences derive from common experiences of women in addition to knowledge and awareness of belonging to a subordinate group.

3.3 Reflexivity

Issues related to religious and cultural values, belonging and identity can be sensitive and difficult to discuss. In the current research, the researcher herself is a young British-Muslim woman and has an understanding of religious and cultural issues. In addition, the researcher and respondents shared much in common on the basis of age, gender as well as being born and educated in the British society. These various factors were helpful for both researcher and respondents in producing an easy relationship.

My own research experiences support the notion that maintaining distance from participants for objectivity as advocated in traditional research methods (Dickson-Swift et al, 2007), is less effective when interviewing women (Oakley, 1981). It is often argued that maintaining distance is particularly necessary when asking sensitive questions, however, I would suggest the opposite is true. When conducting interviews with women it is vital to develop a level of trust between researcher and participant. This not only helps the participant to feel comfortable and at ease, but also encourages conversational communication, thus yielding more detailed, richer data.

For instance, during my research when one of the women was explaining the change in her parents' attitudes towards western clothing, I commented that I had a similar experience with my parents. This not only added a sense of shared experiences but generated a lengthy response from the participant regarding her experiences. Thus, as reported by Madill (2011) the researcher's role is key in prompting spontaneous conversation, and in turn, yielding rich and detailed data. As illustrated by the example above, spontaneous conversation underlines the importance of responding to participants during the interview process to aid an easy flow of communication.

It is important to stress that analysis is a result of interactions between the participants and the researcher (Finlay, 2002). Thus, to explore the meaning of the participants' experiences, data analysis requires reflexivity from the researcher, who interprets how the participant makes sense of the world and such interpretations are based on the researcher's own conceptions, beliefs, expectations and experiences (Willig, 2001).

3.4 Method

This research aims to explore the experiences of young British-Muslim women in Britain and the influences on constructing and negotiating their identities. It further seeks to investigate if young British-Muslim women experience a conflict in culture in their everyday lives. The research would also explore whether

young British women are aware of any media representations of Muslim women in British society and their view of those portrayals.

As this study is a qualitative approach to understanding complex processes of identity and belonging, the research aims to obtain data from women at various stages of their lives, with diverse attitudes and experiences. The study investigated twelve young British-Muslim women, aged between 16-33 years old. The sample comprised of three respondents in further education (age range 16-17); three respondents in higher education (age range 19-21); three respondents who were in employment (age range 25-28) and three participants who were homemakers (age range 23-33). They do not constitute a homogenous group - the diversity points not only to the heterogeneity of the Muslim population but also to the variety of views and experiences included within that broad category. All except one respondent was born in Britain; who had lived in Pakistan until the age of 11 years old. The sample selection for this research was purposive sampling, in which respondents were recruited through the researcher's contacts at the university and word-of-mouth, providing they met the criteria of being a British-Muslim woman who was in higher education, further education, employment or a homemaker.

The study adopts a qualitative approach, exploring how young British-Muslim women describe their experiences surrounding religion, western influences, gender and identity construction. This is appropriate for the research as it aimed to study the subjective meaning for the participants. Data was collected using semi-structured interviews, as it allows the researcher flexibility to probe areas of interest, thus build a rapport with the respondent, helping them to speak openly (Smith and Osborne, 2003). Wooffitt and Widdicombe (2006) point to the similarities between semi-structured interviews and naturalistic conversation. Maddill (2011), in her study comparing semi-structured interviews with spontaneous conversation, found that the interviewer response to participants and building rapport in an interview setting can encourage spontaneous conversation. Furthermore, semi-structured interviews enable the participant to

provide a fuller, richer account and can be applied in research that is sensitive in content (Hood et al, 1999; Braun and Clarke, 2006) which questionnaires and surveys can lack (McLeod, 2003).

The decision to employ a qualitative design was a consequence of the intention of this thesis to study the subjective meaning of individuals, which refer to the tradition of interpretation (Smith and Osborne, 2003). IPA was adopted to analyse the data, as this approach explores personal lived experience to examine how people make sense of their personal and social world (Frost, 2011).

This approach allows the researcher to examine meaningful and symbolic content and identify patterns across large amounts of data in an attempt to elicit experiential themes (Smith et al, 2009). IPA has clearly defined stages of analysis, which enable the researcher to follow the approach with rigour. Another similar analysis process is that of grounded theory. Willig (2001) explains the basic difference between grounded theory and IPA is that the former enables the researcher to study social processes whilst the latter allows the researcher to gain insight into participant's making sense of their experiences. Thus, IPA is more suitable for investigating phenomenology. This method, therefore, is advantageous in order to understand the lived experience of young British-Muslim women, how they make sense of them and the personal meanings those experiences hold.

3.5 Procedure

Respondents were provided with an information letter (see Appendix 1), in which the study was explained to them, as by the nature of the study, the respondents will need to open up about their experiences. Ethical approval for this study was granted by the University of Huddersfield (see Appendix 5 and Appendix 6) and all ethical guidelines were adhered to (see Appendix 2 and Appendix 4). Three interviews were conducted at the University campus; two were conducted at college and seven interviews were conducted at the

respondents' home, at their request. All interviews were audio-recorded and the time taken to conduct the interview ranged from 38 minutes to 72 minutes.

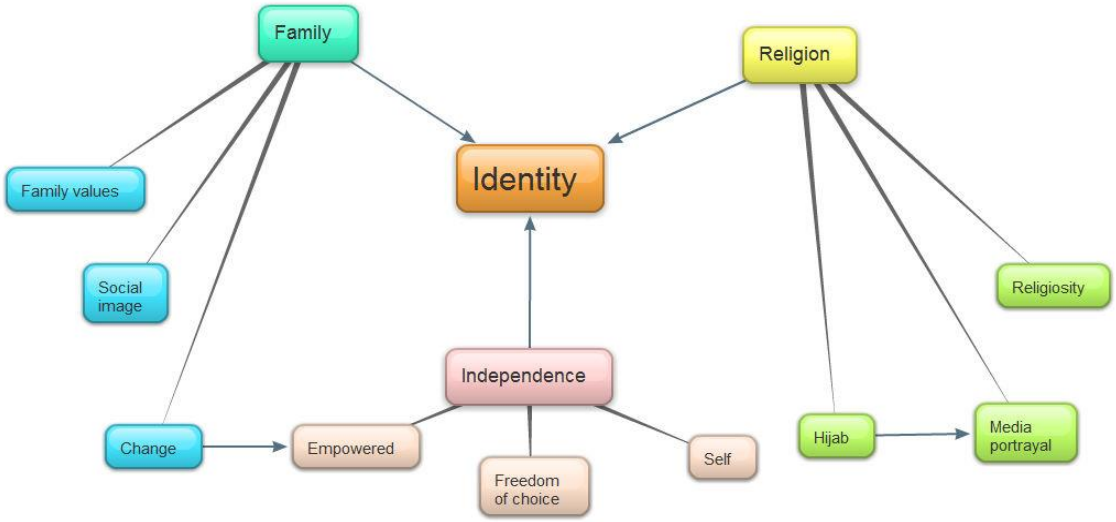
The interview schedule was developed by the authors, as there was no available interview schedule that explored a broad range of experiences of life in Britain for young British-Muslim women (see Appendix 3). The questions developed were guided by topics on Muslim women's identity in existing literature in order to explore the various influences on shaping the identities of these young women. The interview schedule was designed in order to examine family values, lifestyle options, education and aspirations, hijab, media portrayals, educational as well as their self-defined identities. The interview schedule started with the general questions about their home environment to more specific questions on their position in British society and subsequent influences on their lives in Britain. Respondents were also asked about their current knowledge of media portrayals of Muslim women and whether they identify with such portrayals.

Interviews were transcribed verbatim (see Appendix 5) and analysed using IPA. Each transcript was read thoroughly numerous times in order to become as familiar as possible with the respondents' account. Each reading resulted in annotating key phrases and preliminary interpretations on the left hand margin. On the right hand margin emergent themes were noted, which were common patterns or reoccurring phrases that captured the essential meaning of some passages. Each transcript was given the same attention, thus encouraging identification of similarities and differences amongst the accounts. A list was then compiled of all the emergent themes in order to identify any connections or contradictions between them (see Appendix 8). The themes were then clustered together based on conceptual research, creating superordinate themes. Finally, I ordered the themes so that they produced a coherent narrative account.

4. Analysis

When exploring young British-Muslim women negotiating their identities, analysis of the data revealed three main themes of ‘Family’; ‘Independence’ and ‘Religion’. An overarching theme of ‘Identity’ is present throughout the other main themes, as will be discussed in further detail. A diagrammatic representation of the overarching theme, main themes and subthemes is presented in Figure 1.

Figure 1: Diagram of themes



The theme of ‘Family’ sets the scene of the home environment; cultural and religious expectations and how the family influences the identity of these women. The theme of ‘Independence’ is fundamental in displaying the level of importance the respondents place on education, aspirations and career as well as their own sense of belonging and freedom. Finally, the theme of ‘Religion’ explores the respondents’ view of the media portrayal of Muslims and offers insight into how this has affected the perception of Muslim women. The theme of ‘Religion’ also explores the ways in which gender and religious values are performed and perceived by others. It is noteworthy that the themes and subthemes occasionally overlap, as each of the aspects of the experience interlink and often cause the other. Thus, every effort has been made to ensure that an artificial distinctiveness is not imposed on the data set.

4.1 Family

A theme clearly shown throughout all respondents' interviews was related to the family influence on their identities. The theme of 'Family' is focussed on how the respondents describe their family life in relation to expectations and restrictions from the family. Social image also plays a part in family life, in terms of the image portrayed to the extended family or 'biraderi' [extended kinship network], as well as the image the respondents portray to their family. It is evident that an effort is made by the respondents to strike a balance between home life and the western society, and respondents felt this was aided by the change undergone in Muslim families' lifestyles.

4.1.1 Family Values

Home Life

Literature suggests that Muslim families are mainly close-knit, cohesive units (Shariff, 2009) with strong views of loyalty, obedience and deference (Azam, 2006, Leonard & Speakman, 1986). The data revealed that family was central to the respondents' lives. Interestingly, when asked to describe their home life, most respondents talked about their family values or religiosity. Thus, it appears the default position of identity at home is focussed on family values, religion and culture. For example:

> *"Home life… I think we were quite traditional, at one point, I'm sure we were. But I think as times gone on, we've kind of… it's kind of diluted itself…"* (R8, Worker)

Family has an effect on ethnic identity, especially if they hold strong traditional values (Juang and Syed, 2010). For some respondents, these values can be different for their immediate family compared to their extended family:

> *"It's not culture… probably my extended family, they're quite cultural… traditional, but not my immediate family, it's not really like that. It's a bit more… liberal."* (R2, University student)

Respondent 6, however, felt that her personal views were different compared to her parents'. She believes being born in the UK is the reason, stating she has

similar views to her siblings. This may suggest a generational shift, with young British-Muslims identifying more with a western identity:

> *"I enjoy my home life but I do think erm, with me being born in the UK that my views are slightly different to my parents. Erm… but I do find then, that on the other hand, with my sisters and my younger brothers, that our views are sometimes similar… in the sense of the western culture…"* (R6, Worker)

Children who are exposed to family traditions, such as food, language, dress, rituals and traditions, are more likely to identify with their ethnicity (Juang and Syed, 2010). Nevertheless, it is apparent that despite the conflicting views between Respondent 6 and her parents, she still has an appreciation for her heritage and some of her parents' traditional values:

> *"I really do like some of the more traditional and cultural aspects of my heritage… with having Pakistani parents."* (R6, Worker)

Respondents noted that although their family held traditional cultural or religious views, they were not overly strict, implying a dilution of some traditional customs. Thus, contradicting Azam (2006), who found strong cultural and religious family values among young British Pakistani women. Respondents' state:

> *"I wouldn't say that they're strict… you know, how you would get some parents that are strict in my culture. We're all quite religious in my family, so… that's really important."* (R9, 6th Form student)

> *"It's not really strict traditional, but they are traditional values that we have."* (R5, University student)

Sennels (2010) cites fundamental differences between Muslim and western cultures, stating that a significant change will need to occur in the identity and values of Muslims for them to accept the values of the western society. However, in the current study, respondents talk about how their family fits in with the western society, despite the religiosity, culture or values. For example:

> *"It's a mixture. I think where tradition… culture is quite important; we still kind of, fit in well with the modern world, the society and of what's going on around us"* (R11, Homemaker)

In addition to accepting the western society, respondents felt that they were active members of the western society, by abiding by its societal norms. A

notion of ‘normal’ was rife in Respondent 12 account, whereby she explained how she felt they were a normal family, quoting ‘normal’ activities that they take part in and yet are still practising Muslims:

> *“… We are a normal family (…) we practice… practising Muslims*” (R12, Homemaker)

> *“We are pretty much normal… we are a modern set of people, we go everywhere, we do everything, we go on holidays –we’ve just recently been to Disneyland… we have movie nights, with the ladies.”* (R12, Homemaker)

Previous literature suggests that young British-Muslim girls were influenced by the western notion of freedom (Stopes-Roe & Cochrane, 1990) and felt freer when they were in school (Ellis, 1991; Modood et al, 1994; Basit, 1997). However, the current study found the opposite for one respondent who felt more comfortable and open at home, indicating that a Muslim family home was not the stifling environment that is often portrayed in the media:

> *“I guess I am different when it comes to school life and different when it comes to my life at home… because of the people I am around, like I have my family that are around me when I am at home and I feel more relaxed and… I open up to them more because I have known them my whole life.”* (R9, 6th Form student)

Thus, home can offer solace, allowing the respondents to feel at ease. This could also be seen for another respondent who spoke about being more reserved at work but feeling unrestrained at home:

> *“At work you have to act professional… the banter is there when it needs to be there but you are professional. At home you can just act like a nutter, everybody mucks in, but it’s comfortable, you know what I mean?”* (R7, Worker)

Despite being open and unrestrained at home, respondents felt obligated to show courteous regard to their parents. Similarly, Basit (1997) found that “the notion of respect is deeply embedded in the British-Muslim subculture” (pg. 429). Respondents placed a great importance on showing respect to their parents and being mindful of what is discussed with them:

> *“So I have to look at who I’m talking to. Same with my parents, I have to think before I speak, like coz… it’s not that I might say something wrong, it’s that I might say something that will disrespect them. So, that’s one thing at home, you have to show respect.”* (R5, University student)

> *"I respect my family and my elders because the way I see it, disrespecting them isn't going to do you any good, and shows how you haven't got any manners at all."* (R9, 6th Form student)

> *"That's the respect I've got for them, but… there's, like when you're talking, no swearing in the house, no dirty talk or anything."* (R5, University student)

While neither the Qur'an nor Hadith state that women have to be housewives, Islamic law (Sharia) recognises gender disparity. For females, traditionally, were expected to fulfil marital and maternal responsibilities (Afshar, 2005). One respondent describes her home life as focussed on caring for her family:

> *"My life at home consists of looking after the family, keeping close contact with family… for example, checking if everyone is okay. Like... I'm just mostly at home."* (R10, Homemaker)

Expectations

Abbott (1998) rationalises that the possible 'culture clash' is as a result of expectations of migrant parents to that of their British-Muslim children. Parents expect their daughters to fulfil their role at home and Afshar (2005) states that the values prescribed at home were merely preparation for becoming a future wife. Respondents were 'dutiful' to their family; however it is noteworthy, that the younger women (6th form students) placed a greater emphasis on their household responsibilities:

> *"At home I have to be more responsible towards family coz I have to fulfil my duties…"* (R3, 6th Form student)

As highlighted in the literature review, much of the pressure placed on women to uphold traditional cultural and family values stemmed from the notion of family honour. Respondent 4, who is also a 6th form student, implies that the family honour lies with her and she has the huge pressure of having the responsibility of the whole family. Thus, parental expectations are not restricted to looking after the family or household chores, but also upkeep of family honour:

> *"…I have the responsibility of my whole family, keeping their respect and honour high in front of other people, follow their culture rules and I have to always ask for their permission before doing anything even if they are away from home."* (R4, 6th Form student)

Parents also expected their children to fulfil their religious duties, placing importance on *Jummah* [Friday prayer] and fasting during Ramadan. However, in relation to Islam, the expectations are for their sons too, not just for their daughters. Thus, it appears religious identities are created and reinforced by family:

> *"In our family, like here, if no one fast, that's it! My mum says 'read your namaaz and keep all your rozay* [fasts]*, at least do that'. Like, sometimes if my brother doesn't go to read Jummah, like the Friday prayer, she will go ballistic, saying that you don't read the others, at least get up for this one"* (R5, University student)

With age, there appears to be a change in parental expectations or a shift in power. Older respondents, who were now working or homemakers, noted that the parental expectations were more stringent when they were younger:

> *"When I was younger, it was always me against my dad, you know as in my parents. They had something else… they wanted us to behave in a certain way but you just… my dad would be like 'you need to act like a Pakistani girl… behave like a Pakistani girl, walk like a Pakistani girl, talk like a Pakistani girl'"* (R12, Homemaker)

Muslim parents had a preference to their daughters wearing the traditional *shalwaar kameez* [tunic and pants] rather than western clothing (Anwar, 1998). This was the case for Respondent 6, who makes reference to her parents' expectations of her. However, this is also referring to the past, indicating that her parents are now accepting of her choice not to wear traditional clothing:

> *"Well, I think initially my parents… as I say… they did think… well maybe… yeah they thought that I would have grown up to wear the traditional Asian clothing, like shalwaar kameez"* (R6, Worker)

<u>Restrictions</u>

Previous studies have found that Muslim females are more likely than males to have restrictions imposed on them (Anwar, 1998; Azam, 2006; Naidoo, 1984; Talbani and Hasanali, 2000). Younger respondents from the student categories spoke about restrictions more than those who were working or homemakers. Marcia (1980) suggests that late adolescence is a time where physical development, cognitive skills and social expectations coincide. According to Phinney's (1989) model of identity development, adolescents move from a

stage of unexamined ethnic identity, whereby they accept their ethnicity unquestioningly, to a stage of ethnic identity search in which they explore and seek understanding of their ethnicity. Thus, enabling a young person to discern their childhood identification and construct a viable path toward their adulthood. This could explain the younger women's compliance, whereby they are still in the process of forming their own identity separate from their parents. The following quote illustrates the restrictions imposed on the respondents:

> *"I'm not allowed to go out much; it'd be like a one-off thing. They wouldn't… they don't really like me going out a lot."* (R1, University student)

Respondent 3 explained how she doesn't have any restrictions, but then goes on to contradict this by naming many restrictions. It is possible that she doesn't see these as restrictions, rather as a normal part of her life. She attempts to explain that this is precautionary for her own safety rather than controlling, but then, albeit jokingly, hints exactly that:

> *"I have no restrictions, other than having to wear Asian clothes while at home. And if I'm going out with friends, I have to tell my parents' coz they always want to know where I'm going and who with… and have their consent. Erm… not in an over-protective way, just to make sure I'm safe I guess… and probably to make sure I'm not with any guys (laughs)."* (R3, 6th Form student)

Kassam (1997) found that Asian women were expected to comply by parents' prescribed roles and rules of behaviour in the home, and consequently, demanded more freedom inside the home (Ghuman, 1994). Respondents made comparisons between their immediate family and that of others close to them. Respondent 1 describes how she feels she has more restrictions placed on her than her cousins:

> *"Compared to like my dad's brothers and sisters, my dad's quite strict, so like my cousins – a lot of the stuff their allowed to do, I wouldn't be allowed to do it."* (R1, University student)

Some respondents didn't dispute parental authority and felt it was their obligation to follow their parents' rules, since they were bought up not to question their parents' actions, behaviours and decisions:

> *"I just listen to whatever my parents say and follow their rules. I never try to argue with them if I disagree with them because in my culture it is believed that whatever the parents say is always right."* (R4, 6th Form student)

Whereas other respondents cited their frustration and anger at having to ask for permission, but begrudgingly accepted that this was a part of their lives. Stophes-Roe and Cochran (1990) argued that young Asian girls do not enjoy life at home because their parents restrict their behaviour. However, this is a much too simplistic view, as Respondent 7 has previously been quoted as saying she felt more comfortable at home than work.

> *"It p*sses me off completely that I have to ask permission to do stuff, erm but that comes with part of the upbringing… of being Muslim."* (R7, Worker)

Balance

Home life and the family is key in moulding the identity of young people (Khan 1979), whereby values around cultural beliefs are transmitted by parents (Abu-Ali & Reisen, 1999). Respondents note that they still held dear the traditional values instilled by their parents, despite growing up in a western society. For example:

> *"I've grown up around English people but my parents have always instilled those values in me of what… not to an extent where it's really really strict like most Asian people have, but they have put those values that there's a boundary to how free you're allowed to be. And I've always kept them in my head."* (R7, Worker)

It is clear that family and religion play a part in shaping the identities of young British-Muslim women. Butler's (2001) research illustrates that "individuals display different and often competing cultural symbols, values and patterns of behaviour that can be appropriate at different times and within different contexts" (pg. 256). In the current study, it is apparent that respondents attempt to balance western influences with their parents' more traditional expectations, citing limits to expressing their identity at home:

> *"Like, home life, I can be me, I can be free, I can do what I want but there's a LIMIT."* (R5, University student)

Time outside of home allows the respondents to behave in ways which their parents may have considered deviating from traditional norms. Respondents were obedient and respectful at home, but unrestrained when socialising with friends. Bains and Johal (1998) refers to the notion of 'code-switching', where

individuals behave in one way when with their peers and another when with their families. Respondent felt they were free to be who they want with their friends, without any restrictions:

> *"But, when I'm with my friends, I can be wild! I can have a real laugh with them, we can talk about anything and everything and there are no restrictions."* (R5, University student)

In addition to the restrictions placed by parents, respondents spoke about the restrictions they place on themselves, staying within unspoken limits. The respondents felt that this shows respect and responsibility, without which, they would lose part of their family values. These comments illustrate that women are seeking to become active members of the western society, while retaining important aspects of their religious or cultural family values. The following quote is typical of many of the responses:

> *"I make most of the choices in my life myself… so I'm not told what to do and I live life the way I want to most of the time. But I still do it to within… I know my limits."* (R3, 6th Form student)

Young Muslim women are still aware of the family values and religious commitment. Thus, despite being given the freedom to socialise with friends, respondents still bear in mind that they have to be home at a 'respectable time':

> *"So although they will never give me a time to say 'make sure you come back for this time' erm, I won't come back at 1-2 o'clock in the morning… I wouldn't push my limits."* (R8, Worker)

> *"But there's still that… I still have in the back of my mind that there's a respectable time to be back home. Erm I think that is a cultural… and religious thing…you know to be home at a certain time."* (R6, Worker)

Basit (1997) found that Muslim girls understood western freedom and while some had freedom within limits; others did not and wanted more – however, not as much freedom as their White counterparts. The current study also found that respondents preferred having boundaries and gave importance to religious beliefs:

> *"But it's all about not pushing the boundary… and in a way, I prefer the fact that I've always known that there are certain limits…"* (R6, Worker)

> *"I think we should adapt to our environment, and I think I have. But it's important to hold on, I think, to your… your religion and being British as well."* (R8, Worker)

Previous literature suggests that habits and behaviours passed on by parents' contradict the individuality of their British-Muslim children (Khan, 1979), rendering them frustrated when they are unable to find a balance (Azam, 2006). Not only did the respondents in the current study prefer having boundaries, but felt it was imperative to balance religious values and morals with their British values:

> *"Erm, there's nothing wrong with being westernised… but there are boundaries. I mean, we can be modern and westernised but our values and morals are still there. So yeah, it's a balance"* (R8, Worker)

> *"I think I'm quite westernised, erm I accept the western culture quite a lot, but I know my limits, as to what makes… I keep my values and my morals there as well. Yeah, there's boundaries, but I accept the western culture."* (R7 Worker)

Young British-Muslim women try to strike a balance between the western society and home life, but admit it is not always easy to do so:

> *"… I don't even know. Like I try, it's hard to find balance*" (R1, University student)

Respondents acknowledge that it is difficult to balance if families are holding on to their traditions and cultural customs. It is noteworthy that, similar to previous quotes, this respondent also felt that culture rather than religion posed the problem. The pressures young British-Muslim women face of having to please the family as well as adapt to the western society:

> *"I think that's where the problem is, to get that balance, you find either people are really traditional and they hold on to the religious side of things… but even then I don't think it's religious; it's culture. And then you get others that have completely gone the other way, so I think it's hard. Sometimes, it's easier to adapt to a western society, than to get that balance. It's hard… it's hard to kind of… you want to tick the best of both world's without being disrespectful to either… and without being a hypocrite… or be seen as being a hypocrite."* (R8, Worker)

4.1.2 Social image

Extended Family

The traditional Muslim family is an extended one, often spanning three or more generations, including grandparents and elderly relatives. Dhami & Sheikh (2000) assert that Muslim extended families provide greater stability, coherence, love and support. It appears that extended family structure plays a significant part in the socialisation of respondents and influences their activities. Respondents specifically expressed relief that their extended family did not live nearby – it is noteworthy that respondents mention 'Pakistani mentality' or 'Asian families' that conflicted their beliefs rather than Islamic reasoning:

> *"My life at home is good… we live in* [place]*, it's about an hour away from my other aunties and uncles. Erm… which is good because we don't have that typical Pakistani mentality around us all the time, we can just live, and not worry about what other people are saying."* (R7, Worker)

> *"I think I've been quite lucky… where I live at the minute there's not that many Asian families, but I know in other areas of Leeds and Bradford where the families are quite close together, it could be difficult, everybody knows what you're doing… they know everything, so for them, I suppose it would be different. But I'm lucky, I get up on a morning, I do my own thing, I've got my life to lead… but I know there's* [sic] *people that are under a tremendous amount of pressure."* (R11, Homemaker)

There was, however, consideration for the extended family, with respondents not wanting to disrespect them. It appears that respondents feel they have to adapt to the many situations they face, be it family life, western society or extended family. Hall (1988) argues that identity is fluid and ever-changing and individuals are constantly positioning themselves; this could be seen where respondents noted having to adapt to appease extended family expectations:

> *"But with extended family, because some of them are a bit older, you do feel that you do have to adapt just so…. To keep them happy… not to keep them happy but you don't want to show them any disrespect."* (R8, Worker)

Muslim families see kinship as significant in maintaining group solidarity; however the behaviour of respondents appears to be regulated in some way, as a result being conscientious for the approval of extended family:

> *"…basically, going out wearing short clothes, for example, jeans t-shirt – what I'm wearing right now, something quite short. It would be frowned upon if my grandma ever saw it… or my uncle ever saw it."* (R7, Worker)

> *"When we go see family, I'll always wear the traditional stuff, and a few friends' houses I'll wear it – I'll always make sure I wear it because I feel… coz I know that their quite… backwards."* (R7, Worker)

Even if respondents' felt their immediate family had liberal values, special attention was given to appearances in front of extended family in a bid to protect the social image portrayed:

> *"If they* [extended family] *come around here, and if I've got my jeans and my long top on, I'll go upstairs and I'll put traditional clothes on. Just because I don't want to… I don't want to upset them. It's a respect thing… erm, so I do feel that sometimes you do adapt to suit other people…"* (R8, Worker)

> *"Like basically, I can wear like dresses, t-shirts and tops, like some days I can sit at home in t-shirt and like sweatpants all day or my night clothes. But when we get relatives over, then I'll change... ( ) into shalwaar kameez"* (R5, University student)

One respondent strongly felt that her extended family would have had an effect on her personality, and she would not be the person she is today, had they been nearby. This comment illustrates the effect of extended family on young British-Muslim women, whereby the family would be influenced to present their daughters as complying with traditional norms, and ultimately, effecting the identity of these young women:

> *"But yeah, if we did have family around us then we'd dress a lot differently, and act a lot more differently… I think I wouldn't be as much of a nutter as I am! I'd be restricted, in terms of the way I am and my personality would be completely different I think…. Kept under wraps a little bit more."* (R7, Worker)

However, Respondent 8 is adamant that she would never consider changing herself completely, and her extended family would have to eventually accept her western identity:

> *"…on little things I don't mind but I would never change my whole way of living for somebody else. If we lived a lot closer, then I'd probably, if I'm honest… they'd have to get used to me wearing my western clothes because I wouldn't do it all the time, just to please somebody else….it's too much effort really!"* (R8, Worker)

Deception

In August 2012, an article on BBC News told the story of a young British-born Muslim girl who leads a double life. It revealed that she felt suffocated by her overprotective parents, who worried that she would be corrupted by western influences. Consequently, she moved to university to get away from home and had a secret boyfriend. In the current study, respondents made reference to others who did lead double lives but were quite clear that they did not. Respondents believed that liberal family values had aided their autonomy:

> *"I don't change, I'm not… I don't lead a double life, where at work I've got one personality and then I come home and I switch into another personality… like some people do, like you know…a lot of people do that. I'm pretty much the same, erm… when I'm at work and when I do come home. But that's probably because my family is a bit more… liberal and a bit more westernised…"* (R8, Worker)

Although none of the respondents reported living a double life, they did describe some forms of deception used in order to protect the image they portrayed to their family. Some respondents felt compelled to conceal their behaviours or habits from their families. It can be seen from the following quote that respondents are very much aware of the importance of family honour:

> *"I was with one of my* [male] *friends and my dad was going to come pick me up and I thought it was my dad's car... so I was like 'that's my dad's car', and my mate just quickly like ran a mile, like he said, I don't want him to see… like I don't want him to see… you with a guy"* (R1, University student)

Inter-mixing of the sexes is prohibited in Islam (Basit, 1997), and Muslim families expect their daughters to behave appropriately (Afshar, 2005). In the current study it can be seen that respondents went to great lengths to avoid being discovered with their male friends. Thus, social image is not just what is portrayed to the extended family, but also to immediate family. For example:

> *"I wouldn't really talk about my guy friends at home and like... to my mum and dad. So I have to like…. Just if I see one of my guy friends, I have to just ignore them when I'm out with my mum"* (R1, University student)

> *"I have friends who are the opposite sex, who I talk to often and chill out with…. So… many Muslims would consider that a westernised thing. But I don't see anything wrong with that… I'm not doing anything wrong."* (R3, 6th Form student)

Earlier in the analysis, it was noted that keeping up appearances was important where extended family was concerned. However, it is apparent that this mindfulness was extended to the wider kinship network, whereby the family felt compelled to use deception to appear more traditional:

> *"I mean if someone elderly or some men come and I'm just sat there, my Mum would say or my Dad would say 'go get changed coz we're getting guests, you know we don't want them thinking oh gosh look at her, she's a scally sat at home, dressed like that'. So I'll go get changed, and erm put some shalwaar kameez on"* (R5, University student)

Biraderi

First generation migrant Muslims, largely organised in kinship-based communities, known as biraderi (Ghuman, 1994; Lewis, 2007; Ballard, 2002), sought an environment that will maintain and strengthen their cultural values. The biraderi not only provides support and identity but is also significant in maintaining cultural values, as well as regulating the behaviour of community members. Respondents' parents appeared to be conscious of their social image within the community:

> *"I think they are very conscious of the social aspect… so within the community. And erm, it's a respect factor… not just of what they think of others but what others think of them!" (R6, Worker)*

Hennink, et al (1999) noted that Asian women were acutely aware of the influence of community towards their behaviour. Respondents in the current study, who already felt the pressure of keeping the family honour, felt they were under greater pressure to perform to the expectations of the family in order to please the biraderi:

> *"I have experienced that… you know, having to please my family because they want to please the community or whatever."* (R10, Homemaker)

> *"…I have the responsibility of my whole family, keeping their respect and honour high in front of other people…"* (R4, 6th Form student)

Young Muslim women are seen as representing the 'public face' of their families and communities (Afshar, 2005), thus, many Muslim parents feel it is prudent to curtail their daughter's activities and encourage them to be seen to behave appropriately. It is implied that Muslim families are aware that family honour

may be tarnished if their daughter behaves in a manner contradictory to traditional expectations. This suggests that parents fear conflict in the biraderi and subsequent embarrassment. Respondent 2 spoke at length about the consequences of transgressing traditional customs and 'exposing' the community:

> "*I remember there was that show on… do you remember Muslim driving school? And there was a Muslim girl on there that my aunty knew… and she was telling me that after she did that documentary, people in her community were like 'you shouldn't have done that… and you've embarrassed yourself in front of everyone' because, apparently she got married and then… it was a forced marriage I think, and she didn't want to… she was telling everyone on telly and they were saying 'you shouldn't have done that' so it caused conflict with the community. So, she was being judged by the community… coz it kind of exposed it somehow, and they didn't like that."* (R2, University student)

Hennink et al (1999) suggests that the influence of community expectations on the behaviour of young Muslim women is most pronounced in close-knit communities. In the current study, respondents acknowledge that close-knit communities can be more restrictive. Respondent 2 also makes interesting comments in reference to the sinister side to biraderi and the dangerous repercussions of deviating from expectations. She mentions a highly publicised case of honour killing and relates it to parents' fear of being judged by the biraderi:

> *"…but with that girl Shafilea* ( ) *her parents didn't like it because they were stuck in their community values. You know what, I think her parents wouldn't mind… they just minded what other people say about her, because that was their daughter and what people in the community would say about her. But it goes back to what I was saying, if it's a close-knit community, you'd find there's more restrictions because of… repercussions or… being judged."* (R2, University student)

Therefore, it appears that parents want to give their daughter more freedom but were influenced by the opinion of people in the community, who worried about the consequences of excessive freedom and western influences. For example:

> *"I know with my family, especially my mum, she wanted to give us that freedom but in the same respect, she was kind of pressurised by other family members 'don't give your children too much freedom, don't let them do this, and they're going to be spoilt, they're going to become too western"* (R11, Homemaker)

Although parents and elders place importance on biraderi, for second generation British-Muslim women, biraderi has become less relevant. Similarly, Azam (2006) found that the relationship of younger women with the biraderi was not as close as their parents' relationship with it. Respondents acknowledged that their parents were considerate towards extended family and biraderi, but felt it was of less importance to them personally. Some of the thoughts can be seen in the following extracts:

> *"It's the society and 'what will people say' there's a lot of that. I don't think it affects… well, ( ) it doesn't affect my generation* ( ) *but I think my parents, my aunts, my grandma – they all say 'what will people say' and I think… it doesn't affect me."* (R11, Homemaker)

> *"The elders are always talking about what people will think of them or what people will say. I mean, I don't really get it, what does it matter?"* (R1, University student)

Respondents did not feel a cultural attachment to the biraderi nor that membership in the community, based on shared ethnicity or culture was sufficient reason to maintain a relationship or be mindful of their opinion:

> *"…sometimes….their* [parents'] *views on family members, like other family members. Like I very much appreciate and respect immediate family, and maintain the relationship… but with extended family members and people… like my parents would say keep an even keel with them and that… but I feel that if people don't make the effort then you shouldn't have the need to make more effort just because of your culture or the fact that you are an Asian."* (R6, Worker)

4.1.3 Change

Change in Muslim Families

Research by Modood (2003) suggests that cultural assimilation of ethnic minorities has not occurred. Respondents acknowledged that some Muslim families were stuck in their ways and still refused to integrate into western society:

> *"Some parents are like… they don't want to integrate – no, it's not their fault, it's just that they're used to it, they're comfortable with the way they've been and maybe they're scared of integrating into the western society."* (R2, University student)

However, respondents overwhelmingly felt that the lifestyles of Muslim families had undergone change, whereby they were adapting to British society:

> *"But I think over the last 10-15 years, things have changed a lot, for erm… the Pakistani community. They've changed an awful lot."* (R8, Worker)

> *"There's been so much change in the Pakistani community… we just didn't have it like this when I was younger."* (R11, Homemaker)

> *"But I think as more times gone on, we have become more and more westernised… more liberal."* (R8, Worker)

It was felt that it would take too much effort to fight against integration, and Butler (1995) suggests that new forms of ethnic identities were a reaction to passing of time and the inevitable mixing of cultures in society. One respondent notes:

> *"I think it's maybe adapting with the time…people have to adapt; otherwise we're constantly fighting with each other. I think people lose a lot of energy and they don't want to…" (R8, Worker)*

Change had been recognised towards an acceptance of westernised clothing. Respondents described how their family had once 'frowned upon' their western clothing, but over time, had come to accept it:

> *"…you know, my parents weren't happy with it* [wearing western clothes] *at the beginning… there wasn't arguments as such, but it was frowned upon and 'oh, you're wearing that?' and then it sort of became acceptable to them."* (R6, Worker)

Older respondents felt the difference between them and the younger women, even their own younger siblings. One respondent explains that when she was younger, her activities were heavily restricted by parents and expressed amazement that younger siblings were now allowed to socialise, albeit with a curfew. She also ponders if she pushed her parents for more freedom, would they have eventually relented. This further provides evidence that Muslim families are changing towards integration into western society:

> *"I mean for example, years back… if I talk about even myself and with my younger siblings – there's so much that they get away with and I think 'what the… where did we go wrong?' I mean, maybe we should have pushed for it a bit more. You know, for example, they have a curfew… what frigging curfew?! We came back from school and we were at home. So I'm like 'wow!'"* (R11, Homemaker)

Similarly, younger respondents also note that their older siblings had more restrictions imposed on them, but acknowledge that their parents are different now. Thus, strengthening the argument that change had occurred in Muslim families, which results in change for Muslim women:

> *"My parents aren't really strict, like my dad… he used to be, erm… more strict* [sic]*, probably when my sister was younger, it was different for her. But I think it's easier for me…"* (R3, 6th Form student)

Change for Muslim Women

Hennink et al (1999) suggest that the values and attitudes of young British Asian women will change in the future, whereby they will be less inclined to accept the values of their parents' generation. All of the respondents in the current study believed that the position of Muslim women in Britain was changing and there were significant contrasts between the first and second generation. They felt that Muslim women were becoming more independent, and many were choosing to stay in education or employment. Such changes suggest the traditional notions of women's role in Muslim families are waning:

> *"I think women are becoming a bit more independent* ( )*They want to do other things with their lives, and I don't know if they feel like they need to be valued a bit more and that's why they want to go out and get an education or go out and get a decent job"* (R8, Worker)

Respondent 8 reveals many interesting points, stating her belief that Muslim women are becoming more independent and career-minded. She reasoned that they felt the need to be valued more. She also considers whether young Muslim women are following the steps of the English community, choosing to build their careers first and to get married later. It can be seen that other respondents were also reporting Muslim women marrying 'late':

> *"I suppose it's a bit like the English community, where like now you have women, don't ya, who are having kids later and who have a career and then getting married and having kids. And they are balancing everything all at once, and maybe the Muslim women are now doing that, but we're just a bit behind, we're just maybe 10 years… 15 years behind. Well, maybe that's how we will become as well, I don't know."* (R8, Worker)

> *"My aunty is alright, she's like… I wouldn't mind having a life like hers… she got married at 34 and that's considered late!"* (R2, University student)

Some respondents felt that parents were no longer holding girls back or imposing restrictions on their socialising. However, as noted previously in the analysis, this is not the case for all, as some younger respondents reported restrictions on their socialising. In the case of one respondent:

> *"But it's not really an issue about me going out… nothing like 'oh you're a girl and you can't go out!'"* (R5, University student)

Respondent 7 was very pleased at her relationship with her parents and especially grateful for their trust. She felt that trust is a two-way concept and that the responsibility was on her to maintain the family values. It seems that there is a degree of flexibility, and parents trust their daughters' to 'do the right thing'. For one respondent:

> *"They're* [parents] *quite happy for me to be the way I am, and trust my judgements, and I think that a big part of it, trusting that your daughter's doing the right thing for herself and she's wearing the right clothes because she knows that's respectful. And they taught us from a young age, how to be, so they just trust us to maintain it. I think that's what it is."* (R7, Worker)

Similarly Respondent 3 agreed that parental trust was important. She valued being taught right from wrong by her parents, but also being allowed to make her own decisions. For these respondents, it appears their parents are neither too strict nor too liberal, thus allowing them the independence to make their own decisions:

> *"I do think that it's down to my parents that we have been brought up knowing what's right and what's wrong. And sort of… being left to our own devices… to make our own decisions."* (R6, Worker)

However, respondents were aware that not all Muslim women were in this position of independence and cited that close-knit communities, biraderi and power issues were holding them back:

> *"Where I used to live before, erm that was quite a close-knit community and they didn't like it when their wives were going out to do the school run and they didn't want their wives learning to drive. The wives wanted to better themselves and move forward, but they said no, there's no need. And I don't know whether that's because it gave them [wives] a bit of power and they [husbands] didn't want them to have the upper hand."* (R8, Worker)

Education for Daughters

Despite the pressure of judgement by the biraderi, in most cases, parents' aspirations for their daughters transcend regard for the opinion of others (Basit, 1997). In contrast to the commonly held assumption that parents did not allow young Muslim women to attain qualifications, respondents felt that the change in Muslim families had aided better educational opportunities for young Muslim women:

> *"A lot of people didn't like the idea of sending the daughters to uni… I know that things have changed now, but people don't want their daughters to go to uni… going back about 5-10 years, people didn't agree with stuff like that, but I think now people are like…wanting their daughters to have an education."* (R1, University student)

> *"I mean everyone in this day and age, everyone is all for education, whereas if you look at it… 10-15 years ago, it maybe wasn't encouraged as much – especially with girls."* (R11, Homemaker)

All of the respondents believed that education was becoming a high priority for Muslim families. Many parents were happy to allow their daughters to remain in education and respondents believed that parents no longer hold the view that daughters should not be educated:

> *"I mean, I want to go to university after I finish college, and my parents are happy with that… they want me to. So it's not like they think that daughters shouldn't be educated or whatever."* (R3, 6th Form student)

Previous research suggests that young Muslim women underachieve at school due to lack of family support. It was presumed that parents only allow daughters to study until compulsory schooling age before they make marriage arrangements. In the current study, respondents note that parents are allowing them the freedom to gain qualifications and become ready for marriage, rather than coerce them into it:

> *"So he's* [Dad] *like… first comes education, you have to stand up on your own two feet.* ( ) *all he wants from us to get a good education and see us stand on our own two feet… before we can go look after someone else and take responsibility for someone else… and responsibility of building a family, before we can do that, he wants to see that we're capable of it."* (R5, University student)

Azam (2006) found that there was an element of competition between parents and other families, thus increased parental support towards education. Although this was not implied by the respondents in the current study, it was clear that female members of the extended family attaining educational success influenced parents' decision in allowing their daughters to study. Thus, parents are not only willing to overlook any potential judgement from the community, but they also sought good examples of educated females within the community:

> *"Some of the girls in my extended family… my dad has seen that they've gone to university and done well for themselves. Maybe that's why…"* (R3, 6th Form student)

The general consensus among the respondents was that education was a major priority for young British-Muslim women and mostly, parents were supportive of this. Only one respondent noted being held back by her family. She got married in Pakistan after her second year of undergraduate study and returned to England to complete her degree. However, despite being accepted for a post-graduate course, she did not accept due to family pressure, instead moving to Pakistan for a year to live with her husband:

> *"I got accepted into York Uni for a post-grad course… but then my family didn't really want me to continue further. I went to Pakistan and stayed there, with my husband and his family for a year."* (R10, Homemaker)

Summary

In summary of the above theme, it can be seen that family life is influential in shaping identity of young British-Muslim women. Respondents are aware of the importance of the social image portrayed to extended family, thus can affect their sense of autonomy as a result. The imposition of restrictions and family expectations can lead to feelings of anger and frustration towards parents and respondents try to find a balance between home life and western society. There is a generational shift in attitudes towards the biraderi, with young Muslim women having limited contact compared to their parents. There has been a change in the lifestyles of Muslim families, allowing greater freedom for females,

as well as better educational opportunities. In turn, this has led to change for Muslim women, who are becoming more independent and career-minded.

4.2. Independence

The theme of 'Independence' explores the respondents' feelings of empowerment through education and employment, as well as freedom of choice on matters such as socialising, marriage, clothing and hijab. It is evident that western society has an influence on identity and respondents have varying views on western identities. Respondents attempt to make sense of where they belong, in order to be a part of society in the way they choose to, thus exercising their freedom to be who they are.

4.2.1. Empowered

Education

Extensive research has been carried out in the area of education for British-Muslim girls (Basit, 1997; Jawad and Benn, 2003; Ahmad, 2001). Jawad and Benn (2003) noted that education for females is viewed as a threat to the traditional customs and way of life of the Muslim community. The data in the current study demonstrates that respondents placed a great importance on educational success, perhaps as a consequence of parents change in attitude towards daughters' education. Thus, where it has previously been suggested that young British-Muslim women lacked motivation for educational success afflicted with thoughts of their impending arranged marriage (Modood et al, 1997), parental change towards education for daughters may explain the high importance the respondents place on education. Respondents felt empowered and viewed educational opportunities as a liberating, strong and positive force in integration in to the western society:

> *"… I have sisters who are highly educated, they've got into uni and done well, and gone on to pursue further… a sister who's working for a large law firm and a brother who's got a degree. So the mind-set is similar that education is important, being part of the western culture that we live in, is important."* (R6, Worker)

Jawad and Benn (2003) suggests that Muslim women are discouraged from continuing education, especially Higher Education. In this current study, six respondents (R1, R2, R3, R4, R5, and R9) were currently in further and higher education. One respondent (R10) had completed her degree in psychology, while the remaining respondents were educated to BTEC and A' Level standard.

> *"I'm a housewife....erm, And erm, I studied to university level, I studied* [degree title]*…"* (R10, Housewife)
>
> *"I'm 21, I'm in my first year… I'm studying* [degree title]*. Erm, I used to work as a dental nurse"* (R1, University student)
>
> *"I studied as far as college, BTEC national in business"* (R11, Homemaker)
>
> *"I did my A-levels, in psychology, sociology and English Lit*" (R12, Homemaker)

All respondents in this study were able to continue with post-16 education, which shows a marked difference from previous literature, where Muslim girls were identified as educational causes for concern due to their persistent under-representation in post-compulsory education (Rattansi, 1992; Shain 2002). It is clear that respondents not only desired to do well in education but had high personal aspirations for their future:

> *"I study at Huddersfield, erm…* [degree title] It just like… I don't know how to explain it… *just 'do well, get a job, earn your own money and stand on your own feet…' that kind of thing…"* (R2, University student)
>
> *"I am 16 years old and I'm from* [place]. *I'm currently studying my first year at college….Doing a BTEC business diploma level 3, which is equivalent to 2 a-level subjects* ( ) *I want to go to university after I finish college."* (R3, 6th Form student)

Young British-Muslim women are keen to continue education, thus representing the intergenerational differences in experiences between them and their parents. Many of whom have a much higher level of education than their parents. It seems young British-Muslim women are less willing to accept the traditional 'woman's role', thus, constructing their own identity separate from their traditional cultural norms. These young women are inspired to do well, not only by example of their White counterparts, but also other young Muslim women in their communities:

> *"Some of the girls in my extended family…* ( ) *they've gone to university and done well for themselves…"* (R3, 6th Form student)

Many respondents were encouraged by their parents to go to university and become independent in order to 'stand on your own two feet'. Thus, it seems that education is becoming increasing important for both young women and their parents. Similarly, Ahmad (2001) found that young women reported that their parents viewed higher education as an "absolute necessity" (pg. 143). One respondent notes:

> *"I'm in my final year of university, I'm studying* [degree title] ( ) …*Coz all three of us* [siblings] *are into our education, we're all in universities. One's in Bolton, one's in* [place] *and I'm in* [place]. *So he's* [Dad] *like… first comes education, you have to stand up on your own two feet."* (R5, University student)

> *"…All he* [Dad] *wants from us to get a good education and see us stand on our own two feet"* (R5, University student)

Ambitions

The respondents believe that young British-Muslim women had much higher aspirations than their mothers. They were keen to become more independent, to continue in education and build a career for themselves, often delaying marriage. It seems that living in Britain, gaining an education and building their careers had given young British-Muslim women greater confidence. An emphasis was placed on 'being valued' and wanting to do more with their lives. Studying and pursuing their careers was much more important to some than getting married. For example:

> *"I think women are becoming a bit more independent* ( )*They want to do other things with their lives, and I don't know if they feel like they need to be valued a bit more and that's why they want to go out and get an education or go out and get a decent job"* (R8, Worker)

> *And I think I'm quite ambitious, I want to do something with my life before I get married.* (R3, 6th Form student)

The data revealed that respondents were well educated and some were developing successful careers. For example, Respondent 6 worked for one of the largest energy providers in the UK and is currently handling a new project.

Respondent 7, who worked as a contract manager as well as training to be an accountant, hoped to remain with the company and move up in the hierarchy. Respondent 8 worked for the Police, as part of their counter-terrorism unit. Respondent 1 was working part-time as a receptionist in a dental clinic whilst studying at university for a combined honours degree and Respondent 12 made jewellery from home, and was also taking sewing classes. Some responses can be seen in the following excerpts:

> *"I'm currently employed full-time; I've been working for this large organisation for almost 3 years… it's one of THE largest energy providers in the UK. I'm working on a project… in smart homes… it's a fairly new department so it's exciting, there's lots going on there."* (R6, Worker)

> *"I'm studying* [degree title]*. Erm, I used to work as a dental nurse, but now I just work as a receptionist."* (R1, University student)

> *"I make jewellery… like, bracelets and necklaces in my spare time. I'm taking a sewing class at the moment… yesterday was the first class."* (R12, Homemaker)

The young women in this study are career minded and have different priorities to those of their parents. Respondents felt pleased with the jobs they were in and had high aspirations for building their careers:

> *"I'm training to be an accountant but I'm working as a contract manager. On top of that, I'm covering someone's maternity leave, which means that I've just had a pay rise recently (laughs)…..Which is good!* ( ) *I like working a bit too much, it's one of my downfalls, but wherever I work, I will fully commit myself. I want to go further within that same company, I'm not interested in moving anywhere else, I want to go further within my company.* (R7, Worker)

The respondents noted that their mothers often held traditional roles within the home. Thus, for them, being able to work and build their careers marked a significant change within the Muslim families' lifestyles. Furthermore, they felt that they were active members of the western society by joining the workforce, hence integrating into society. In addition, the general consensus was that the next generation would advance even further in terms of education and career progression. For example:

> *"Well, you know, my mother, she never worked and she's been a housewife for as long as I can remember – as long as SHE can probably remember, she's not had a job, so with me going out, integrating with the workforce, making my own friends, you know… meeting them after work, I think, even the next generation*

> *"is gonna be leaps and bounds in terms of better jobs, higher education erm we already have a massive breakthrough already with the amount of people that a progressing now from certain ethnic minorities and religions."* (R6, Worker)

Respondents felt they had ownership of their life, many using the term 'it was my decision' when describing their chosen career. Consequently, respondents had a feeling of empowerment and taking control of the decision in their lives. Respondent 6 explains how she had wanted to become a nurse but choose not to complete her education when she got a job and developed within the company. This suggests that young British-Muslim women have much more freedom of choice than previously presumed. As Respondent 6 commented:

> *"It was my decision, erm when I finished college… I wanted to get into something completely different to what I'm doing now. I wanted to get into medical work, erm maybe as a nurse, but at the time it felt like the right time to take a job… erm between the academic years. I managed to land myself a permanent role working for* [Company name]*, under one of the insurance companies there. And again, it developed quite fast… I got my teeth in… worked in quite a few projects there; erm was spotted quite quickly to progress…"* (R6, Worker)

4.2.2 Freedom of Choice

Socialising

Ghuman (1994) claimed that Asian girls do not have the same level of freedom as boys, and consequently demand more freedom (Basit, 1997; Din, 2001). Similarly, Hennink, et al (1999) found that females from Sikh and Muslim families were likely to have less freedom than their Hindu counterparts. It has been argued that the increased restrictions on daughters stemmed from fear of them being influenced or corrupted by western society (Brah, 1993; Mirza, 1992). In contrast, many respondents in the current study felt they had the freedom to make their own decisions and taking control of their lives. The following quotes are typical of many responses:

> *"The decisions I make or the actions I take is* [sic] *generally because I want to, not because I've been forced to…"* (R6, worker)

> *"I make most of the choices in my life myself… so I'm not told what to do and I live life the way I want to most of the time."* (R3, 6th Form student)

Despite asserting that they had the power to make the decisions in their lives, many respondents were considerate towards their parents, so as to not abuse their trust. Thus, the level of freedom, perhaps, is dependent on the level of trust and understanding between the young women and their parents:

> *"It is my own decision, where I go and what time I come back is my own decision. But at the same time, I wouldn't disrespect my parents, my mum and dad."* (R8, Worker)

Despite the restrictions cited previously in the analysis, many respondents felt they had the freedom to socialise without pressures from parents. For example:

> *"But erm… if I wanna go out, I can go out, she's* [Mum] *not bothered about it being mixed – guys and girls. I mean, it's quite laid back… when we went prom, we came back late, and that was all mixed."* (R2, University student)

> *"…say if there's a birthday party, I'll say to my Mum that there's a birthday party coming up and I'm gonna go, they'll be like 'fine'"* (R5, University student)

It has previously been noted in the analysis that Muslim families' lifestyles are changing towards education for daughters. It appears that they are adapting to western society, insofar as allowing their daughters to go abroad on holiday. Respondent 5 describes how she was apprehensive about asking her parents to allow her to go to Spain, and expressed her surprise when they agreed. She feels that the only thing that had prevented her from 'staying out' previously was merely that she had never asked:

> *"Coz I guess I've never really asked them like, if I can go out… to stay…* ( ) *so I thought for the holiday, am I not pushing it? But they were ok with it, they were fine and I got to go. So I'm thinking it's the same thing, if I said to them that we're going to have a girls day out, like a weekend out and us girls are going – they'd be fine with it."* (R5, University student)

Another respondent similarly noted that her parents would possibly allow her to socialise with friends but she does not often ask them. It is interesting that even when respondents felt their parents had liberal values and would allow them freedom, the respondents themselves did not want to 'rock the boat'.

> *"I do go out with them* [friends] *outside of college, but like I said, I have to ask my parents' permission… and not that they would say 'no'… I just don't ask that often."* (R3, 6th Form student)

Only one respondent stated that her parents have a major role in the decision-making in her life. She goes as far as saying that if her parents disapproved of her decision, then she would 'have' to follow their advice, almost unquestioningly:

> *"Traditionally I would have to ask my parents before making any decisions in my life… any major decisions… because in my family we consider parents opinion before our own opinions, if they do not appreciate or if they dislike our choice then I would have to follow what would they advise me"* (R4, 6th Form student)

Marriage

For some young Muslims, marriage is the usual way to establish freedom from parental authority (Basit, 1997). The high prevalence rates indicate that arranged and/or consanguineous marriages are a cultural preference among many Muslims (Shaw, 2000). The assumption is that young Muslim girls will have an arranged marriage, however the words 'arranged' and 'forced' are often used interchangeably by many. Basit (1997) comments that many of the young women in her study favoured arranged marriages. In the current study the women's opinions on arranged marriage differed, with some believing that arranged marriages were much more successful than 'love' marriages:

> *"I think you have more chance of an arranged marriage working than a love marriage… just from my experience."* (R6, Worker)

Several respondents mentioned that their family did instigate their meeting with potential partners, indicating not only that there was plenty of choice for the young women, but also that their parents had consulted with them and sought their consent. This implies that arranged marriages are closer to the western notion of 'match making'. For example:

> *"Yeah my family did have an influence on that* [marriage] *erm it was, loosely termed, arranged marriage. We were both introduced as potential partners to see where its goes from there. And we did speak and get to know each other for about a year. Erm… so yes, they did arrange it… but it was all with the thumbs up from me."* (R6, Worker)

Previous studies have found that many young Muslims rejected the idea of marrying to someone from their parent's country of origin, citing practical reasons, such as language and communication problems (Anwar, 1998). The

current study has demonstrated a different picture, whereby young British-Muslim women were open to the idea of marriage to someone from Pakistan, providing they were consulted and gave consent:

> *"I wanted to get married to my husband, they* [family] *didn't force me or anything (laughs). It was arranged… but I had met him and I liked him* ( ) *I went to Pakistan with my family and got married. I came back and completed my third year of uni and graduated"* (R10, Homemaker)

Respondent 11 gave an interesting perspective, not only did she herself choose her marriage partner from Pakistan, but her parents had discouraged her, believing she was too young at 17. She returned to Pakistan some years later and married her chosen partner. This goes against the presumption that young Muslim girls are taken to Pakistan, where their parents actively encourage them to marry. What she says in the following excerpt shows that she was an active member in the consultation of the arranged marriage and exercised her right to individual choice:

> *"Yes I'm married… erm, I went to Pakistan in 1996 and I met* [husband] *there and yes I did want to marry him but my mum wasn't too keen on the idea if I'm honest with you. At that point, I knew I wanted to marry him but I got talked out of it, believe it or not, by my parents. Normally most Pakistani parents would say 'yes please!' (laughs) but I got talked out of it and we came back. And then we went back after so many years and I still felt the same, although at that point… I mean '96, what was I… 17 or something, so mum was like 'what, are you crazy?!' but in 1999 I went back and finally got married to him."* (R11, Homemaker)

Modood et al (1997) suggest that many young British-Muslim women saw an arranged marriage as inevitable and had negative opinions on the matter. Although respondent 3 did not necessarily view arranged marriage as negative, she did see it as inevitable:

> *"I think probably that my parents want… they would probably find someone who they think is suitable."* (R3, 6th Form student)

It is clear that many young Muslim women support the notion of arranged marriages. However, other respondents wanted to choose their marriage partners, but were acutely aware of their parents' disapproval, as the potential partner had to fit their criteria. Respondent 1 mentions caste, indicating that to transgress traditional norms and marry out of caste would potentially cause judgement from the biraderi:

> *"There's like erm, my dad, he wouldn't… I don't think he would allow me to marry someone I'd chosen myself.* ( ) *But my grandma did say to me like, if I find someone, she'll be ok with it… as long as he was like Pakistani and same caste!"* (R1, University student)

The caste system, developed in India, is very complex and especially in relation to marriage. Some respondents reported tremendous change in the Muslim families in relation to caste, seeing it as a declining trend:

> *"…there are a lot of different changes that have come about, some are quite subtle and some are in your face. Like with marriage out of culture,* ( )*… sorry, out of caste, I don't know if that is relevant to you, but so many years back that was taboo – no way! And these days, I mean… we've come a long way."* (R11, Homemaker)

Some respondents noted that change had also come in their parents attitudes to arranged marriages, with young women having far more freedom. It is not clear as to what may have caused this change, and Azam (2006) suggests this could be an almost forced acceptance to match their children's more liberal values. Respondent 5 explains that although her elder sisters had arranged marriages, her parents are now more open to their daughters choosing their marriage partners:

> *"With my sisters it was like an arranged marriage but they got to choose… so my dad gave them a few options and they chose who they wanted to marry* ( ) *But it's just the fact that… there's no advantage to arranged marriages and especially the fact that… when families have that image in their head that their kids are going to get married from back home, from Pakistan, they're going to get married to our relatives in Pakistan. My Dad, he hasn't got that image anymore – he's like "wherever they say, I'll do it, as long as he's Muslim, that's fine."* (R5, University student)

Separation and divorce was another area that had undergone change, with Muslim women now having much more freedom of choice. First generation women had tended to stay with their husbands, and those who left were isolated and shunned by the family or biraderi (Jawad and Benn, 2003). In contrast, the current study illustrates that young British-Muslim women are finding it easier to separate from or divorce their husbands, and received support from their families. One respondent comments:

> *"I'm separated from my husband so I'm back at home now, with my parents, which is a nice shock to the system (laughs)… but its ok."* (R8, Worker)

Clothing/Hijab

The hijab [headscarf] is a simple item of clothing that can provoke many feelings, and has become the source of controversy (Hancock, 2008). Media discourses often focus on female attire to present Muslim women as oppressed, passive victims of traditional patriarchy (Meer, Dwyer and Modood, 2010), who are pressured or 'brainwashed' into wearing the hijab. However, the current research found that young British-Muslim women, regardless of whether they wore the hijab or not, felt neither oppressed nor pressured into wearing it. The sample comprised of an even split, with half the respondents [R1, R2, R4, R9, R10 and R12] wearing the hijab. The data illustrates that these women chose to wear the hijab, thus exercising their freedom of choice and felt it was an expression of their individual identities. Respondent 10 emphasises that it was her decision, choosing to present herself within a religious context:

> *"I decided to wear a hijab because that is what a Muslim woman has to wear… if I don't wear it then how does it show I am Muslim to others?* ( ) *I wear it to express my own identity."* (R10, Homemaker)

Similarly, Respondent 4 commented that the hijab was a personal choice for her to abide by her religion. She believes that young women are required to cover up in order to fulfil their religious duties. However, she feels that wearing the hijab does not change her identity, thus women wearing the hijab still feel they can express their individual identities:

> *"I chose to wear the hijab because of my religion. In Islam it is a rule that all girls should cover their hair.* ( ) *But it's not like… Wearing the hijab does not change my identity from who I really am…you know, I say and do the same things that I used to do before I started wearing the hijab."* (R4, 6th Form student)

In May 2012 The Guardian published an article on the misunderstanding about how women relate to their hijab. The author (Takolia, 2012), who herself was a Muslim woman, rejected societal expectations of sexualising women and for her the hijab was political, feminist and empowering. Respondents in the current study felt that hijab was liberating, in that it shows others their right to choose how they wish to dress, rather than conforming to other peoples' expectations.

Respondent 10 notes that the majority of women who wore the hijab did so for their own reasons and were not forced into it:

> *"My view is that the hijab shows people that you can dress how you want, not how others want you to dress. Basically, you should be able to do what you want, and if I want to wear the hijab then that's my choice. In my experience, most women who wear the hijab wear it for that reason… coz they want to, not because they are forced into it or whatever."* (R10, Homemaker)

It can be seen that young women felt the hijab was worn out of personal choice and none of the respondents stated it was enforced upon them by family. However, one respondent recalls being judged by her peers when she was younger for not wearing the hijab, which ultimately may have formed her decision to wear it. Albeit, she comments that now she feels comfortable in wearing it and would not take it off:

> *"We were in year 5 and all my friends used to wear it* [hijab]*, and they all called me a Shaitan* [Satan] *because I didn't wear it. And even the boys used to come mess my hair and everything as a joke. And then, one Ramadan I just decided to put it on… maybe not because of my friends, but after that I left it on. And now I just wouldn't take it off."* (R2, University student)

On the issue of dress, Respondent 9 was the only one to wear *abaya* [long outer-garment], again, citing religious reasons. This young woman felt that her religion had influenced her decision and formed her identity:

> *"I wear an abaya* [long, outer-garment] *to school because I prefer to be covered and not wear tight clothing because it's against my religion. That's my choice…because I am a Muslim and that's just how it's got to be."* (R9, 6th Form student)

For the respondents who did not wear a hijab, they noted that they did not feel pressured by family or peers. Each felt it would be solely their decision, if and when they chose to wear it:

> *"I don't think I'd ever be influenced or have that peer pressure put on me. ( ) If I make the decision that I need to wear it or I should wear it, then that would be solely based on my mind… my own decision."* (R6, Worker)

> *"A few of my friends wear the hijab and they are comfortable with wearing it. But that doesn't really…pressure me into wearing it coz I reckon once I'm ready to commit to it, that's when the time is right."* (R3, 6th Form student)

> *"If I was to wear it, I'd wear it for me; I wouldn't wear it for anybody else."* (R8, Worker)

Respondent 7 makes interesting comments about her interpretation of modesty in relation to religion. She explains that she feels dressing 'decently' is sufficient and she would not be true to herself if she wore the hijab. Thus, it substantiates the argument that dress constitutes a personal choice:

> *"I don't come across in a provocative manner myself… I'm alright, I'm decent… I don't think I need a hijab (laughs)* ( ) *the way I dress is considered to be modest anyway. Nobody looks at… and I know it defeats the object, Islam says you should be completely covered, but I just don't feel the need – it's just not me as a person."* (R7, Worker)

Freedom of choice seems to go beyond choice to wear the hijab or not. Respondents expressed their right to decide their attire, thus, contradicting previous research which suggests parents pressured daughters to wear shalwaar kameez. One respondent comments that her body shape had ultimately formed her choice of dress, nonetheless, it was still her decision what she chose to wear, rather than any family pressures:

> *"So yeah, I dress respectably – even at work if I wear a short top, if I am wearing a short top, I'll be wearing baggy trousers, work trousers that are quite baggy. So I always keep that… nothing is ever tight on me, if one bits tight then the other bits baggy. But that's my own personal choice, because I don't like the shape of my backside. So I think if I was a bit sexier, I'd be a bit more wilder* [sic] *(laughs)."* (R7, Worker)

For some of these young women, the right to choose their attire was especially beneficial. They felt privileged to be able to experience both western and traditional values. Thus, reinstating the point that these young women had multiple identities formed by both cultures, rather than cultural outsider stubbornly refusing to integrate into British society (Meer, Dwyer and Modood, 2010). For example:

> *"And I do like wearing those as well* [shalwaar kameez] *when obviously the occasion arises* (…) *it is almost… a privilege… to be able to… to flitter between the two!"* (R6, Worker)

Respondent 3 wore the traditional shalwaar kameez when at home as this was her parent's preference. However, she wore more western clothing while at college, not only to express her right to individual choice, but also to fit in with her peers:

> *"At home my parents want me to wear Asian clothes ( ) At college, it's my choice to wear western clothes… I decide what to buy and what to wear… I mean you can say they influence a little bit coz I would make sure that my clothes are modest. But then, that's me as well, not just them."* (R3, 6th Form student)

4.2.3 Self

Belonging

It is claimed that clothing is relevant to how the self is presented and understood in different social contexts (Crane and Bovone, 2006). However, Ryan (2011) argues that clothing is just one means through which gender and religious values are perceived. The data in the current study revealed that respondents felt experiences of life in Britain and western influences were factors for wanting to fit in with their peers:

> "*But…living in Britain and watching others follow the western culture is an influence…I guess you want to fit in with everyone else."* (R3, 6th Form student)

Respondents' description of wearing traditional *shalwaar kameez* had connotations of fear of judgement and isolation. Some respondents were happy to wear traditional clothing at home, as they were surrounded by family members wearing similar clothes. However, respondents felt they would be out of place if they wore that when at university or socialising. Respondent 1 uses the word 'freshie' which derives from the term 'fresh off the boat' referring to someone (usually south Asian) who is new to the country. So it appears that respondents placed importance on emphasising their British identity when outside of the home environment through something seemingly superficial, like clothing:

> *"…there's a fear of being judged. I do, I wear it, shalwaar kameez at home but I don't really wear it when I come to uni or when I go out coz I just think people are gonna… you do… you feel like a freshie walking around in shalwaar kameez."* (R1, University student)

> *"Wearing Asian clothes at home is my parent's choice but… I don't have any objection to it as most of my relatives, family members and friends wear Asian clothes, so I feel comfortable wearing them... I don't stand out from everyone else."* (R3, 6th Form student)

Interestingly, respondents who were now in employment also mention dressing to fit in with other people in the past. But as they have grown older and formed their identity, they feel less pressure to dress to please others. However, these respondents were those who were free to dress how they wish at home or outside of home, so it could be argued that their confidence stems from this independence:

> *"So before, when I was a teenager, I did used to wear things that maybe they used to wear, just because I didn't want to be seen as maybe being different."* (R8, Worker)

> *"But as I've grown older, and got into college and found my own identity, I wore clothes I thought I would fit in with people… how I would feel comfortable, I think that's the most important thing now. When I dress, I make a conscious note to dress for my comfort rather than to please others…"* (R6, Worker)

Respondent 3 explains her choice to wear western clothing to college, in order to fit it. Thus, strengthening the argument that fitting in and belonging to western society is important to these young women:

> *"But wearing western clothes to college is my choice; I guess it makes me feel like I fit in more with others."* (R3, 6th Form student)

However, she acknowledges that wearing western clothes does not make someone 'westernised'. It is apparent that the superficial issue here is dress, but the deeper matter is an acceptance by western society of the respondents' British identity:

> *"But I don't think that's it… it's more than just what you wear. Someone can come here from Pakistan and just wearing western clothes isn't going to make them westernised."* (R3, 6th Form student)

The respondents discuss issues of belonging and nationality and what meaning these concepts hold for them. Nandi (2012) contests the assumption that Muslims struggle with their British identity and divided loyalties. Her research found that Muslims identified with Britishness more than any other Britons and expressed a stronger sense of belonging in Britain than their compatriots. Similarly, Respondents in the current study felt they belonged in Britain:

> *You're born and bred here, at the end of the day.* (R7, Worker)

Dosanjh and Ghuman (1998) suggest that the second generation in Britain "are increasingly prone to question traditional values…" (pg.19). Respondent 8 remarks that the young generation who are born and bred in England should adapt to their surroundings since they belong here, not in their parents' country of origin. She emphasises her British identity and feels England is her home:

> *"…at the end of the day like, we live in England… our generation are born and bred here, so we shouldn't have to be living as though we're from another country… because we're from this country, so we should integrate into the community... like, we're British, coz… we ARE British at the end of the day."* (R8, Worker)

Previous literature has suggested that Muslims are more likely to segregate themselves from mainstream society in a bid to find their own identity (Bhatti, 1978). This current study found that young British-Muslim women felt a sense of pride at having been educated and integrated into western society. Thus, they do not wish to be segregated from mainstream society, rather they felt an integral part of it:

> *"…the second-generation in the UK and… erm we are educated, we speak English, we're able to communicate, we're able to integrate with people from different cultures and… integrate with our white counterparts… people from the western culture."* (R6, Worker)

These young women felt they had changed their lifestyles and believed it was important and necessary to adapt to some of the British cultural values. However, this did not mean they would abandon their religious values, as the majority of respondents placed a similar level of importance on being Muslim. Consequently, these young women felt comfortable with mixing religious values and British culture, which they utilised in different ways and in different contexts:

> *And we've adapted to all the different traditions and everything else that we go through here, in England, as British-Muslims.* (R11, Homemaker)

> *You can still be British and wear western clothes AND wear the hijab.* (R8, Worker)

The data revealed that the respondents felt a strong sense of belonging, stemmed from keeping up-to-date with the current and political affairs in England. One respondent referred to England as 'my country', thus reinforcing her sense of belonging to her country of birth:

> *"If some women are typical or backwards* ( ) *Well I'm not like that, I know what's happening, and I'm in tune with what's happening with MY country and the rest of the world".* **By 'my country' you mean…?** *"England!"* (R11, Homemaker)

Respondent 2 made interesting comments about the difference between being *legally* British and *socially* British. It is apparent that being born in Britain and experiencing the culture was thought to be more influential on British identity, rather than simply having a British status:

> *"…nowadays British means… because Britain is so multicultural, anyone can be British. You can come from… you've come from Pakistan and 5 years later, you're legally British. It depends on if you mean legally British or socially British."* (R2, University student)

Another respondent also comments on this difference. Respondent 4 came to England at a young age and despite being confirmed as a British citizen, she did not feel British. Thus, social experiences of western society are paramount in forming a British identity:

> *"My original birthplace was in Pakistan, I came to England when I was 11 years old…. So even though I am confirmed as a British citizen, I still sometimes… I sometimes find it kind of difficult to say I am a British and find it hard to fit in with western people."* (R4, 6th Form student)

Basit (1997) concluded that British-Muslim women are still commitment to their religion, regardless of how 'westernised' they may be in appearance and speech. In the current study, while the majority of women prioritised their British identity, some respondents emphasised their religious identity. The comments illustrate that Muslim identity took priority as it provided a universal sense of belonging, which was not dependent on allegiance to a particular country or place. Some of the thoughts can be seen in the following extracts:

> *"I am a British-Muslim woman. British because I was born here…but to be honest, I could have been born anywhere… that's irrelevant. I would have still been Muslim though. That's what I have to remember."* (R9, 6th Form student)

> *"I would say British-Muslim, but that doesn't mean I put British first, it just makes sense to say "British-Muslim". Obviously I'm always going to be a Muslim, because it doesn't matter where I go, I'm still going to be a Muslim. I guess religion is with you and then, the other part is wherever you are… that's just location."* (R2, University student)

> *"I'm Muslim first, and then I'm British. I'm British by default, because of the place I was born*." (R5, University student)

Interestingly, none of the respondents mentioned their *cultural* heritage as part of their identity. This is similar to previous findings that many young British Asians saw themselves as British and not Pakistani (Modood et al, 1997; Din, 2001). It can be seen that even the respondent who was born and raised in Pakistan until she was 11 years old, described herself as:

> *"I consider myself as a Muslim woman…"* (R4, 6th Form student)

It is clear that the majority of respondents feel a strong sense of belonging and consider Britain as their home. Conversely, respondents were also frustrated at feeling as though they are not accepted by the mainstream society. Respondent 11 spoke at length about belonging and it is clear that she considers England as 'her country'. However, she also feels frustrated at discrimination and stereotypes about Muslims, which perhaps prevent her from being accepted. Thus, her identity and sense of belonging are being dictated by how others perceive her identity:

> *"It's not right, because I feel this country is as much mine as it is anyone else's, and then for something like that, it's almost like they don't want you… you always get blamed for everything."* (R11, Homemaker)

> *"I consider myself as a British-Muslim and I feel as though no matter what you do… obviously this is my country, I feel as though it's my country, but you're never going to be accepted. And then, that's hard to sometimes get your head around. Like, we're born and bred here, and to me it feels like it's mine… but it's never gonna be. At times, when you keep being labelled and you feel, no matter what you do, it's never gonna be. And then, I certainly don't believe that I belong is Pakistan, where my parents have come from… and then, when I think about it, if I'm not accepted here, where on earth do I belong?"* (R11, Homemaker)

Similarly, Respondent 2 makes comments about being accepted. She notes that she can try to fit in and act as western as possible, but her religious and cultural differences will still prevent her from being accepted. So, it appears that respondents' place importance not only on their own feelings of belonging but also of their British identity being accepted in western society:

> *"I can say I'm westernised as much as I want, but at the end of the day, they're going to see me as an Asian… They're not going to see me as a western person. Like I can go out and do whatever they want me to do… I can act as western as I want, but at the end of the day, I'm still going to be different."* (R2, University student)

It is interesting that respondents specifically mention that they don't consider themselves 'English' and none used the word when describing themselves, instead choosing 'British'. The general belief was that the word 'English' would only be used to describe white individuals. The 2007 Annual Population Survey (Office for National Statistics, 2009) reported that a third of Whites consider their nationality as 'English', but the majority of non-whites identify as 'British'. One possible reason for this may be the ethnic group options on the census in England and Wales, which do not offer non-white ethnic groups the option of choosing 'English' as part of their ethnic group. The categories class them as 'Black British' or 'Asian British', rather than 'Black English' or 'Asian English'. Respondents' views can be seen in the following extracts:

> *"I wouldn't consider myself to be English, even though we have been bought up here and we are English. No, I think I'm British and that's as far as it goes. You're not accepted as either… you're not accepted as an English person, and you go to Pakistan and you're not accepted as a Pakistani.*" (R7, Worker)

> *"Nah, I consider myself to be British, the truth is, you ARE English, but you're never gonna be accepted as being an English person, because to be an English person, it means being White. I'm comfortable saying 'I'm British'."* (R7, Worker)

> *"I wouldn't call myself English, because I'm not English…if someone said they're English, I'd think they're Caucasian. So I wouldn't say I was… I'd say I was British, not English."* (R2, University student)

<u>Westernised</u>

Respondents' comments regarding what they consider 'westernised' raised many interesting points. The complexity of identity can be seen in the many conflicting responses each respondent gave on what they thought is meant by 'westernised' and whether they considered themselves as westernised. Respondents were keen to point out that their idea of westernised was different compared to their parents and elders, who viewed even socialising as westernised:

> *"I don't know, like my grandma, she'll talk about people….like so-and-so is so westernised, just because they go out but there's nothing wrong with doing stuff like that."* (R1, University student)

As noted previously, it is apparent that Muslim parents preferred attire for their daughters is traditional clothing. As such, they viewed people who wear western clothing as being westernised, thus having more freedom and being more modern. It is implied that parents and elders view being 'westernised' as negative:

> *"As from Muslims' point of view… they think being westernised is when people wear western clothes like jeans or tops or whatever coz wearing stuff like that is in the western culture. You do, you hear people say it "oh, so-and-so is so westernised because she wears jeans".* (R3, 6th Form student)

Respondents acknowledge that being westernised is beyond clothing, however, admit that it is difficult not to make assumptions based on how someone is dressed.

> *"Yeah, being westernised is beyond clothing… but the first thing you see is the way someone looks or the way they dress and you just like make judgements… like assumptions that they're more traditional."* (R1, University student)

Another respondent agreed that being westernised is beyond clothing and believed that disobeying parents, drinking alcohol and inter-mixing of the sexes was considered westernised. Thus, respondents' concepts of westernised were seemingly different from being British:

> *"But I don't think that's it… it's more than just what you wear.* ( ) *I think… Not obeying what your parents say … or not following the traditions they want you to follow is westernised. I guess… some Muslims consider being westernised is… talking to the opposite sex without any relations, as in Islam it is forbidden. Going out late night, drinking alcohol and partying… that's a western thing"* (R3, 6th Form student)

> *"My thoughts on the western identity are negative, really. Mainly due to the fact that western people always make their own decisions and do whatever they want, even if their parents don't want them to do something… ( ) And another thing… some western clothing is too revealing which people wear and walk around in the society, which in my opinion is shameful."* (R3, 6th Form student)

Hinnink et al (1999) found that despite being more accepting of ideas such as mixed sex socialising, young British Asian women still viewed notions such as developing relationships and premarital sex as westernised and unacceptable. The current study found similar views, whereby respondents believed that western people lacked moral values:

> *"For me, westernised is out clubbing, drinking and all that, I think. Wearing western clothes… you can't be westernised just from wearing westernised clothes, ok it may be part of it, but it's not just that. It's the whole mentality, isn't it? Yeah, western might be educated, driven, ambitious and all that. I see westernised people… and it's all… going out, clubbing, drinking… having partners… coz that is not part of… and also that carefree attitude, whether it's your mum, dad whoever… everyone is leading their own lives."* (R11, Homemaker)

> *"I think… to be western… or to have a western identity is… I think a MASSIVE part of the western culture is the socialising, by that I mean going out, drinking, going clubbing, smoking and erm the mixing of the sexes… and having relationships – cohabitating. I think that's very much the western culture."* (R6, Worker)

> *"When someone uses the word westernised (…) erm, it's just that whole mentality isn't it… going out, drinking alcohol, partying, sex and all that."* (R9, 6th Form student)

Respondents' ideas of 'westernised' also include people trying to fit in with western society, thus contradicting earlier comments that respondents actively wanted to fit in and belong to the mainstream society. The paradox is that respondents wanted to be recognised as British, without conforming to negative aspects of being westernised:

> *"…being westernised is someone who fits into the western society…. So, follows their traditions… or their erm… way of life. Like going out, and drinking and all that… that's westernised."* (R10, Homemaker)

Conversely, some respondents saw the positive aspects of being westernised, claiming that westernised was not just drinking alcohol and partying, but can be a state of mind and free-thinking:

> *"But I think westernised is more than that. The way you think can be westernised even without the drinking... partying and blah blah. Like if you're free-thinking and open-minded… that can be westernised."* (R10, Homemaker)

Moreover, one respondent made clear distinctions between her parent's culture, claiming herself to belong to British culture and gave importance to education and socialising, in order to better integrate:

> *"Well for me, being western is more to do with mentality. I mean people can have modern things but still be backwards… so not really about being modern. It is clothes and education and socialising outside of family… but erm, it more a state of mind. It's about your views I guess. Like, we were born and bred in this country so we have to integrate, that doesn't mean forget your heritage, but that culture is your parents' culture and this is ours."* (R8, Worker)

Respondent 6 pointed out the positive aspects of being westernised is the opportunity to 'be your own person' and having the freedom to make your own decisions. She makes comparisons to young women living in Pakistan, who perhaps do not have such luxuries of individual choice:

> *"So I think westernised, for me… is that you can be your own person here, where we can wear western clothes if you want or wear traditional clothes if you wants… erm, we have that freedom to make your own choices in life, that maybe women in Pakistan don't, if they WANT to be western." (R6, Worker)*

Thus, it appears that the freedom that comes with living in a western society and being westernised is seen as beneficial, with respondents acknowledging that they can still be westernised in their thinking, even if they opt for traditional attire. Therefore, these young women, whilst respecting the western cultures, are not compromising their own religious needs and fulfilments and, whilst being individual, are integrating well into mainstream society:

> *"I think being westernised is personality, obviously yeah, dress sense as well, but that doesn't really matter. I think your personality. I'm westernised, but I wear a hijab and I wear an abaaya (body cover). But that's my mentality that I feel as if I'm British… so, I'm open-minded to stuff."* (R12, Homemaker)

> *"I AM westernised, that is my version of being westernised, it's the way I currently am. I'm a westernised person, but I don't forget who I am, and I don't forget the values that I've been taught."* (R7, Worker)

Respondents agreed that it is important and necessary to adapt and integrate into western society. However, they emphasised that this is possible without losing their religious identities. Thus, they were creating a new identity for themselves which encompass religious values as well as their experiences of western society. For example:

> *"It's completely fair and normal to try and fit into western society and make your own identity a bit more westernised, however, to me it should not be so into the Western identity that you end up forgetting your own identity for example your identity as a Muslim or Pakistani."* (R10, Homemaker)

These comments illustrate the complexity of identity and the range of experiences that can influence identity negotiation for young British-Muslim women.

National Identity

Identity is a complex and sensitive issue, which can be seen in a study carried out by Ryan, Kofman and Banfi (2009) found that the majority of participants used hyphenated categories such as 'British-Muslim' to capture the complexity and multifaceted nature of their identities. In the current study, the majority of respondents combined nationality with religion. For example:

> *"I'm British… and a Muslim"* (R11, Homemaker)

The data revealed that the women in this study are proficient at creating and combining multiple identities derived from religious values, western influences and their own aspirations. Respondents regarded religion and nationality equally important and use both to describe themselves. Interestingly, respondents did not describe themselves using their parents' country of origin:

> *"… I would describe myself as a British-Muslim women as I was born here, which makes me British. I may follow some of my parent's traditions and culture but that does not make me any less of a British citizen."* (R3, 6th Form student)

As testament to the complex issue of identity, it can be seen that some respondents struggled to form a simple answer when asked to describe themselves. One respondent argued that it was difficult to describe yourself, noting the challenges of maintaining a religious identity when living in a western society:

> *"It's hard trying to describe yourself… you can't… like coz you're a bit of everything… you're British and you've got… so, it's hard when I'm trying to be religious and wear… where you live prevents you coz like you want to dress a certain way and want to fit in with that society but you can't!"* (R1, University student)

Another respondent comments that she feels like she is juggling two different lives:

> *"I try my best at… two different lives!"* (R5, University student)

However, other respondents seemed to combine their multiple identities more easily. Respondent 8 describes that she feels she is a part of the western

society and prioritises her British identity, however, she still felt connected to her religion:

> *"I think I'm westernised in the sense that I'm educated, and driven and ambitious, but also that I am a part of the society. I still research Islam and it's also a part of me… But I'm British, that's who I am first."* (R8, Worker)

Previous research based in western societies such as USA, UK and Australia suggest that a stronger identification with both cultures could alleviate the adaptation process (Kabir and Rickards, 2006; Phinney et al., 2006; Robinson, 1985). In the current study, respondents demonstrated strong bonds with both their religious identity as well as they country of birth:

> *"… It's quite straightforward; I'm a Muslim woman but… mixed in with the British society. I live here and this is the way of life I've known."* (R10, Homemaker)

When asked if they considered themselves westernised, despite previously citing their British identity, most respondents had great difficulty answering, most opting to 'sit on the fence' and state they were in the middle. Thus, it appears that having a British identity and being westernised are seen as two different entities:

> *"Ok yeah, it may not be like some, who go out… or are more erm… westernised, but I'm not backwards."* (R10, Homemaker)

> *"Do I consider myself westernised…? (…) I'm not backwards… I'm not a typical Muslim housewife… I know what's happening with the rest of the world…. Erm… Well, I think I'm in the middle then! If that's the case, I'm in the middle then."* (R11, Homemaker)

> *"Erm… (pause) I think I… I would put myself in the middle, I don't think I'm completely westernised."* (R3, 6th Form student)

> *"I'd say I was… not westernised, but in the middle…"* (R2, University student)

Another possible explanation could be that most respondents saw 'westernised' as mainly negative. Only one respondent said that she did not like consider herself westernised and her religious identity was most important.

> *"No, I don't consider myself westernised, I am just a simple girl… I'm just doing what I was brought in this world to do, which is to follow my deen [faith] and respect my parents… and make Allah (s.w.t) happy."* (R9, 6th Form student)

Summary

In summary of the above theme, it is clear that respondents placed high importance of education and career aspirations which enable them to be independent, build for the future and feel empowered. Young British-Muslim women felt confident to be involved in the consultation process of choosing their marriage partners, and many favoured arranged marriages. The respondents valued the freedom given to them to be able to socialise as well as choice in clothing, stressing it was their choice to wear or not wear the hijab. Clothing was influential in shaping the identities of these young women, as they felt they fit in with their peers. Respondents felt a strong allegiance to Britain, which they considered to be their home and gave importance to belonging in the western society. However, they were frustrated at feeling marginalised by the mainstream society and expressed desire to be accepted. Despite their strong British identities, many women viewed being 'westernised' as negative and associated the term with the problems of British society such as alcohol and lack of morals.

4.3. Religion

The theme of 'Religion' explores the respondents' views on the how the hijab is portrayed, both in the media and by the hijab-wearers. The media play a part in shaping the perceived identities of the respondents, as they discuss stereotypes, discrimination, and the subsequent affects. Respondents sought knowledge about their religion and made distinctions between cultural and religious identities. It is evident that intergenerational differences exist and respondents gave priority to religious values over cultural values.

4.3.1 Hijab

Visible symbol

The freedom to choose whether to wear the hijab has been discussed previously in the analysis. The data revealed the respondents had various views and experiences of wearing the hijab and this often formed their religious

identity. So often the discourse about hijab is divorced from those who actually wear it, therefore this analysis aims to illuminate the experiences of the hijab for these young women. Brown (2006) suggests that a Muslim woman's "attempt at invisibility in fact make her more visible as a Muslim woman…" (pp. 417). Respondents were aware of the potential judgement from those around them, of this visible religious symbol. For these young women, wearing the hijab did not mean they would change their behaviours or personality:

> *"I personally feel that it wouldn't change anything in my personality or my behaviours or my character, by wearing the hijab… but maybe it would change other people's perspective of me i.e. if they look at me and they see me without the hijab they won't know instantly what faith I belong to, but when they see the hijab, they will know automatically and identify me as a Muslim."* (R6, Worker)

Previous discourses have openly judged the hijab, but the respondents reveal that the hijab is judged by Muslims as well as non-Muslims. Respondents expressed that wearing the hijab would mean that they are judged as a Muslim woman by non-Muslims, but also perceived to be a devout, 'good' Muslim woman by other Muslims. Respondent 2, who wore a hijab, felt that she could be both herself and a Muslim, which illustrates that religion is just one part of the identity of these women:

> *"I don't think people should assume I should be a certain way, coz I do swear and say crude jokes, but that doesn't mean that… that's nothing to do with the scarf, that's me at the end of the day. You can't just say because I wear a hijab I have to be religious and look down when I walk and blah blah, it's like… I'm still me, at the end of the day. I can be both – I can be me and be a Muslim as well, without having people think that I always have to be good."* (R2, University student)

The respondents' spoke of their struggle with the hijab, often putting it on and taking it off several times. This could be as a result of the various judgements they have to face when wearing the hijab:

> *"But, in the first six months, it was… a convertible... it was on and off, on and off (laughs) because obviously for so long I had… shown myself, it was very difficult. That just got easier without it, and like I said, now I just feel naked without it."* (12, Homemaker)

> *"I wasn't encouraged at such a young age by my parents, I have found it difficult… and yes, it is an on-going struggle for me, I have to admit… to keep it on…"* (R11, Homemaker)

Another respondent felt the hijab was liberating and empowering, and expressed similar views to Takolia (2012) and Majeed (2008), who reacted against the sexualising of women. Respondent 2 made it clear that wearing the hijab gave the freedom of not having to please anyone else. Furthermore, she felt emancipated from society's negative views and expressed that people speak to her for who she is and not how she looks:

> *"I guess it makes you more independent because you're not doing anything for a man, you know what I mean? Not that I'm saying that every woman who doesn't wear a scarf, they look good just for a man. But there's just that… you have a bit more freedom if you do, you don't have to please anybody. If someone's going to talk to you, they'll talk to you for who you are, not how you look."* (R2, University student)

Young women felt that the hijab was a sign of respect and detracts unwanted male attention. One respondent, who does not wear the hijab herself, spoke of a colleague's experiences and also notes that people talk to hijab-wearers with respect. Thus, rather than curtailing the voices of young women, the hijab has allowed them to make an expression without even having to speak:

> *"There's a girl who I work with who wears the hijab, ( ) she said she wears it because it protects her from other guys being attracted to her and covers her modestly. She thinks, when she has the hijab on it's almost a sign 'respect me' erm and when she is approached and people do speak to her, they speak to her with respect, so that's the reason she wears it."* (R6, Worker)

> *"I think women are respected more when they have the hijab on. It's like… it's a symbol of respect isn't it? That's my experience of it…. people show respect towards you."* (R9, 6th Form student)

Thus, for some respondents, the hijab is a visible symbol of their commitment to Islam and respondents felt it was crucial to show your religion, as this was an important part of their identities:

> *"…it* [hijab] *makes a girl feel more safe when out, and it shows her real value and identity that she follows her religion very closely as being a Muslim. When people see a girl with hijab on, they know that she's a Muslim… it shows your religion."* (R4, 6th Form student)

Hijab symbolises the religious identities for young women and made them feel safe as well as increasing their connection to their religion. Consequently, hijab is paramount in constructing the religious identities of young British-Muslim women:

> *"It* [hijab] *makes me feel connected… erm it makes me feel a little closer to my religion."* (R1, University student)

> *"But I guess I put it* [hijab] *on because…. I can't explain… you know when you just get this feeling, like… erm oh, I can't describe it… I guess it makes you feel safe when you wear it, does that sound stupid…?"* (R2, University student)

Respondent 3 makes interesting comments about the reasons for wearing the hijab. It was felt that because the hijab was a visible symbol of religion, it should only be worn for religious reasons. Thus, there appears to be right and wrong ways to wear the hijab:

> *"Some girls who wear it* [hijab] *do actually follow their religion strictly and that's the best way, you should just do it for your religion and not for show."* (R3, 6th Form student)

Right and Wrong Hijab

Respondents made interesting comments about wearing the hijab for the 'wrong' reasons but were conscious not to judge others. However, they were aware that the hijab was a religious symbol and those who did not wear it for the 'right' reasons were portraying a bad image:

> *"For the people who wear it, if they wear it properly and for the right reasons…I mean, who are we to judge?"* (R11, Homemaker)

> *"We can't judge who wears it for the right reasons and who wears it for the wrong…. But you do hear people… because the hijab is a religious thing, you kind of put that character as a good character but when you hear them doing certain things and they wear the hijab, it is almost like bad influence… its bad… it's not a good sign."* (R6, Worker)

Respondents were quite clear that the hijab should be respected, and women who wear the hijab should not act in ways contradictory to Islam:

> *"I just think that girls who wear the hijab should respect it… or not wear it at all."* (R3, 6th Form student)

> *"Well, before I used to think that you're respected more when you wear a hijab, but I think that's changing, because you'll get a lot of people who wear a hijab but they don't really respect it."* (R1, University student)

Respondents made reference to other females they know who wore the hijab and expressed their frustration and anger at those who did not respect it. Thus, the judgement for Muslim women wearing the hijab was not just from non-

Muslims, but also from Muslims. It appears that the hijab being a visible symbol of religion meant that those who choose to wear it should behave in a way to preserve the importance, sacredness and honour attached to it:

> *"Other girls that they know who wear scarves, they'll be like "there's really no point in her wearing the scarf, why does she wear it for? And she's disrespecting that scarf. Coz there are so many girls who wear scarves but are going with one guy and then they're seeing another guy…. So they're disrespecting it. If they're going to wear it, wear it for the right reasons."* (R5, University student)

> *"There's that woman who attended the court as a juror and was caught with earphones in her ears… and she had covered with the hijab on top.* ( ) *When people read such stories, people give hijab the bad name…"* (R3, 6th Form student)

Respondent 11 speaks of a possible misinterpretation of hijab. She believes that the hijab is not the 'be-all-end-all' of her religion and goes on to explain that for her, the word 'hijab' is much more than just covering the head. She elucidates that the hijab is a concept of modesty, in how someone behaves and goes as far as saying that the hijab is a state of mind. Thus, the *headscarf* is seen as a religious symbol, but the concept of *hijab* extends beyond that:

> *"But I don't think it's the be-all-and end-all of the religion, of Islam* ( ) *I know it's important and again, I think hijab is interpreted… when people say hijab, you think of a scarf… hijab is like… it's modesty and that could be in the way you speak, in the way you walk, in the way you talk and the way you present yourself. So not necessarily… a hijab isn't just what you put on your head, you have to understand that. It's more… a state of mind."* (R11, Homemaker)

Respondents believe that wearing the hijab does not automatically mean increased religiousness. They felt that other, more important aspects of Islam should be followed and respected first, such as improving their character and increasing their knowledge of Islam:

> *"But for me, the whole hijab factor is… the whole erm, you are more religious! You know… there's things in the religion that you should be doing before you think 'oh I should wear the hijab'* ( ) *you have to have respect for your family, you have to have respect for your partner, you have to have, erm knowledge of the religion, you have to pray 5 times a day. I think THOSE things are more important than wearing the hijab."* (R6, Worker)

Furthermore, some young women who wore the hijab held an air of superiority and respondents felt this was misplaced if they did not wear the hijab for the right reasons:

> *"And another thing is, these people who wear the hijab, they walk about and actually think they're far superior than you… oh yeah yeah, they've got it all, they've got the religion in hand or whatever… as though they've got the key to paradise and everyone's happy with them and that's it. But it's not, they really have lost the plot somewhere – it's not the be-all-and-end-all, they really have to look deep into what the requirements are…and I don't think hijab is…in this day and age, hijab is not what it should be."* (R11, Homemaker)

Respondent 11 comments that a woman who did not wear the hijab but is of good character is more important than someone wearing the hijab but not abiding by the rules of Islam:

> *"If there are two people there, one person prays five times a day, looks after their family and is a really decent person whose got a kind heart… tries to abide by the rules of Islam. And there's another person who doesn't do ANY of that, but wear a hijab! So, who's…? It's more than just simply wearing the hijab and thinking that's it."* (R11, Homemaker)

Paradoxically, respondents expressed equal frustrations towards those were forced into wearing the hijab. It appears that right or wrong ways to wearing the hijab means the *intention* has to be right, and solely for religious reasons:

> *"But people who are wearing for the sake of wearing it…well firstly, if they're forced into it and it's not from the heart, they don't…you know, the intentions aren't right, they don't want to wear it and they're forced into it, then there's no point wearing it…* ( ) *I'd rather people like that didn't actually wear it, than wear it as a front."* (R11, Homemaker)

> *"I think that nowadays there are a lot of people wearing it for different reasons, whereas it should just be for religious reasons. What I mean by that is that people do get pressured into wearing it, maybe by family or friends, or from their partner or their siblings if they've taken on that route, they kinda force that on people."* (R6, Worker)

As noted earlier in the analysis, respondents believed that most women choose to wear the hijab, even if they wore it for the 'wrong reasons'. Further strengthening the point that hijab is a personal choice and the respondents in this study viewed the hijab as a religious symbol. Thus, respondents commented that they would wear it at a stage when they felt committed to Islam and would respect it:

> *"There are different reasons, only the person wearing it can answer why they wear it. Not many, in my experience… even if they wear it for, let's say the wrong reasons; it's still their choice, ultimately – not forced on them."* (R6, Worker)

> *"…like some girls take it on and off all the time, erm if I was to wear it, I'd wear it and it would never come off, because it just doesn't give a good image either to other people… erm you know, if you keep taking it on and off, it's like, you need to take it seriously…"* (R8, Worker)

It is clear that respondents felt wearing the hijab was seen as increased religiosity, and should be worn as a result of religious commitment. However, respondents reported that many women wore the hijab as an act to appear more religious but covertly, behave in ways contradictory to Islam. Lewis (2007) argues that the perception of a Muslim identity does not necessarily translate into an Islamic identity, in that it is not necessarily dependent on religious observance. So it appears that although there may be an increased interest in Islam, this does not necessarily mean an increase in religiosity:

> *"Wearing the hijab gives off a certain image… I don't know exactly what.... like being really good or something."* (R3, 6th Form student)

> *"Don't just wear it to show people that "I'm so Islamic and I'm so good". You don't show off your religion by wearing a hijab only, it's got to come from your heart."* (R5, University student)

> *"…some people wear the hijab and wear it for the right reasons. But I just think that the majority of girls wear it… very hypocritically…. To present themselves in a different way than actually how they are."* (R7, Worker)

So, it appears that although there are an increasing number of hijab-wearers that does not necessarily mean they have an increased commitment to their religion. Respondents noted the hijab was simply a means to project the image of a 'good' Muslim girl. Respondents commented that the hijab changes the perceived identity of hijab-wearers:

> *"…however some girls take it off on occasions which shows they aren't exactly committed to it. Muslim people who see a female with the hijab on automatically presume she is a decent girl… someone who is following her religion but sometimes realistically, she can be doing things that are against the religion."* (R3, 6th Form student)

> *"I know of a few girls who have worn the hijab and it has been a mere act to cover, like a different persona that they have erm… being very westernised, very uncultured but yet they think it's almost… a cover-up for them."* (R6, Worker)

> *"So wearing the hijab does change a person's identity from what they really are… I mean not their identity but how people see them. Like, they might be different, but want to seem good or religious."* (R3, 6th Form student)

After recounting a story about a young girl on the train, who appeared quite westernised but then covered up with a hijab before getting off the train, Respondent 8 explained that her cousin did the same. So, hijab is used as deception as a means to appease parental expectations:

> *"My cousin used to do that as well. She used to go to school, secondary school and she used to have a scarf on her head… erm and when she got to the school gates, going to the school, she used to take it off. And when she used to go… when it was time to go home and she went to the gates again, her dad was picking her up, she used to put it back on."* (R8, Worker)

It can be seen that there are many facets to the hijab. The respondents in the current study did not view it as a sign of oppression, rather a personal choice, a religious symbol and interestingly, a fashion statement. Butler (2001) suggests that an increased interest in Islam among young British-Muslim women was stemmed from the fact that it had become fashionable in Britain. The London Veil (Shamsavari Exhibition, 2013) documented young Muslim women's self-styled hijabs, celebrating their expression to individual identities. It is clear that the hijab is seen as fashionable in Britain and not merely a religious symbol. However, the respondents had strong feelings about the inappropriateness of wearing the hijab as a 'fashion statement':

> *"On the other hand, we've got people who wear it, like I said to you, kind of like a fashion statement – again, I don't think it's appropriate."* (R11, Homemaker)

> *"I know people who wear it because it's almost a fashion statement now, with all the different designs you can get."* (R6, Worker)

It is noteworthy that all respondents who spoke about the hijab being fashionable used the term 'fashion statement'. It appears that wearing the hijab as a fashion statement loses the essence of it, in that it should be for modesty. So, contrary to the Shamsavari exhibition, which promoted colour, creativity and individuality in wearing the hijab, the respondents in the current study saw the adaptation of a religious symbol into a fashion statement as negative:

> *"…it's more than just simply wearing the hijab and thinking that's it. And besides, it's more of a fashion statement these days… with all these funky*

designs and they've got someone coming out to pin them all up and 'dolling' them up. Again, if it's there for modesty… you've lost the essence anyway, so what's the point. If it's there to draw less attention, but you have it all jazzed up then you're going to cause… the last wedding we went to, fuchsia pink hijab tied all the way up there like a turban and with a brooch on it… that's not going to work. It's not….It's not right." (R11, Homemaker)

"But then, nowadays, Muslims wear it as a fashion statement. Like you see…. I'm not judging them, they can do what they like – but if you weren't a Muslim and you saw some of them, you would think "what the hell?" coz they have the hijabs huge and tied on top of their heads…. And some of them have a bit of hair out." (R2, University student)

Niqaab

Muslim women's opinions appear to be divided on the subject of the veil. The covering of the face by a veil has never been universal in the Muslim world (Ahmed, 1992). The literature review has highlighted the media's view on the niqab as oppressive and contradictory to British culture. Strikingly, many respondents also commented that they feel niqab-wearing women are forced to wear it:

"This is going to sound bad, but when I see a women and a man who are married, and she's wearing the niqaab, I always think that the husband made her wear it." (*R2, University student)*

Respondents give reason for objecting to the niqab, stating it causes the woman to 'lose her identity'. Many respondents felt it was important to view people's faces and know who you are speaking to. Interestingly, this is very similar to Tory MP Philip Hollobone's (BBC 2013) reasons for proposing a bill to ban the niqab in Britain. Respondents note:

"I just think that if I wasn't a Muslim and I saw someone wearing a niqab, like you do… It's really important to look at someone's face and I think that's why it'd be really hard for me to wear one myself, because it's really important… like talking to someone and not… like you don't know who you're talking to. It's like you lose your identity." (R1, University student)

"The niqab, that's just a no-no, no-one really likes it, unless you've heard of anyone…? I mean, I'm Muslim and I don't really like it… to be honest with you, it frightens you and the person whose actually wearing it, you haven't got a clue… you know, you don't know them from Adam, it could be absolutely anyone… male/female, anyone. And because they've got their face covered

> *and they're under this kind of… I have to call it a disguise… it's like they've got a false sense of authority or… this confidence, because you don't know who they are but they know who you are! (laughs) and it is a little bit daunting… I think it's a little bit too extreme, personally."* (R11, Homemaker)

Nevertheless, despite their own negative views on the niqab, respondents opposed the French ban on face covering. Respondents expressed frustration at the double-oppression of Muslim women and believe that the government should not force women to remove the niqab in the same way that Muslim men should not be allowed to force women to wear it. This concurs with Ryan (2011) that Muslim women felt a sense of identity towards those who were stigmatised, even if they themselves did not personally experience stigma. Respondent 11 makes some interesting comments on this topic:

> *"The* [niqab] *ban was absolutely ridiculous, why would someone want to force their opinion on another individual, when there's so much talk about freedom. I mean, rather than forcing them to take it off, and these poor women not knowing what to do, and people who genuinely want to wear it, I think it's unfair on them…I think they should offer them the right sort of support if they want to liberate seemingly oppressed women. And to give them support…so they have their own opinion and they feel confident in themselves and that they can express their own identity. And if they WERE being forced* [to wear niqab] *they would be able to deal with it themselves rather than the authorities saying one rule for everyone and take it off. I think it's really unfair, I think women; in general…if that's what they thought, they should be given more support and not necessarily be ordered to take it off."* (R11, Homemaker)

> *"I think that's France just being unfair, at the end of the day, that's somebody's religion, it's close to their heart… you can't rip it away like that. They shouldn't… they shouldn't be able to take away someone's choice… if Muslim men can't force women to wear the hijab, then other people shouldn't be able to force a woman NOT to wear the hijab."* (R7, Worker)

4.3.2 Media Portrayal

Hijab

Media portrayals of Muslims have generally been unfair misrepresentations (Moore, Mason and Lewis, 2008; Jawad and Benn, 2003). Similarly, respondents in the current study felt that the hijab-wearing women were portrayed negatively:

> *I think the media portray women who wear the hijab really negatively… REALLY negatively.* (R8, Worker)

This negative image was not limited to news media, but had extended to social media. One respondent reports how some non-Muslims depict hijab-wearers on Facebook:

> *"There was a lot of links of Facebook that people used to post… people used to post pictures saying… erm… they had a picture of a dog leash and a woman with a hijab, and there was a caption underneath saying that the dog leash was probably better… erm shows more respect for women than the hijab… something like that."* (R5 University student)

As seen earlier in the analysis, all the hijab-wearers in this study pointed to freedom of choice and claimed it was their decision to wear the hijab. Respondents felt that this was not what was presented to the mainstream society:

> *"I think a lot of people's opinions are that a lot… or majority of women who wear the hijab are forced to wear it. What we have to remember and respect is that… I'd say 80% of women, or maybe more… wear it out of choice and for the love of the religion."* (R6, Worker)

With the many negative portrayals of the hijab, respondents point to the media as the cause of the differential treatment of hijab-wearing women. Respondents noted that the only view the indigenous population have is that Muslim women were forced to wear the hijab:

> *"I think, hijab, firstly when you go out…for example….you know…let's start with it, I don't think when people see you with the hijab on, they don't think… western people don't think that that's a decision you would have made, they automatically think that you're actually being forced to wear it."* (R11, Homemaker)

> *"But, it's the media… the media has put this image in every bodies head, and there is a lot of criticism towards us Muslims."* (R5, University student)

Respondents make comparisons between the hijab and religious insignia for other religions and note that the hijab is targeted more. They feel it is unjust and unnecessary and just simply reinforces discriminations about Muslim women:

> *"Because if you look at erm, other religions… like nuns, they can wear their religious outfit without being judged. To this day, I can't remember an article or newspapers clip or anything in the media or news or radio for that matter… ANYTHING, any sort of information about a nun being judged for the way she is dressed."* (R6, Worker)

> *"I feel that in today's society the hijab is seen as totally negative. Non-Muslims are free to wear what they like but Muslims are… looked down on or thought to be forced. I think it's totally unacceptable… they don't question themselves or each other about dressing 'down' so why question those who choose to dress more and cover up."* (R10, Homemaker)

The hijab is seen as only been worn by women who are forced into it, women who have no rights of self-expression, have huge pressures from their family to conform to a rigid set of rules and values which are seen as backwards and outdated. However, hijab-wearing respondents felt comfortable, confident and they strongly oppose being labelled as oppressed:

> *Because some people think it's oppressive, but I don't think it is. How can they say that? Do I feel oppressed? No I don't. I just don't understand where they get that from* (R2)

Stereotype

Respondents feel that Muslims are typecast and this brings some anger and frustration in the voices and statements made by young women:

> *"I… it's definitely harsh because… they don't portray the good things about Muslim women and the way they act in the society, but instead they prefer to portray Muslim women as oppressed. Like, all these women are forced to do… whatever."* (R9, 6th Form student)

With an increasing number of media stories focusing on Muslim dress code, forced marriages and honour killings (Moore, Mason and Lewis, 2008), respondents felt aggrieved at the stereotyping of Muslim women. Respondents' comment that Muslim women are portrayed in the media as uneducated, subjugated and victimised but are never shown as successful career women, which many of the respondents in this research see themselves as:

> *"I think they do portray Muslim women as being the typical… they don't show the Muslim women who are working and that kind of thing. But then, the typical stories that do come out are always the negative ones… honour killings, for example."* (R7, Worker)

> *"I think generally, they* [the media] *think that Muslim women are oppressed and they're not educated… and they don't want to do anything else with their lives apart from have babies and cook! And that's what they try to put across as well."* (R8, Worker)

Similar to existing literature, respondents in this study felt that Muslims were less likely to be identified in terms of their profession or job, and more often identified simply as Muslims, rather than individuals with distinct identities (Moore, Mason and Lewis, 2008). For example:

> *"I think Muslim women get judged quickly, before they say… erm what we do professionally, or how we've impacted certain things… before they go on to that, we're classed as Muslims."* (R6, Worker)

These stereotyped media portrayals led the general public to have negative views of Muslim women. Respondents report the prejudice and judgements made about Muslim women:

> *"So that's the only view that English people are ever going to get on Muslim women… is housewives, in a strict family, get beat up for no reason, that kind of stuff. Who does find out any good stories about Muslim women, you just don't get it. That kind of behaviour isn't restricted to Muslims… it's just sensationalised, you know what I mean?"* (R7, Worker)

> *"There's a friend of mine who's recently fallen, there was a pothole and she fell and broke her ribs… and when she went to the hospital, automatically they thought that it was her partner… I think that's an interesting point. I think everyone seems to think that all these Muslim women get beaten up and have their scarf wrapped around them, whether it's for religious reason or it's to cover up all the bruises they think are hidden under there"* (R11, Homemaker)

In addition to being typecast, respondents felt that Muslims were targeted by the media, and stories pertaining to Muslims were sensationalised:

> *"I've not seen anyone being judged but Muslims. So I think the media does definitely pinpoint against Muslims."* (R6, Worker)

It appears that media use the word 'Muslim' as an extra label in news stories and respondents were hurt that the religion is blamed for whatever problem is reported Respondents felt that the increased media coverage of religious and cultural issues relating to Muslims is exacerbating integration and further isolating communities:

> *"So yeah we do get, I think, the rough end of the stick sometimes, but on occasions where maybe, erm, someone from the western culture, murdering someone… you don't get in the media that a Christian person has done this, it's explained that they are cold-blooded or whatever, and limited to that person, it's not that the whole religion is like that. Whereas with us, it's always a Pakistani…Muslim… you know, the religion is always targeted."* (R6, Worker)

> *"There's always got to be that emphasis, like if it's a thief then it's a Muslim thief, it's not just a criminal. Whereas if it's someone White, then it'll be like 'a man has done this'. It's like an extra label… and even in other things, it's always Muslim first.* ( ) *I think THEY think it makes good media, because it's a good story, but really all its doing is creating that barrier between communities, it's just making it wider. It's isolating people more, because they sensationalise the bad bits of a religion, even though it may happen in other religions."* (R8, Worker)

Respondents question how or why the stereotyping and targeting of Muslims has developed. Some give reason that terrorism may have encouraged these portrayals, while others believe that it is the easy way out, to simply label people:

> *"So that's what I mean, it's easy to label people. It's always, you know, 'oh well, the Muslims… so many Muslim people have done this or Muslim people have done that'. I don't understand why the word 'Muslim' is always highlighted."* (R11, Homemaker)

> *"But I don't know why that's come about; I don't know why… like maybe, with the London bombings, maybe that stemmed it…. I'm just not sure, but I don't see the need for that to be there."* (R8, Worker)

However, other respondents believe that the media use Muslims and Islam as a scapegoat:

> *"Ok if they want to use that as an excuse.* ( ) *It's like a scapegoat… the religion is a scapegoat. It's just an easy way out…" (*R11, Homemaker)

Moore, Mason and Lewis (2008) found that the most common nouns used in relation to British-Muslims were 'terrorist'; 'extremist'; and 'Islamist', with very few positive nouns. Similarly, the respondents in this study show they are aware of such nuances and felt that the stories of the success or achievements of Muslim public figures never highlight that they are in fact Muslims:

> *"Mo Farrah, he won in the Olympics and normally they write "Muslim this" or Muslim that" but when he won, they never wrote "Muslim Olympian". So when it's a good thing, they never do that. If it's something bad, they'll always put the religion first, like condemning the religion…"* (R2, University student)

Reject Media Portrayals

Existing literature suggests that Muslims themselves consider the news media to misrepresent them (Moore, Mason and Lewis, 2008) and reject the generalisation of all Muslims based on some negative stories:

> *"It is not fair that the media are only showing the bad sides of Muslim girls making it look like all Muslim girls don't get treated properly. All the Muslim girls I know are free to make their own choices and even if they made a bad choice, they're family wouldn't kill them. It's just an extreme but that's the only thing the media show."* (R3, 6th Form student)

Young British-Muslim women felt that their freedom of choice in wearing the hijab and the liberation they achieve are not portrayed in the media, thus exacerbating their position in mainstream society:

> *I don't think they give a… real portrayal of it, to be honest. I don't think they know what they're talking about when they talk about the hijab! I think they see that all these women… poor little women and they're forced to cover their head… oppressed, and they need to stay in their homes and that it… that's a Muslim woman for you. But actually, in fact it's the opposite.* (R12, Homemaker)

Respondents disagree with the notion of 'culture clash', stating that they feel they benefit from both western and their parents' cultures. However they regard themselves as young British-Muslim women and adopt multiple identities. They feel the media generalise that all Muslim women want to be more westernised, but that is not the case:

> *"In the media… the Shafilea case that came about… she wanted a western identity and her parents didn't want her to go that way or whatever. Maybe… that was the case for her and she really didn't want these traditional values. But then, what they… the media seem to generalise all Muslims… in exactly the same way. We all want to be westernised and our parents are holding us back… we're in this huge culture clash (!) But they… they don't seem to realise that it's not all like that. For me, there's aspects of my tradition that I love, and I just think that's part of me, I wouldn't change regardless."* (R1, University student)

Respondents argue that the misrepresentation in the mainstream society, borne from negative media portrayals, contradict their experiences in Britain. They see themselves as young Muslim women proud of their British identity and active members of the mainstream society:

> *"If you ever speak to an English person about a Muslim person, they're always going to assume that the women are housewives and they sit at home and get beat up, and all they do is cook and all that kind of stuff. They don't see… it's obviously not how we live, so it's different to my version of the truth… it's different to a lot of people's version of the truth."* (R7, Worker)

> *"It completely contradicts my experience! I'm a person who is living freely, I'm living exactly how they themselves, the media people, how they live their life… they go out and whatever, I live like that. So I think 'you're full of it!' they're putting the wrong image, a bad image…"* (R5, University student)

Respondents acknowledge and accept that there are more unfortunate Muslim women who are controlled by parents and have restrictions imposed on them. However, they point that these are a minority and express a desire to be treated on individual merit, rather than generalised as an entire group:

> *"And the thing it is with the media, is that these problems do exist but the media doesn't… it picks up on that point and doesn't give its views on the other side of it… the side that you and I know. It's not a balance; they just concentrate on that backward approach."* (R8, Worker)

> *"I do agree, that there may be… not maybe, there ARE cases out there* [forced marriage]*… but not everything is black and white. Judge each case on its own merits."* (R11, homemaker)

> *"It's not fair to say that just because one Muslim is doing something bad, then the rest are like that. It shouldn't be generalised like that."* (R9, 6th Form student)

The media seems to highlight the negative aspects of Muslims in British society, but respondents felt they omit information and do not show the positive sides of British-Muslims:

> *"But, then not all of Muslims or Asians force their girls to wear hijab or force them into marriage or stuff like that. I mean, a small minority of Muslims do it, and the media kinda…. make out like all Muslims are the same. So it's weird, I guess the media doesn't show the full picture."* (R10, Homemaker)

> *…you get some families who will do wrong, like stop their daughters from living freely, or being westernised. But there are other families who know… they're up to date with the new generation. I just think that it's just the extreme ones that are highlighted.* (R5, University student)

It seems very important for respondents to stress that it is parents or families who do wrong, not the religion. Furthermore, they stress that it is a small minority of families who force or oppress their daughters, rather than Muslims as a group:

> *"…everything is 'Islam' but it's not… people do something wrong, it's THEM who have done something wrong, not Islam."* (R11, homemaker)

> *"Erm I think there are a small minority, but the media, very often, likes to portray that as the norm for us. It's like… sensationalised and blown out of proportion… more than it exists."* (R6, Worker)

Respondents criticise the media, claiming they sensationalise news to make better stories and thus, increase their revenue. Respondents believe that the media exaggerate and/or fabricate stories, and invariably control the minds of the masses.

> *"People look at you, and if you're wearing a hijab then immediately you're either oppressed or a terrorist (laughs) I'm not kidding, there are some crazy people out there, and the media feeds them crap and they take it in and… they think it's real."* (R10, Homemaker)

> *"… it would be unfair to say not at all, but I would say 99% of them are exaggerated… I mean it is the media, it's their job to make it interesting… they want their newspaper to be bought or they want their interview to be sold… they want their headlines to be on the front of the newspaper. I think a lot of it is exaggerated and you know… fabricated."* (R6, Worker)

> *"I think, overall, if you're a media corporation, you're not going to print good stuff about certain groups because you wouldn't want that… it's not going to make the news, no one's going to care…"* (R2, University student)

Discrimination

The increased media coverage, that too of negative portrayals, has led to differential treatment of Muslim women, especially hijab-wearing women. Respondents recall incidents of discrimination against hijab-wearers, whereby people are less tolerant towards them:

> *"I think they, like even when I'm in a shopping centre, if a lady* [wearing hijab] *is with kids that are noisy, as an example, I can see other people looking, and giving them dirty looks, as if to say 'oh my god! Look at her and look at her kids, how they are' but if that same woman and noisy kids were maybe someone who didn't have a hijab on, or someone of a different ethnic group… then they wouldn't even look at them twice."* (R8, Worker)

Similarly, Respondent 11 has encountered differential treatment when wearing the hijab. Here she describes one such occasion:

> *"Another thing – personal experience, out shopping without a hijab if you go out, you get so many people who are really friendly with you…I'm talking about the western people – they are so friendly, really nice, go out of their way, smile*

> *at the kids or whatever. If you have your hijab on, those same people will give you absolute daggers, as if you've done something wrong, you know?"* (R11, Homemaker)

Respondent 10 makes interesting comments about the impact of negative or stereotyped media portrayals. She suggests that she herself may have been subject to stares and comments from people because she chooses to wear a hijab. Furthermore, she feels that people, upon seeing her wearing a hijab, immediately label her oppressed or a terrorist:

> *"And then the way you're treated like… well other people's behaviour towards me wearing a hijab has been negative, I mean, I've had some horrible looks on the bus and train, which I suppose is because the media portrayal is so negative. People look at you, and if you're wearing a hijab then immediately you're either oppressed or a terrorist (laughs)…"* (R10, Homemaker)

> *But the media just have really bad stories about Muslims, so if you have a hijab on, then people… western people are going to assume that's how you are…* (R1, University student)

Respondents describe the impact of media stereotypes on the lives of many Muslims. One respondent feels that the media instils fear into Muslims, forcing them to conceal their religious identity or restrict their activities. Therefore their religious identity is threatened by discrimination from non-Muslims:

> *"So yeah the media makes things out to be more than they are, to be honest. And they… we are like drawn into them, we think 'oh we can't do that now' or 'we can't go to London now because people are going to think… if my husband's got a beard, we're walking through London and he's got a rucksack on his back then 'oh my god, they're gonna think he's a bomber!' so yeah, it does instil that fear in you because you think what are people going to think about us."* (R12, Homemaker)

Another respondent reported the same views that visible religious symbols, such as the hijab, elicit negative images for many in the mainstream society:

> *"Like the terrorist attacks, now if you see a girl wearing a hijab or a niqaab, then she is a terrorist's wife or a man with a beard, he's a terrorist."* (R5, University student)

Respondents appreciate that their colleagues were able to understand them as individuals rather than judge them based on media portrayals:

> *"…like my work place, they're a bit more understanding towards me, I suppose. In the sense that they know that I'm different, they know I've got different views, but at the same time, they know that I'm not typical."* (R8, Worker)

4.3.3 Religiosity

Religious knowledge

Young British-Muslim women are displaying an increased interest in religious knowledge, as they feel it has greater universal applicability (Jacobson 1997). Lewis (2007) suggests that young British-Muslims, especially Muslim women were in an exploratory and questioning category, whereby they sought to gain knowledge of Islam. Respondents note their willingness to research Islam:

> *"But now, you kind of… you have your own identity so, you look into things a bit more and now I wear clothes that I want to wear, mainly because I… (pause) probably researched a bit about… erm…. The religion, about Islamic faith and realised why, actually why we have to maybe cover up a bit more."* (R8, Worker)

This increase in religious knowledge can spur important decisions, such as wearing the hijab:

> *"I think I just kind of gained an interest like 'oh actually, do we do it like this' or sometimes 'is that how it's written… in Islam?' and it was just like 'that sounds interesting' and from there I just started reading into it, and I started reading into the women of Islam and it just went from there, and spurred my decision* [to wear a hijab]*."* (R12, Homemaker)

> *"I've looked into a lot more of the religion and I understand now more about the hijab and why people wear it than I used to. Because before I did used to think of it as a sign of oppression and 'oh, these people are really backwards who wear it' but now that I've looked into it, I understand and it's 'oh actually the people that do wear it are actually much more stronger… as a person…"* (R8, Worker)

Despite citing integration in western society, respondents still have a religious connection, and place a great emphasis on religion in their lives:

> *"I think for myself, I have made my own decisions and I'm educated. But then, at the same time, I haven't forgotten my religion. It's still important to me."* (R10, Homemaker)

> *"And yeah, I do…I consider myself to be a religious person, I have a very strong belief in my religion."* (R4, 6th Form student)

Butler (2001) found that many Muslim women believed that British-Muslims take a greater interest in their religion as they get older. She suggests that young people turn away from their religion at school due to peer pressure, but revive

interest later in life. However, the current study found stronger religious identities in the younger student respondents:

> *"I would describe myself… as being religious, I pray 5 times a day… if I miss a pray it would feel like something missing because I am that used to praying and remembering Allah."* (R9, 6th Form student)

> *"I wanna do it for myself, I want to do it to please my Lord* ( ) *basically, if I ever get a chance, even if right now, if I get a chance. For instance, if my family were planning a trip for Ummrah (pilgrimage) that's it, I would mend my ways. I wouldn't want to go for Ummrah without being prepared… I would want to be ready and be prepared. And that one thing, I really really want to go there."* (R5, University student)

The respondents felt confident in asserting their British identity, however, still place an importance on religion, morals and values. Many young women in this study considered their religious identity more relevant to their lives than an ethnic or British identity. As one Respondent comments:

> *"I'm just doing what I was brought in this world to do, which is to follow my deen [faith] and respect my parents… and make Allah (s.w.t) happy."* (R9, 6th Form student)

Respondent 12 mentions the important role Islam plays in her life. She follows the Muslim dress code of hijab and abaya [long outer-garment] and regularly prays. She also feels responsible to transmit religious values to her children:

> *"I cover – completely cover everything apart from my face, and erm, I do try my best to read my namaaz (prayers) as well and teaching the kids."* (R12, Homemaker)

Similarly, Respondent 11 believes that she would be setting a better example if she herself practiced Islam more and become a good role model for her children. Thus, it can be seen that religious values are not only transmitted from migrant parents to second-generation Muslims, but also second-generation Muslims as parents also pass on those same values:

> *"I think what made me start wearing the hijab is that I'm at the point where Mash'Allah my girls go to the madrasa* [religious school]*, they both started wearing the hijab and I wanted to encourage them and say that 'yes this is the right thing to do.'" (R11, Homemaker)*

Culture vs. Religion

The increased religious knowledge has led young British-Muslim women to question the first generation's interpretations of Islam, which they feel is based more on culture. The data revealed that respondents were able to distinguish between Islamic laws and cultural values. Respondents blame culture for the negative stories cited in the media, which are being presented as religious issues:

> *"…but it's not religious – these stories that are in the media, it has more to do with culture than religion."* (R12, Homemaker)

> *"…the majority of the stories you read are because someone's culture… not religion."* (R10, Homemaker)

The data reveals that respondents argue that parent's traditional cultural values were responsible for the restrictions placed on women and not Islam. Their frustration was apparent at the infusion of culture and religion, not only on the parents' part, but also in the media:

> *"There's things about honour killings and all that, which really p*sses me off… oops, sorry! But it really does, because that wasn't religious at all, that was cultural, so being a Muslim girl has nothing to do with that. People see that as it being all Muslims, but it's not though, it's cultural."* (R2, University student)

Previous research has often amalgamated religion and culture, failing to separate the two. Respondent in the current study were able to distinguish the differences and suggest that these differences are the cause of intergenerational tensions:

> *"There are girls who want to be more westernised. Maybe they don't relate to the Pakistani culture that their parents experienced. I think that's more… people confuse culture and religion."* (R1, University student)

Many respondents point out that it is traditional customs that confine women to the home, and discourage them from seeking employment or further education. Religion, they argue, was not to blame for the inequality between men and women, but traditional cultural values. Consequently, most of the women were critical of culture, which they felt was directly responsible for restricting the rights of women that Islam had given them:

> *"Like a lot of people from the Asian… ethnic minority do tend to have a backwards view and they think it's wrong for one to think freely…well, for women to think freely. But is that an ethnicity issue or a religious issue? People think that things they do, which are cultural… they think that it's religious… like a lot of people are confused."* (R10, Homemaker)

Respondents argued that for many Muslims, the religion had become confused with culture, and that people were blaming the religion for restrictions, which they believed were purely cultural. As one respondent notes:

> *"But I guess it's like… it's more cultural than Islamic. It's not… religion, I think they get confused at times, I think they kind of put them together."* (R2, University student)

One respondent recalls her childhood experiences, where her parents had placed restrictions based on what was 'wrong' and against the religion. However, she has been able to discern that those restrictions were based on cultural interpretations and were not, in fact, based on Islamic laws:

> *"And well, as a child… ( ) I don't know whether they were taught differently, but what we now know as culturally wrong… was then described to us as being religiously wrong… and there's a fine line between that. I've realised that now and for me, religion is always more important than culture."* (R11, Homemaker)

Respondents sought to gain more knowledge and a better understanding of Islam as they were not satisfied with what their parents had taught them. Respondent 2 mentions she read the Qur'an in English in order to better understand Islam, and this understanding has allowed her to differentiate between religion and culture. So, it appears young women are placing importance not only on British education, but also Islamic knowledge and view both as empowering:

> *"I tried to read it [the Qur'an] in English myself and then I learnt that half the stuff is all cultural. But I guess that depends on… on everyone's different culture and they mix it up. But I think why don't you go for the straight-forward religion as it says and not culture…?"* (R2, University student)

It is clear that respondents felt that not only had they become aware of the differences, but their parents had also gained more knowledge of Islam. With this knowledge and education, the first generation had now 'realised' the difference and religion holds more value for than culture:

> *"And over the years, people have educated themselves and they now know… what they then thought was important and they wasted all that sleep over… they now realise that it really holds no value."* ( ) *The culture thing is being put aside and people are more looking into religion and they've realised that culture is totally different to religion. And I think at one point it was all one big jumbled mess and no one really knew what was what. I think now, people are researching a little bit more and saying 'well no, this is culture and this is actually what religion is'."* (R10, Homemaker)

Jacobson (1997) suggests that religion had universal applicability, thus young people had a stronger religious identity. Respondent 12 suggests that being born in the United Kingdom means that she has been able to learn about Islam and places a greater importance on religion than culture – both her parents' culture and British culture.

> *"I don't think culturally any more, I think religiously and the fact that I'm born and bred in the UK, I think 'it's ok to be British, it's fine, there's nothing wrong with being British' but like I said, never contradict it with my religion now."* (R12, Homemaker)

Thus, it seems that culture is given less importance, with many young British-Muslim women being more in tune with religion than their parents:

> *Well, I know that I'm not really cultural…* (R2, University student)

Young women is this study profess that cultural based interpretations holds less importance to them, as they have an increased religious knowledge. In turn, they now want to transmit religious knowledge to their children and not infuse any cultural interpretations:

> *"What I'm trying to say is… I would much rather instil religion in my children… and culture is less important."* (R11, Homemaker)

Summary

In summary of the above theme, the hijab was considered a visible religious symbol, and respondents felt confident in asserting their religious identity. There appear to be right and wrongs to the hijab, and respondents stressed that it should only be worn for religious reasons. The respondents, despite not agreeing with the wearing of niqab, criticised the ban and felt it was contradictory to the very oppression that it was supposedly trying to eradicate.

The media is significant in shaping the perceived identities of young British-Muslim women. The media portrayal of, not only the hijab, but of Muslim women in general, was rejected by the respondents who felt that successful, high achieving Muslim women were never shown. They felt these misrepresented portrayals led to discrimination and isolation of Muslim women. All of the respondents valued religious knowledge and sought a better understanding of Islam. They were able to differentiate between culture and religion and largely rejected cultural practices. It is evident that intergenerational differences exist and respondents gave priority to religion over cultural values.

Discussion

This qualitative research study explored the experiences of young British-Muslim women in Britain. The purpose of this research was to better understand the influences on constructing and negotiating these women's identities. It further sought to investigate whether young British-Muslim women experience a conflict in culture in their everyday lives. The study investigated twelve young British-Muslim women, aged between 16-33 years old. The sample comprised of three respondents in further education; three respondents in higher education; three respondents who were in employment and three participants who were homemakers. It is evident that the themes and subthemes are inextricably linked as they consist of factors that all contribute to shaping the identity of young British-Muslim women. Thus, every effort has been made to ensure that an artificial distinctiveness is not imposed on the data set. The analysis includes quotes from the interview transcripts in order to assess consistency between the data and researcher interpretation.

The study found three main themes emerging from analysis of the data. The respondents placed a great importance on family life and, for the most part, felt relaxed and comfortable at home. This contradicts previous findings which suggest that young Muslim females do not enjoy home life (Stopes-Roe and Cochran, 1990) and use school as an escape from tension at home (Ellis, 1991; Modood et al, 1994; Din, 2001). Although many Muslim families still hold traditional values, increasingly, young British-Muslim women were reporting a dilution of some traditional values, whereby some family held more liberal values. Respondents spoke of identity at home in terms of family values, religion and culture. This finding further strengthens the argument that home life is influential in shaping the identity of young British-Muslim women.

Anwar (1985) argues that the family is the source of intergenerational conflicts and tensions, often as a result of parental expectations (Abbott, 1998). The current research found that despite the parental expectations and the

restrictions imposed by parents, young British-Muslim women are attempting to balance family values with western society. Extended family can affect respondents' sense of autonomy, whereby they are constantly juggling their identities, often with use of deception, in order to keep up appearances. Thus, family and the biraderi had a vital role in the negotiation and construction of their identities. This is consistent with the findings of Hennink et al (1999) who suggest that the biraderi can influence the behaviour of young British-Muslim women. Furthermore, the data revealed the complex and changing nature of social identities, in that young British-Muslim women would often present themselves differently for friends, extended family and the biraderi. This is consistent with previous findings which suggest that individuals display different values and patterns of behaviour within different contexts (Butler, 2001; Bains and Johal, 1998). However, there is a generational shift in attitudes towards the biraderi, with young Muslim women having limited contact compared to their parents, albeit, respondents are aware of the control the biraderi can have on the activities of the females.

Respondents report a change in the lifestyles of Muslim families, whereby they are adapting to British society. This allows greater freedom, as well as better educational opportunities for young Muslim women. Previous research suggests that education for females is viewed as a threat to the traditional customs and way of life of the Muslim community (Jawad and Benn, 2003). However, the current research found that the general consensus among the respondents was that daughters' education was a priority for Muslim parents who encouraged educational success. In turn, this leads to change for Muslim women, are becoming more confident, independent and career-minded, often delaying marriage. Therefore, it is clear that Muslim families are changing towards integration into values more consistent with western societies.

Findings from the current study highlight the importance placed on educational success and becoming independent. All of the respondents in the current study were able to continue post-compulsory education, which was viewed as

liberating and positive as well as empowering for these young women. The data revealed that young British-Muslim women have high career aspirations, and were keen to become more independent and build a career for themselves. It seems that living in Britain, gaining an education and building their careers had given young British-Muslim women greater confidence. It is clear that young Muslim women are less willing to accept the traditional 'woman's role' than their mothers. Furthermore, they felt that they were active members of the western society by joining the workforce, hence integrating into society. Thus, young Muslim women's social position is changing from a traditional home-making role, to that with much more freedom and autonomy.

Young British-Muslim women in the current study appear to have much more freedom than previous studies reported (Shaw, 2000; Din, 2001; Talbani and Hasanali, 2000; Hennink et al, 1999). The respondents valued the freedom given to them to be able to make their own decisions, and consequently, felt they had ownership of their life. These young women reported that they had the freedom to socialise and go on holidays, but also acknowledged that not all Muslim females had the same opportunities. In line with previous findings (for example, Basit, 1997), the young women in the sample expressed their openness to arranged marriages or marrying someone from their parent's country of origin. However, it is noteworthy that these young women were an active member in the consultation process of choosing their marriage partner, thus, exercising their right to individual choice without wholly abandoning their parents' traditional customs. The respondents indicated that Muslim families were also changing in their views in relation to caste, especially where marriage is concerned, and felt it was a declining trend. In addition to freedom to socialise and choose their marriage partners, the young women had the freedom to choose their clothing and decide whether to wear the hijab or not. This finding is consistent with Dwyer (2000) who also argues that dress is an important means through which young Muslim women negotiate their identities. Half of the sample in the current study wore the hijab and cited religious reasons for doing so, but stressed it was based solely on their personal choice, and had not been enforced by their families.

The data illustrates the complexity of identity. Respondents felt a strong allegiance to Britain, which they considered to be their home and emphasised belonging in the western society. Clothing was influential in shaping the identities of these young women, as they felt they fit in with their peers. This is in line with Ryan (2011) who suggests that clothing is a means through which gender and religious values are perceived. These women believed they had adapted to western society and were an integral part of it, and they prioritised their British identity. However, despite their strong British identities, many of the women viewed being 'westernised' as negative and associated the term with the problems of British society such as alcohol and lack of morals.

Previous studies have assumed that being exposed to two or more cultures causes some tensions and conflicts between dissatisfied young people and their families (Joly, 1995; Abbott, 1998; Din, 2001). In the current research, it appears that the young women's British identities did not contradict the religious identities of these young women; they were creating their own identity combining their experiences of British society and western influences with their religious values. Most of the respondents in the study were comfortable with their multiple identities, and they stated that they can proficiently express their identity in both cultures. The respondents suggested they benefited from experiencing and felt privileged to experience both their parents' traditional values as well as western values. These findings are far removed from those suggested in previous literature of conflicting identities as the young women in the study were confident to assert their identity in both cultures. However, respondents were also frustrated at feeling as though they are not accepted by mainstream western society. Further, despite considering England as their home, respondents specifically mention that they do not consider themselves 'English' and none used the word when describing themselves, instead choosing 'British'. The general belief was that the word 'English' would only be used to describe white individuals. It is noteworthy that none of the respondents described their identities using their parents' country of origin.

It is apparent that hijab can hold many meanings for young British-Muslim women. It can be a visible religious symbol, or political, liberating and empowering. The young women in the study are aware that the hijab would make them more visible as a Muslim woman and, potentially, attract judgement. However, they feel confident in asserting their identity as Muslim women but at the same time, maintain that wearing the hijab does not change their personality. It appears there are right and wrongs to wearing the hijab, and respondents were clear that it should only be worn for religious reasons, and not as a façade, a form of deception or as a fashion statement. However, religious observance such as praying, deference and good character were given more prominence than the hijab. The respondents, despite not always agreeing with the wearing of the niqab, criticised a ban on wearing veils and felt it was contradictory to the very oppression that it was supposedly trying to eradicate.

The media is significant in shaping the perceived identities of young British-Muslim women. The respondents opposed the media portrayals of Muslim women as oppressed and felt that such a portrayal reinforces discrimination. Moreover, they reported that Muslim women were typecast as opposing 'British way of life' and consequently felt isolated and judged by the mainstream western society. The young women rejected conventional media portrayals and felt they were biased in their negativity about Muslims. The respondents' commented that Muslim women are further portrayed in the media as uneducated, subjugated and victimised but are never shown as successful career women (which, indeed, some of the sample thought they were themselves). The increased media coverage, that too of negative portrayals, has led to differential treatment of Muslim women, especially hijab-wearing women.

In relation to religion, it is clear that Islam is important to all twelve respondents, irrespective of their ages or stages of life. In line with previous findings (Lewis, 2007), the young women were seeking to gain knowledge about their religion

and felt empowered to have a better understanding of Islam. As a result of this increased religious knowledge, these women felt they understood Islam better and were able to distinguish between religion and culture. However, they felt that their parents confused the two and expressed their frustration at this infusion. The young women in the study argued that the negative stories in the media, such as honour killings and forced marriages, were as a result of cultural values, and not religious. The data revealed that these women gave priority to religion over culture, and felt that Islam had a greater universal application. For respondents who were parents themselves, it was important for them to ensure that their children were taught religious rather than cultural values. Such notions, they said, reinforce gender roles and emphasise the ways in which young British-Muslim women are expected to uphold the family's religious integrity (Dwyer, 2000).

The current study has highlighted the experiences of young British Muslim women's life in Britain, providing insight into the many factors that influence their identities which need to be considered by family members, UK policy-makers and media corporations. The research evidence has demonstrated the complexities of young British-Muslim women's lives, resulting from various factors, such as religion, culture, socialisation and education, influencing and shaping their identities. Interestingly, the data revealed that there is little of the 'culture clash' discussed in the literature review as the second-generation is actively rejecting culture, instead prioritising their religious identities over cultural values, yet still felt confident to assert their British identities. This research has demonstrated that young British-Muslim women are strong, confident and proud to be British, yet maintain their religious commitment. They are able to challenge their parents' traditional cultural practices with their increased knowledge of Islam. It is clear that negative portrayals and stereotypes about Muslim women lead to discrimination. In order to abate the stereotyping, it is necessary to aid understanding through increased contact and dialogue between young British-Muslim women and the indigenous population.

There are several limitations in this study which must be acknowledged. First, respondents were all of Pakistani heritage, although it was not the aim of this research to study one particular group of British-Muslim women. This was simply as a result of the accessibility of participants. The researcher faced many problems in recruiting participants, for two categories in particular – sixth form students and homemakers. The purpose of this study was to more deeply understand the experiences of the participants as young British-Muslim women, and the negotiation and construction of their identities. While the findings of the study may offer some insight into the experiences and influences on identity, they are not intended to be applied to all young British-Muslim women. They are specific to the women in this study, therefore findings should be considered as tentative.

It is noteworthy that I knew some of the women I interviewed much better than others; however, this did not seem to affect the quality of the interviews. The women were all comfortable to discuss not only the general portrayal of women, but also their personal experiences. Clearly, gender had an important part in not only building a trusting relationship with the participants, but also to generate a conversational communication. As Butler (2001) notes, male researchers have previously reported problems involving Muslim women, who refrain from contact with unrelated males. My status as a woman, therefore, was a necessary part of the study.

The women in the study were able to relate to me as a young British-Muslim woman, with an understanding of religious and cultural issues. Furthermore, on the basis of age and gender, as well as the fact that they had been born and educated in British society, we shared much in common. These various factors all helped to produce a very easy relationship with the young women involved in this research. As a young British-Muslim woman, my position as a researcher has empowered me to understand the experiences described by the participants. I have endeavoured to ensure neutrality and fairness in my interpretations, and to illuminate the variety of these women's experiences.

The greatest revelation is how young British-Muslim women construct their identities from their experiences of life in Britain, while accepting and at times challenging their family values. Although, it is clear in recent years, the lifestyles of Muslim families have undergone change, it is important to investigate to what extent the process of adaptation and change has occurred. Furthermore, it would be prudent to investigate other religious or ethnic groups to determine whether they have gone through a similar process of change over the years.

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Appendix 1

Experiences of life in Britain: Young British-Muslim women negotiating their identities

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You are being invited to take part in this study. Before you decide to take part it is important that you understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully and discuss it with me if you wish. Please do not hesitate to ask if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information.

Background to the study:
The aim of this research project is to investigate young British-Muslim women's experiences of life in Britain, as they negotiate their identities as British-Muslim women. I am also interested in British-Muslim women's experiences and/or views on the hijab.

In order to research this topic I would like to hear from a number of young women at different stages of their lives to discuss the topic. This could include those who have just finished high school, are currently in higher education or are working women as well as homemakers.

Can I take part?
If you are a British-Muslim woman, aged 16-34 years old, and are interested in taking part in the study I would like to hear from you.

What will I need to do?
If you agree to take part in the research an interview will be conducted by the researcher. The interviews will last around an hour in length and will be audio taped for the purpose of transcription. The interview can happen in any location that is most convenient and comfortable for you. For example, I can make arrangements to interview in your own home or at an alternative venue, such as a room at the University.

Will my identity be disclosed?
All information disclosed within the interview will be kept confidential, except where legal obligations would necessitate disclosure by the researchers to appropriate personnel.

What will happen to the information?
All interview data, both digital and paper copies will be strictly confidential. Only myself and my supervisory team will have direct access to this data. All data will be kept in a secure location on site at the University of Huddersfield and will be destroyed no more than ten years after publication of the research. Up until then data may be used for subsequent research studies.

What happens after the interview?
All information collected from you during this research will be kept secure and any identifying material, such as names and places will be removed in order to ensure anonymity. Once the interviews have been transcribed they will then be analysed and the analysis written up for a Masters dissertation. It is important to make you aware that in the write-up some direct quotes from your interview may be used. However, all personal details will be changed and so it will not be possible for those reading the analysis to identify you.

It is anticipated that the findings of the research will, at some point, be disseminated more widely through journal publications, academic conferences and research reports.

Your participation in this study is strictly voluntary and you have the full right to withdraw at any time, without having to explain your reasons. You are free to stop the interview at any time if you do not wish to continue and withdraw your data. Additionally, if having completed the interview you decide that you wish to remove yourself from the study all data will be destroyed and not included in the study. Please also be aware that you are not obliged to answer all of the questions posed to you in the interview. If there is a question you would rather not answer please just say and I will move on to the next.

If you would like a copy of your transcript after the interview has taken place please mention this after the interview or contact me at any point thereafter. I can also make a summary of the research findings available to you once the study has been completed – again, please let me know.

Who can I contact for further information?
If you require any further information about the research, please contact me:

Iram Ali
u0852561@hud.ac.uk
07921801663

Dr Abigail Locke (main supervisor)
a.locke@hud.ac.uk

Appendix 2

Experiences of life in Britain: Young British-Muslim women negotiating their identities

Researcher: Iram Ali

Interview consent form

It is important that you read, understand and sign the consent form. Your contribution to this research is entirely voluntary and you are not obliged in any way to participate, if you require any further details please contact your researcher.

I have been fully informed of the nature and aims of this research □

I consent to taking part in it □

I understand that I have the right to withdraw from the interview at any time without giving any reason and a right to withdraw my data if I wish □

I give my permission for my interview to be audio recorded □

I understand that the information collected will be kept in secure conditions at the University of Huddersfield □

I understand that no person other than the researcher and supervisory team will have access to the original recording and the resulting transcripts □

I give permission for my words to be quoted (by use of pseudonym) □

I understand that my identity will be protected by the use of pseudonym in the report and that no written information that could lead to my being identified will be included in any report or publication resulting from this research □

If you are satisfied that you understand the information and are happy to take part in this project please put a tick in the box aligned to each sentence and sign below.

Signature of Participant:	Signature of Researcher:
Print:	Print:
Date:	Date:

(Two copies of this consent should be completed. One copy to be retained by Participant and one copy to be retained by Researcher)

Appendix 3

Interview schedule

The interview schedule will consist of a semi-structured interview; however the questions I use will fit according to the participant's responses.

Indicative Interview Schedule (order and wording may change):

Topic Area: General

Can you tell me a little bit about yourself?

(Age, occupation, level of education)

Tell me a bit about your life at home

(Traditional values/liberal)

Does your home life differ from your work/school life? Do you feel there are cultural differences?

(home/school/uni/work)

Tell me how you navigate between these different settings/cultures

Topic area: Lifestyle/options

Do you work/study?

Choice of clothing

Socialising with friends

Do you have a partner?

Topic Area: Hijab

Do you wear/have you considered wearing the hijab?

What made you take that decision? - Religion, pressure, expression of own identity

What are your experiences or views on the hijab?

How do you feel the hijab is portrayed in the media compared to your experiences?

Topic Area: Media

How do you feel about the media portrayal of Muslim women?

(Is it fair? different to your own experiences?) Shafilea Ahmed?

Can you identify with those portrayals?

How would you describe yourself?

Topic Area: Identity

What do you consider is meant by being westernised?

What are your thoughts on 'western' identity?

Do you consider yourself 'westernised'?

How do you identify yourself?

- Do you consider yourself British/Muslim woman?
- Your identity as a British Muslim woman.
- Imposition of western values on other cultures?

Appendix 4

Appendix 5

THE UNIVERSITY OF HUDDERSFIELD
School of Human and Health Sciences – School Research Ethics Panel

OUTLINE OF PROPOSAL
Please complete and return via email to:
Kirsty Thomson SREP Administrator: hhs_srep@hud.ac.uk

Name of applicant: Iram Ali

Title of study: Experiences of life in Britain: Young British Muslim women negotiating their identities

Department: Human and Health Sciences Date sent: 19th June 2012

Issue	Please provide sufficient detail for SREP to assess strategies used to address ethical issues in the research proposal
Researcher(s) details	Iram Ali Masters by Research Student
Supervisor details	Abigail Locke School of Human and Health Sciences HHRB 3/02 University of Huddersfield Queensgate Huddersfield HD1 3DH Email: a.locke @hud.ac.uk Telephone: 01484 472063
Aim / objectives	**Study aims and research questions:** 3. To investigate if young British Muslim women experience a conflict in culture in their everyday lives. 4. To examine how these women negotiate their identities as young British Muslim women. **Design of study:** This is a qualitative research study investigating the experiences of young British Muslim women negotiating their identities. The research questions above will be investigated through conducting semi-structured interviews with approximately **20** young women at different stages of their lives, comprising of 4 samples - some who have recently completed their final year in high school, some who are currently in higher education as well as working women and homemakers.
Brief overview of research methodology	Data will be collected using semi-structured interviews, as this enables the participant to provide a fuller, richer account (Braun and Clark, 2006). In addition, semi-structured interviews allow the researcher flexibility in probing areas of interest, with the respondent leading the interview (Smith and Osborne, 2003). Thus building a relationship with the participant and help them to speak openly. The interviews will be digitally recorded, transcribed and then analysed using qualitative analyses. Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA), as outlined by Smith and Osborne (2003), will be adopted to analyse the data in order to understand the lived experience of individuals, how they make sense of them and the personal meanings those experiences hold.

Permissions for study	The researcher is able to access the participants through opportunistic sampling and acquaintances.
Access to participants	Participants will be recruited through an opportunity sample in which participants will respond through the researcher's contacts at university. In addition, the remaining participants will be recruited through acquaintances.
Confidentiality	All participants will be guaranteed confidentiality of the data gathered from their interview. Information about confidentiality will be included in the information sheets to advise participants that: 1. The data collected and the interview transcripts that follow will be viewed by the researcher and supervisory team. Excerpts of the data may also be published in conference papers, journal articles and research reports at the end of the study. 2. All data will be treated confidentially. The study will be fully compliant with the data protection act. Paper data will be kept in a locked filing cabinet at The Queensgate Campus, University of Huddersfield. All the electronic files will be password protected and the only the researcher and the supervisory team will know the password and able to access the data. This is a secure and robust way of storing electronic data. The audio data will be retained at the University of Huddersfield, for a period of 5 years, after which it will be destroyed in an appropriate and secure way. Paper records will be shredded, pulped or incinerated and electronic documents will be deleted or overwritten. Participants will be advised in the information sheet that their data that direct quotes may be taken from the transcripts, although it will be stressed that these will be anonymised.
Anonymity	Procedures used to protect anonymity will be outlined in the information sheets given to participants and it will be checked that they understand these procedures on the consent forms. Pseudonyms will be used in place of real names in the interview transcripts for both the names of participants and significant others they may mention throughout the interview. Direct references to names of organizations or places will also be altered.
Psychological support for participants	It is not anticipated that the participants will suffer any psychological distress as a result of participating in this research. However, the researcher recognises that as with all social science research, participants may become upset. In the event that a participant becomes upset during the research process, the interview will pause and the interviewee will be asked whether they wish to continue. As has been noted, the participants are free to terminate the research process at any time and can choose not to answer specific questions. In the event that the participants feel that they need to discuss any issues with anyone further, the researcher will provide a list of places that offer support, including Womenspace, Hamara Centre Leeds, and Asian Youth Alliance (AYA).
Researcher safety / support (attach complete University Risk Analysis and Management form)	See attached Risk Analysis and Management form.
Identify any potential conflicts of interest	There are no identifiable potential conflicts of interest. However, it is to be noted that the researcher herself is a young British Muslim woman also.
Please supply copies of all relevant supporting documentation electronically. If this is not available electronically, please provide explanation and supply hard copy	
Information sheet	See attached
Consent form	See attached
Letters	See attached
Questionnaire	N/A
Interview guide	See attached for interview schedule

Dissemination of results	Findings may also be disseminated more widely through journal publications and academic conferences. The final report and executive summary will be made available on the Institutional Repository at the University of Huddersfield. The participants were made aware on the information sheets that they could contact the researcher for the findings of the study and also for a copy of their anonymised data transcript.
Other issues	N/A
Where application is to be made to NHS Research Ethics Committee	N/A
All documentation has been read by supervisor (where applicable)	Please confirm. This proposal will not be considered unless the supervisor has submitted a report confirming that (s)he has read all documents and supports their submission to SREP

All documentation must be submitted to the SREP administrator. All proposals will be reviewed by two members of SREP.

If you have any queries relating to the completion of this form or any other queries relating to SREP's consideration of this proposal, please contact the SREP administrator (Kirsty Thomson) in the first instance – hhs_srep@hud.ac.uk

Appendix 6

THE UNIVERSITY OF HUDDERSFIELD
SCHOOL OF HUMAN AND HEALTH SCIENCES – SCHOOL RESEARCH ETHICS PANEL

SUPERVISOR REPORT
Please complete and return via email to:
Kirsty Thomson SREP Administrator: hhs_srep@hud.ac.uk

Name of student: Iram Ali

Title of study: Experiences of life in Britain: Young British Muslim women negotiating their identities

Name of course (if not MPhil or PhD) Masters by Research

Name of supervisor(s): Abigail Locke, Grainne McMahon

Date: 7th December 2012

I confirm that I have (a) read all documentation submitted to SREP in respect of the above research project and (b) support its submission to SREP. I also confirm that a Risk Analysis has been conducted in accordance with University requirements.

Please identify all documents seen below:

Letters (specify)	x
Participant information sheet	x
Participant consent form	x
Interview schedule	x
Questionnaire	n/a
NHS REC form	n/a
University of Huddersfield Risk Analysis and Management form	X
Other	

Signed (if submitting hard copy):

Please note:

No application submitted by a student will be considered by SREP without a fully completed Supervisor Report

If you have any queries relating to the completion of this form or need any other information relating to SREP's consideration of this proposal, please email hhs_srep@hud.ac.uk

Appendix 7

Interview Transcript

Can you tell me a bit about yourself?

Well, erm, I'm 26 years old, I live in [place] and I work full time. I went to college and took a gap year… I started working full-time; erm… and I never really went back into studies.

Can you tell me a little bit about your life at home?

Erm, well I come from a very large family – I have 10 siblings, and I live at home at the moment... with my parents and a few of my siblings. And it's a very busy house… as you can imagine (laughs).

And, how would you describe your life at home?

Erm, I enjoy my home life but I do think erm, with me being born in the UK that my views are slightly different to my parents. Erm… but I do find then, that on the other hand, with my sisters and my younger brothers, that our views are sometimes similar… in the sense of the western culture… but then again, I really do like some of the more traditional and cultural aspects of my heritage… with having Pakistani parents.

What views or values of yours are different from your parents?

Erm, just… certain things, like socialising - their view on that… going out. And sometimes…. Their views on family members, like other family members. Like I very much appreciate and respect immediate family, and maintain the relationship… but with extended family members… like my parents would say keep an even keel with them and that… but I feel that if people don't make the effort then you shouldn't have the need to make more effort just because of your culture or the fact that you are an Asian.

So, you feel there's that extended-family respect because of culture?

Absolutely, because erm, I think they are very conscious of the social aspect… so within the community. And erm, it's a respect factor… not just of what they think of others but what others think of them! Erm, sometimes, I think… you know, live life as you want, erm be happy and go on without having to please other people… to tiptoe around.

Do you mean doing what's best for you?

No! no, no… I wouldn't say I do what's best for me… erm but I just think that sometimes, I don't think THAT far ahead about what everyone else is gonna think when I do certain things in life.

Does your home life differ from your work life?

Yes and no. I say that because, coming from a large family… I have sisters who are highly educated, they've got into uni and done well, and gone on to pursue further… a sister who's working for a large law firm and a brother who's got a degree. So the mind-set is similar that education is important, being part of the western culture that we live in, is important. So at work, I have the same… people… we have people who have similar views on life, but then I've got friends at work who are from the same background or similar… who have same beliefs… so even though sometimes I'm at work I'll have people saying things about religion – views similar to my own. But then at home I'll have someone say something about the western culture that I totally agree on, so it is a mix. I think coming from a large family, with so many people in the house, there are quite a few people with different opinions… which I think we are really lucky. I do think that it's down to my parents that we have been brought up knowing what's right and what's wrong. And sort of… being left to our own devices… to make our own decisions.

So, you've had a traditional input, but you…. (Question interrupted)

…We've been able to make our own minds up. We've never had it that 'you must do this' or whatever. It's more of… we've been educated in the right way, erm about how we should… how the religion is and how we're expected to behave. But I don't think that's part of religion erm in a way it is, but in a way its more respect and manners, which I think sometimes, in today's society is missing. So it's good parenting skills. It's a mix of religion and culture I guess.

How do you navigate between these settings… you home life and work life?

There are certainly different things I'd do at home than when I'm out with friends to socialise… maybe different activities. But when I'm at home, it tends to kind of… erm, more family suitable. I am a very… very loud character; it's hard to tone it down, just based on the fact that I'm now at home. I'm very comfortable in either setting… whether that be social setting… out with my friends or my work colleagues or being at home – I am very loud… quite a bold character. It would be hard to tame that down, so I would… between the two settings of being at work or at home, I'd say there's very little difference - between what I do and say, not a lot. I am basically who I am… I think it would be too much

effort to be one person at home and one when I'm out… that would be quite confusing.

So, tell me a bit about your work…

Erm, I'm currently employed fulltime, I've been working for this large organisation for almost 3 years… it's one of THE largest energy providers in the UK. I'm working on a project… in smart homes.. it's a fairly new department so it's exciting, there's lots going on there, but I work with a good bunch… it never gets boring, there's something always going on (laughs)

You mentioned earlier that you took a gap year and then started working… how did that decision come about?

It was my decision, erm when I finished college… I wanted to get into something completely different to what I'm doing now. I wanted to get into medical work, erm maybe as a nurse, but at the time it felt like the right time to take a job… erm between the academic years. I managed to land myself a permanent role working for [Company name], under one of the insurance companies there. And again, it developed quite fast… I got my teeth in… worked in quite a few projects there, erm was spotted quite quickly to progress… erm so I thought that was a good way to progress, rather than going back into studying. I did find that there were an awful lot of people who have got into university, erm got themselves a… you know… a commendable degree but they were still working in like a call centre… so I didn't see why I would go back to get a degree to potentially come back and do the job I was already doing, so it was almost like… if people have got degrees, got themselves in debt and they were still doing the same job that I was doing, I thought it was… beneficial for me to continue working than going back.

Can you tell me about your choice of clothing… at home or work?

Well, I think initially my parents… as I say… they did think… well maybe… yeah they thought that I would have grown up to wear the traditional Asian clothing, like *shalwaar kameez*. But as I've grown older, and got into college and found my own identity, I wore clothes I thought I would fit in with people… how I would feel comfortable, I think that's the most important thing now. When I dress, I make a conscious note to dress for my comfort rather than to please others… so I guess I've been lucky that… you know, my parents weren't happy with it at the beginning… there wasn't arguments as such, but it was frowned upon and 'oh, you're wearing that?' and then it sort of became acceptable to them… because it's always been modest… you know, I've always been quite respectful… you know, covering legs… and things like that. There have not

been any issues with revealing clothing or anything like that. So I think there's not been anything that they can say about… like, it's a concern.

So, you wear westernised clothes… not the traditional shalwaar kameez?

Yeah, yeah. And I do like wearing those as well [*shalwaar kameez*] when obviously the occasion arises, like at festivals… on Eid or weddings, or maybe a family function. Even if a few people turned up wearing western clothes, I would still rather have that chance of dressing up in traditional clothes… it is almost… a privilege… to be able to… to flitter between the two!

You mentioned earlier about socialising with friends and work colleagues, can you expand on that and tell me about your social life?

Erm… well I do have a very good… close-knit circle of friends, but… somewhere along the lines I think my parents are slightly judgemental on them. Maybe, they think that some of them lead me astray… which is not the case, erm if anything does come about that something happens, i.e. the decisions I make or the actions I take is generally because I want to, not because I've been forced to. Erm, with one particular friend, erm my mother does seem to think that she has an overpowering bad influence on me, so if I've got home late she would assume that we were up to something. So, I don't have many friends over to mine… my mum is always… you know, welcoming when they do come! But it is very rare.

Ok, so your parents are sometimes judgemental about your friends – what sort of influence do they have on your decisions when you go out?

They don't have any control, in a sense that if I had make plans with a friend to go out I would go out… unless a family emergency came up. But there's still that… I still have in the back of my mind that there's a respectable time to be back home. Erm I think that is a cultural… and religious thing…you know to be home at a certain time. Like, according to religion, we're not supposed to drink… drink alcohol. I know it's bad, like, other Muslims do it, and whoever comes to know of it… kinda looks down on them. So that is influenced by… I dunno, my parents – not drinking knowing I can't coz of my religion. But it's all about not pushing the boundary… and in a way, I prefer the fact that I've always known that there are certain limits… because it means that maybe I have stopped myself from doing things I wasn't supposed to do. There's a lot of temptation out there! I think not just for a person of religion or culture but… you know… certain things you do in life you regret and certain people you bump into… I mean, things like clubbing and dancing… all of that, that's not something that I agree with, obviously this is my personal opinion, I know people do it… like Muslims. But personally for me, I quite like the fact that

there's a certain time for me to be home and very often, when I have been out with my friends… who are white, they have said that they find it commendable that I prefer to go home rather than… as they say 'risk it' and stay out, push the boundaries and see what happens, until my parents accept that this is what the norm is now. Even now at the age of 26, I'm normally home at a reasonable hour.

Ok… Do you have a partner?

I do, I got married in July this year… it's been a hectic few months since I got back! (laughs)

Again, was that your choice, or did your family have any influence on that?

Erm, yeah my family did have an influence on that… it wasn't anything of the sort that we hear in the media "oh it's a forced marriage" erm... it was, loosely termed, arranged marriage. We were both introduced as potential partners to see where its goes from there. And we did speak and get to know each other for about a year. Erm… so yes, they did arrange it… but it was all with the thumbs up from me. It wasn't like 'oh this is it, you're getting married!' erm… but from what I've seen… it.. I think you have more chance of an arranged marriage working than a love marriage… just from my experience. Where I've seen… how you've been treated differently from where it's an arranged marriage, where they know that the families are involved… erm not involved in everything you do and every decision that you make but just the mere fact that there's the respect element there. I know friends who've had love marriages where they've gone totally wrong… no respect for each other's parents, name calling, erm…. I'm not saying it doesn't happen in arranged marriages, I'm sure there are cases there. But just from what I've seen, I think there is yeah.

Have you ever worn the hijab or considered wearing the hijab?

I haven't at this stage considered wearing the hijab… coz I don't think erm… I don't know if the right word for it is 'ready'? Erm I don't know if there's a certain stage in life where you do become ready to do something like that… is it something you should be ready to do? Or is it something that we should be ready to accept… that should be done, that we SHOULD be doing? I personally feel that it wouldn't change anything in my personality or my behaviours or my character, by wearing the hijab… but maybe it would change other people's perspective of me i.e. if they look at me and they see me without the hijab they won't know instantly what faith I belong to, but when they see the hijab, they will know automatically and identify me as a Muslim. So maybe that would be, one of the benefits, it's not something to be ashamed on, of what religion you belong

to. But for me, the whole hijab factor is… the whole erm, you are more religious! You know… there's things in the religion that you should be doing before you think 'oh I should wear the hijab' there's things… you have to have respect for your family, you have to have respect for your partner, you have to have, erm knowledge of the religion, you have to pray 5 times a day. I think THOSE things are more important than wearing the hijab, so I think there's quite a few points to cover before I reach that decision.

So, for you, it would be more of a religious decision rather than pressure from anywhere?

Yeah, I don't think I'd ever be influenced, I've had people come up to me, where I have been at religious functions and they've said 'oh it really suits you, you should really wear it' erm but then again I've had people saying 'why don't you wear the hijab? You SHOULD wear it' where they face-on challenge me! Erm, 'it should cover your head, you get, you know good deeds etc' erm I don't think I'd ever be influenced or have that peer pressure put on me. As I said very early on in the conversation, that I am quite a strong, bold character and if I feel at that point in life, that something happens – on the back of something, or I make the decision that I need to wear it or I should wear it, then that would be solely based on my mind… my own decision.

Do you feel that wearing, or not wearing the hijab is an expression of identity?

I don't think the hijab effects it, and I think that nowadays there are a lot of people wearing it for different reasons, whereas it should just be for religious reasons. What I mean by that is that people do get pressured into wearing it, maybe by family or friends, or from their partner or their siblings if they've taken on that route, they kinda force that on people. But then again, I know of a few girls who have worn the hijab and it has been a mere act to cover, like a different persona that they have erm… being very westernised, very uncultured but yet they think it's almost… a cover-up for them. So I think that's a really fine line, we can't judge who wears it for the right reasons and who wears it for the wrong…. But you do hear people… because the hijab is a religious thing, you kind of put that character as a good character but when you hear them doing certain things and they wear the hijab, it is almost like bad influence… its bad… it's not a good sign.

What are your experiences, even of others wearing it, on the hijab?

I think there are a lot of people, unfortunately, in the western culture, who are very quick to judge. I've worked with many people… I've been working since I

was 18, I've worked with quite a few large companies… erm and because I say, I keep coming back to the point, where I am loud and a bit of a comedian should I say, and sometimes I do use my religion and my culture as a way of breaking the ice and I feel that from the western culture, they do find that amusing, where you crack a joke at your own expense because they're like 'oh, you're quite cool, we were thinking that!' so, sometimes you brush it off and say 'yeah its ok' but then on other occasions you like 'oh, you actually think like that?' I think a lot of people's opinions are that a lot… or majority of women who wear the hijab are forced to wear it. What we have to remember and respect is that… I'd say 80% of women, or maybe more… wear it out of choice and for the love of the religion.

How do you feel the hijab is portrayed in the media?

Definitely negatively, with the last… obviously the ban in France, you know, forcing them to take it off. And certainly I agree if you're driving, to take it off, coz it could be a distraction, but that's obviously with the niqaab – which is the covering up of the face, you know and just the eyes visible. I think that's…. I wouldn't… I'd say it's going a bit far, in the sense for a teacher, where you need to use expressions, you need them to be able to see the face, you need to be able to trust the face. As I say… teachers are very much like parents, so I think that on some aspects I do agree that erm the niqaab shouldn't be worn in certain activities but everyone should have the freedom of dressing how they want. Because if you look at erm, other religions… like nuns, they can wear their religious outfit without being judged. To this day, I can't remember an article or newspapers clip or anything in the media or news or radio for that matter… ANYTHING, any sort of information about a nun being judged for the way she is dressed. Or a rabbi… you know from the Jewish faith or from any other religion, I've not seen anyone being judged but Muslims. So I think the media does definitely pinpoint against Muslims.

How does the media portrayal of women compare with your own experiences of people that you may know who wear the hijab?

Erm… there's a girl who I work with, who wears the hijab, she's married and she's got a child with another one on the way, she said she wears it because it protects her from other guys being attracted to her and covers her modestly. She thinks, when she has the hijab on it's almost a sign 'respect me' erm and when she is approached and people do speak to her, they speak to her with respect, so that's the reason she wears it. Whereas, on the other hand I know people who wear it because it's almost a fashion statement now, with all the different designs you can get. There are different reasons, only the person wearing it can answer why they wear it. Not many, in my experience… even if

they wear it for, let's say the wrong reasons; it's still their choice, ultimately – not forced on them. For whatever reasons, whether it's a cover-up, for religious reasons or just a respect matter… erm or whatever.

And generally, how do you feel the media portrays Muslim women?

I think we have… I think Muslim women get judged quickly, before they say… erm what we do professionally, or how we've impacted certain things… before they go on to that, we're classed as Muslims. That's the first thing, but you won't hear of anyone… for example, in the house of parliament, you won't hear of anyone from there being called a Christian or a Jewish women, you won't hear their faith being brought forward first, before their name… almost as their identity. I don't understand why the faith is brought forward before that person's professional status or whatever. A lot of Muslims are identified by their religion first, and I think it does give them… in a way, we're highlighted and we shouldn't be highlighted, but then on the other hand, we do have things like erm… things mentioned in the media, you know, the honour killings… erm… the young girl, Shafilea, who, you know, who's case recently was brought to our attention by the media, where you found that she was quite westernised erm, she wanted to be quite outgoing and social and liberal… but she felt her parents were holding her back. Erm, and as such, they took her to, well the story is that they took her back to Pakistan and tried to get her… a forced marriage, which went quite wrong and she came back and she… as we all know… unfortunately, she was murdered. Erm… and following the interview and things… erm by the media, I have seen the interview where her sister confessed that her parents had killed her. So yeah we do get, I think, the rough end of the stick sometimes, but on occasions where maybe, erm, someone from the western culture, murdering someone… you don't get in the media that a Christian person has done this, it's explained that they are cold-blooded or whatever, and limited to that person, it's not that the whole religion is like that. Whereas with us, it's always a Pakistani…Muslim… you know, the religion is always targeted.

So, religion is emphasised?

Absolutely! That it's this… it must be because they're from this religion… we all get tarnished. It is, I do think it's quite unfair.

From your personal experience, does that cultural clash exist the way it's portrayed so much in the media, between the younger generation and their parents?

Like I mentioned, Shafilea wanted to be a bit more westernised and she was… obviously had liberal views whereas her parents didn't…. Erm I think there are a small minority, but the media, very often, likes to portray that as the norm for us.

It's like… sensationalised and blown out of proportion… more than it exists. On the back of that, when I go into work or meet my friends and it's like 'oh, you guys do this' and it's like you've just painted us all with the same brush. And it's not the case, it's a very very VERY small minority, I'd say maybe, 5% of the Muslims in the world… where people do this. But then when you look at the rate of people in the western culture doing things such as murders, hurting their children, child abuse, the erm…parents where they have partners molesting the children… and in America you have the whole craze of someone going and shooting people down... you know. If you put all of what the western culture has done… maybe just for example from 2010 until 2012, and if you look at the percentage… of what they have done all around the world… and compare them to what the Muslim stories have been in the paper, it wouldn't even be a fraction of what the western culture has done but it's never portrayed as "so many people have done this, from this culture or religion" when it's the white or the western culture, but it's always highlighted when its Muslims.

So you feel it's quite an unfair portrayal?

Oh yeah, definitely!

Is there anything that you can identify with these portrayals, about Muslim women?

Erm… it would be unfair to say not at all, but I would say 99% of them are exaggerated… I mean it is the media, it's their job to make it interesting… they want their newspaper to be bought or they want their interview to be sold… they want their headlines to be on the front of the newspaper. I think a lot of it is exaggerated and you know… fabricated.

What do you consider is meant by being westernised?

Erm, I think… to be western… or to have a western identity is… I think a MASSIVE part of the western culture is the socialising, by that I mean going out, drinking, going clubbing, smoking and erm the mixing of the sexes… and having relationships – cohabitating. I think that's very much the western culture.

And what are your thoughts on a western identity?

Erm… I think… in the sense of cohabitating… that's not something, you know…. Any religion erm you know… condones up until you are married… that even in Christianity… in Judaism and basically any other faith you look at, it is the same, nothing of that sort is acceptable. So it's NOT just about religion… of you know Islam. Its Sikhism, Judaism… across the board, so I think that's the main factor… and it's definitely frowned upon. That is the actual reality of the western society… like my friends that is just the norm… I'm not saying that's

bad, I'm just saying that is their lifestyle, they don't have to think twice about it, whereas for us… for Muslims it would be a big deal. If you were from… perhaps Pakistan or India or anywhere in south Asia, for a young girl, you would be quite… erm house-trained and homely, and you know… your parents would tell you how to be and how to live your life, in a certain way and the clothes would be… the traditional Asian attire. You know… you would expect to wear it; there would not be any other choice, even if you wanted that would not be an option. So I think westernised, for me… is that you can be your own person here, where we can wear western clothes if you want or wear traditional clothes if you wants… erm, we have that freedom to make your own choices in life, that maybe women in Pakistan don't, if they WANT to be western. I think the consequences would be much worse, whereas here, it's accepted – if that is who you are, if that is how you've accepted… being in Britain, then its ok. It is very acceptable for a lot of people; even my friends are very much like me, and friends of friend, I'd say, pretty much 90% of the younger generation – my peers are in similar situations where they're working and their parents are fine with what they do… it's not erm… seen as overstepping boundaries…

So, it sounds like there is a move… for better integration in society, is that right?

I think so, yeah! And that's more because we are, what you call, the second-generation in the UK and… erm we are educated, we speak English, we're able to communicate, we're able to integrate with people from different cultures and… integrate with our white counterparts… people from the western culture. Well, I say that but I am westernised – this is me! It's my identity as well, but just to make a point about integrating… because we work. Well, you know, my mother, she never worked and she's been a housewife for as long as I can remember – as long as SHE can probably remember, she's not had a job, so with me going out, integrating with the workforce, making my own friends, you know… meeting them after work, I think, even the next generation is gonna be leaps and bounds in terms of better jobs, higher education erm we already have a massive breakthrough already with the amount of people that a progressing now from certain ethnic minorities and religions.

My next question was how you identify yourself… you already mentioned a word -'westernised'. What are your thoughts?

I think I am westernised in the sense, erm… you know, unless it is a religious occasion or function… or I'm going to erm, a family members house. Otherwise I am in my jeans, my top, dresses… erm I go on holidays, I work, and I do still appreciate the religion and practice when I can. Erm, so I think, there's a mix, that's there.

So, you think you're religion is part of your identity also?

Yeah, because I've known nothing different… If I was brought with no religion and then it was interjected into my life, say maybe at 10, or even at a later stage in life, then I would have been 'hang on a minute'. But when you know no different, that is all you know… to bring both together… and make it work.

Appendix 8

1st level coding	2nd level coding
Work and education	Independent
Views different to parents	Clash
Similar views to Siblings on western culture	Liberal
Also likes heritage/culture	Balance
Views differ on socialising	Clash
Culture not reason enough	Cultural indifference
Conscious of social aspect/community	Social image
Respect from others	Social image
What others think of them	Social image
Own views different	Independence
Siblings educated	Education
Education and being part of society	Integrate/Education
Parents taught values/morals	Upbringing
Being able to make up own mind	Independence
Educated about religion and manners	Morals/values
Mix of religion and culture	Balance
Home and social life differ	Clash
I am who I am	Own person/Identity
Too much effort	
Same person	Identity
Working for large organisation	Career/ambition
Company status	Ambition
Own decision	Freedom of choice
Right time to get a job	Career
Development and progression	Career/ambitions/valued
Progression	Ambition
Beneficial for me to work	Own decision
Parents wanted traditional clothes	Expectations
Found own identity	Identity
Clothes to fit in	Belonging
No longer dresses to please others	
Parents weren't happy initially	Clash
Parents accepted choice of clothing	Change
Dress modestly	
Like wearing traditional clothes on occasions	Culture/Traditional
Privilege to flitter between 2 cultures	Balance
Parents judge friends	
Make own decisions	Independent
Parents don't have control	Freedom
Respectable time	Boundaries

Alcohol frowned upon	Judged
Not drinking due to religion	Religious/boundaries
Not pushing the boundaries	Boundaries
Prefer to have limits	Boundaries
Prefer to have limits	Boundaries
White friends admire self-restraint	Respect/acceptance
Parents eventually accept	Pushing boundaries
Parents had influence on marriage	Influence
Not a forced marriage	Media
Was arranged but had a choice	Joint decisions
Haven't considered wearing hijab	Own decision/Hijab
'Ready' for hijab	Questioning hijab
Hijab wouldn't change personality or character	Same person/Expression of identity/questioning hijab
Other people's perspective	Perceived identity/religious identity
Hijab as religious symbol	Perceived identity/Hijab
Not ashamed of religion	Religious connection
Character & morals more important than hijab	Questioning hijab
Would not be influenced	Influence/Own decision
Challenged about hijab	Influence
Bold, strong character	
Own decision	Freedom of choice
Different reasons for hijab	Questioning hijab
Some people forced to wear hijab	Pressure
Hijab a front	Deception
Hijab as religious symbol	Expectations/hijab
Western people judge	Negativity/discrimination
Crack a joke at own expense/religion	Belonging
Perception of hijab	Hijab
Most women wear it out of choice	Religious identity
Negative image	Media
Agree with niqaab ban	
Everyone should dress how they want	Freedom of choice
No other religion judged	Muslims targeted
Media highlights Muslims	Muslims targeted
Hijab for modesty	Hijab
Hijab as a sign of respect	Hijab
Hijab as fashion statement	Hijab
Even if fashion statement, still own decision	Hijab/freedom of choice
Muslim women judged	Media/negative image
Religion as extra label	Muslims targeted
Comparing Muslims to others	
Muslims identified/highlighted	
Honour killings	Media
Girl wanted to be westernised/liberal	Culture clash

but parents opposed	
Rough end of the stick	Muslims targeted
Comparing to other religions/limited to individual	Muslims targeted
Religion is targeted	
All tarnished	
Small minority experience culture clash	Media sensationalise/class as norm
Blown out of proportion	Media sensationalise
People believe the media	Media/negative image
Small minority	Media highlight Muslims
Comparison to western culture	
Comparison to western culture	
Exaggerated media portrayal of Muslim women	Media
Media just after a good story	
Exaggerated and fabricated	Media
Westernised is socialising	Western identity
Western identity	
Comparison to other religions	
Cohabiting the norm	Western identity
Not acceptable for Muslims	Freedom of choice
Comparison to traditional settings	
Western is being your own person	Identity
Freedom of choice	
Western identity accepted in Britain	
Younger generation more a part of society & parents accept	change/acceptance/belonging
second-generation Muslims	Integration
I am westernised	Western identity
Different for mother	
Part of society/integration/belonging/change	
Westernised	Identity
Religious connection	Religious identity
mix of both	Balance
Known no different	Religion part of identity
Bring it together and make it work	Balance/religious identity