"Don't Talk About Where You're From, Pretend You're Dutch": The Belonging

Experiences of Dutch University Students With a Turkish or Moroccan Minority

Background During Secondary School

A.E.C. Snijders (1500783)

Faculty of Social Sciences, Utrecht University

Master's Program of Educational Sciences

Master's Thesis (201600025)

Supervisor: Dr. F. Z. Çolak

Second assessor: Dr. A. Ben Shalom

12 June 2023

Word count: 8000

THE BELONGING EXPERIENCES OF DUTCH ETHNIC MINORITY STUDENTS

Abstract

This qualitative study addresses the research question: How have Dutch university students with a Turkish or Moroccan minority background experienced belonging during their time in secondary school? The study explicitly investigates three contributing factors to a sense of belonging: student-teacher interaction, curriculum, and the ethnic composition of schools. Fourteen participants shared their experiences during semi-structured interviews. Subsequently, thematic data analysis was conducted to identify recurring patterns. Findings revealed that students experienced instances where teachers cast them as representatives of non-Western countries, making them feel pressured. The participants expressed disappointment with the curriculum, which overlooked essential aspects of non-Western history and cultures. This insight contributed to students' insecurity about their cultural identity and fostered ignorance among their white peers. Students from predominantly white schools experienced difficulty expressing their cultural identity and developing connections with white peers. Conversely, students from culturally diverse schools could express their cultural identity more easily, with peers and teachers serving as influential role models. Findings indicate the urgency for schools to create an inclusive and culturally supportive environment to foster a sense of belonging for ethnic minority students.

Keywords: sense of belonging, interpersonal experience, curriculum experience, institutional experience, student-teacher interaction, ethnic composition, predominantly white, culturally diverse

Introduction

Dutch Turkish and Moroccan Muslims face accusations for their alleged unwillingness to integrate, posing a social concern for the white majority because it threatens their dominant societal position (Slootman, 2018). Another societal issue arises from the white Dutch majority's perception of Muslims as culprits jeopardizing Dutch culture. The Dutch public has stigmatized Islam as being illiberal, intolerant, and traditional (Uitermark et al., 2011). In response, the Dutch government has proposed cultural assimilation to address these issues (Slootman, 2018). Consequently, Turkish and Moroccan immigrants and their descendants must behave, reason, and identify as Dutch citizens, risking the abandonment of their cultural identity (Duyvendak, 2011). Despite Dutch Muslims' attempts to assimilate, their ethnic and religious markers continue to face disapproval (Vasta, 2007). The notion of cultural incompatibility extends to Dutch schools, where teachers' social biases may impact their assessment of students' academic performance (Boone & Van Houtte, 2013). Accordingly, teachers perceive students from lower social backgrounds as less academically competent (Slootman, 2018).

This bias results in teachers underestimating the abilities of ethnic minority students while overestimating those of their white majority peers, making ethnic minority students feel disconnected from their teachers (Van Caudenberg, 2020). Such othering causes these students to feel isolated (Kennedy et al., 2023). Maintaining emotional and academic well-being relies heavily on a sense of belonging, which refers to the connection students form with their school and its community (Gillen-O'Neel, 2021). Ethnic minority students who lack a sense of belonging in school suffer many consequences, such as negative emotions, increased absences, and a higher chance of dropping out (Van Caudenberg et al., 2020). The intensity of their sense of belonging can vary across schools depending on the level of cultural diversity. Greater ethnic diversity in education correlates positively with a stronger

sense of belonging for ethnic minority students (Van Praag et al., 2015). Culturally diverse schools offer teachers valuable exposure to students from diverse cultural backgrounds, enhancing their understanding and acceptance of ethnic minority students (Williams, 2018). Furthermore, culturally diverse schools often incorporate non-dominant narratives in the curriculum, making students feel validated (Marchitello & Trinidad, 2019). Teachers must interact with ethnic minority students to effectively integrate their perspectives into the learning content and acquire knowledge of their experiences, which fosters a sense of belonging for these students (Kennedy, 2011).

This study aims to investigate how student-teacher interaction, curriculum, and the ethnic composition of schools have contributed to Dutch students' sense of belonging with a Turkish or Moroccan minority background. This research holds significant social importance, as it can help identify barriers that have hampered these students in classroom settings (D'Hondt et al., 2021). By understanding their challenges, secondary schools can formulate more efficient policies and implement practices that foster equity and inclusivity in their schools (Leijgraaf, 2022). This study can bridge cultural gaps and reduce prejudice and discrimination against this demographic by fostering understanding among the broader population. In summary, this research highlights the impact of various factors on the sense of belonging of ethnic minority students, providing insight that can inform supporting school policies and practices.

Previous research has examined the belonging experiences of ethnic minority students within the American context (e.g., Gray et al., 2018; Ladson-Billings, 1995). Simultaneously, other research has addressed the belonging experiences across schools with culturally diverse student populations (e.g., Demanet et al., 2016; Van Tartwijk et al., 2009). However, most of these studies are conducted outside the Netherlands, primarily using quantitative methods, lacking an in-depth understanding of ethnic minority students' perspectives (e.g., Celeste et

al., 2019; Civitillo et al., 2021). Moreover, research focused on understanding the perspective of ethnic minority students has largely concentrated on contexts outside Dutch education (e.g., Çolak et al., 2020; Kennedy, 2011).

Therefore, the current study contributes to the existing literature by using qualitative methods to examine the belonging experiences among Dutch university students with a Turkish or Moroccan minority background during their time in secondary education. Additionally, the study investigates the contributing factors to a sense of belonging: interpersonal, curriculum, and institutional experiences. The study aims to answer the following primary research question and supporting sub-questions:

How have Dutch university students with a Turkish or Moroccan minority background experienced belonging during their time in secondary school?

1) How have Dutch university students with a Turkish or Moroccan minority background experienced the interaction with their teachers?
2) How have Dutch university students with a Turkish or Moroccan minority background experienced the curriculum?
3) How have Dutch university students with a Turkish or Moroccan minority background experienced the ethnic composition of their schools?
4) In what ways did these experiences shape their sense of belonging?

Theoretical Framework

The present study uses Gray et al.'s theory (2018) to examine the belonging experiences among Dutch university students with a Turkish or Moroccan minority background. Within this framework, a sense of belonging in school encompasses students' perceptions of acceptance, respect, and inclusion, which depend upon three components: interpersonal, curriculum, and institutional experiences (Gray et al., 2018). The first factor, interpersonal experience, pertains to students' interactions with their teachers (Tyler et al.,

2016). The second factor, curriculum experience, encompasses students' encounters with the learning content, which aids their acquisition of knowledge, skills, and attitudes (Best, 1989). The third factor, institutional experience, concerns students' experiences of cultural diversity within the student population (Thys & Van Houtte, 2016). Exploring these three components provides a holistic view of students' sense of belonging.

Gray et al. (2018) argue the cruciality of considering all three factors due to their interconnected relationships to comprehend students' belonging experiences in schools. Notably, these interconnections arise from a diverse student population, which enables teachers to interact with students from varied cultural backgrounds, enhancing their understanding of ethnic minority students (Williams, 2018). This understanding allows the incorporation of students' experiences into the curriculum (Kennedy, 2011). Simultaneously, a culturally responsive curriculum can potentially strengthen the interpersonal relationships between students and teachers (Gray et al., 2018). Moreover, content representation in the curriculum proves more effective in a culturally diverse school environment (Demanet et al., 2016). Therefore, this theory has relevant application to this study because it enables a nuanced understanding of ethnic minority students' experiences and the dynamics of the contributing factors regarding their sense of belonging. Van Caudenberg et al. (2020) highlight the importance of these factors as student-teacher interaction, curriculum, and ethnic composition in Belgium, thereby supporting the theory of belonging.

Interpersonal Experience

The interpersonal experience, central to this discussion, refers to the interactions between students and their teachers, forming the foundation for effective student-teacher relationships, instruction, and students' social development (Tyler et al., 2016). Indeed, meeting students' needs is fundamental to facilitating effective learning (Best, 1989).

However, cultural differences between students and teachers often create barriers that hinder teachers from building solid relationships with ethnic minority students (Beaty-O'Ferall et al., 2010). Furthermore, teachers who exhibit low trust in students' academic capabilities negatively influence their motivation, confidence, and academic performance, impacting their belonging experiences (Clycq et al., 2014).

While compassionate teachers can contribute to a supportive school culture for ethnic minority students (Civitillo et al., 2021), certain student-teacher interactions can inadvertently lead to misunderstandings and interpersonal conflicts (Makarova et al., 2019). Notably, not all teachers can effectively address cultural diversity (D'hondt et al., 2021). Teachers' characteristics may determine their attitudes toward students (Agirdag et al., 2012). For example, teachers from non-dominant backgrounds may exhibit more cultural understanding, whereas white majority teachers may encounter more difficulties comprehending Muslim students' cultural and religious practices, leading to instances of cultural insensitivity (Amjad, 2018). To illustrate, teachers tokenizing ethnic minority students treat them as representatives of their ethnic groups, a practice that reinforces stereotyping and contributes to the isolation of ethnic minority students (Schiff, 2014). Moreover, teachers who fail to recognize microaggressions inadvertently perpetuate harmful behaviors and bullying, thereby neglecting the need for ethnic minority students' sense of belonging (Moffit et al., 2019).

Discrimination and stereotyping from teachers contribute to student disengagement from classroom activities, as weak student-teacher relationship precludes teachers from incorporating students' interests and needs into the learning content (D'hondt et al., 2015). Teachers who struggle to form effective relationships with ethnic minority students contribute to widening the achievement gap (Van Caudenberg, 2020). Consequently, these students tend to demonstrate lower academic performance than their white majority peers (D'hondt et al., 2021). Nevertheless, student-teacher relationships can be improved, enabling

teachers to cultivate trust and gain insight into students' challenges and anxieties (Kennedy, 2011). Teachers can better understand students' interests and needs through student-teacher interactions, helping them design relevant curricular activities (Kennedy, 2011). The current study explores the interpersonal aspect by examining students' past experiences with teachers and how these experiences relate to their cultural backgrounds.

Curriculum Experience

The second factor is the curriculum experience, which entails students' experiences with the learning content that offers them opportunities to learn facts, acquire concepts, practice skills, and develop attitudes (Best, 1989). A curriculum that incorporates non-dominant perspectives and realities is pivotal in enhancing knowledge and understanding of cultural diversity among white majority students, thereby mitigating discrimination experiences (Verkuyten & Thijs, 2013). Nevertheless, Dutch education lacks a culturally responsive curriculum and generally offers one that emphasizes white-dominant narratives, such as the glorification of Dutch colonialism, while neglecting the importance of teaching cultural diversity (Leijgraaf, 2022; Moffit et al., 2019).

While the curriculum may incorporate elements of Turkish and Moroccan cultures, its primary focus revolves around assimilating Turkish and Moroccan individuals into the dominant culture (Verkuyten & Thijs, 2013). Such a lack of a culturally responsive curriculum fails to stimulate students to think critically about the perspectives of marginalized groups (Oakes et al., 2013). It typically centers around celebrating religious holidays while inadequately addressing discrimination (Schwarzenthal et al., 2022). This absence of a culturally responsive curriculum reinforces a whiteness norm, implying that certain ethnic groups do not belong (Graham et al., 2022).

Accordingly, valuing cultural practices would significantly enhance the student-teacher relationship, particularly with ethnic minority students (Van Tartwijk et al., 2009). Teachers can tailor their curriculum to students' needs by establishing personal connections with them, resulting in improved academic achievement (Kennedy, 2011). A curriculum that values students' perspectives can encourage teachers to cultivate positive student-teacher interactions (Gray et al., 2018). However, if teachers fail to effectively implement a culturally responsive curriculum, students may continue to face discrimination from their educators (Moffit et al., 2019). This study explores this aspect by investigating students' experiences of the curriculum concerning Turkish and Moroccan cultures and whether students perceived these experiences as positive or negative.

Institutional Experience

The third factor this research explores is students' institutional experience, which refers to their experiences with the level of cultural diversity within schools (Thys & Van Houtte, 2016). Gray et al. (2018) note that ethnic minority students often face discrimination in schools through segregation and policies that restrain their need for belonging. Notably, school segregation is prevalent in Dutch schools, resulting in an unequal distribution of students from diverse backgrounds (Boterman, 2019). However, culturally diverse schools can provide safer environments where ethnic minority students feel less victimized and more comfortable expressing their cultural identities (Van Caudenberg, 2020). The school populations in culturally diverse schools create different dynamics compared to predominantly white schools in terms of power and social support (D'hondt et al., 2015). For example, interaction with ethnic minority peers often contributes to a stronger sense of belonging (Leszczensky & Pink, 2017). However, ethnic minority students in culturally diverse schools may also face increased ethnic discrimination from their peers (D'hondt et

al., 2021). In such situations, students often engage in ethnic homophily, a tendency to selectively interact with peers from a similar ethnic background (Demanet et al., 2016).

Teaching in culturally diverse schools typically presents greater challenges for teachers than in predominantly white schools. This difficulty arises because teachers often lack knowledge of students' culturally rooted communication styles and their communities (Van Tartwijk et al., 2009). This deficiency impairs relationships with ethnic minority students, which is crucial for nurturing a sense of belonging (Beaty-O'Ferrall et al., 2010). However, culturally diverse schools can offer more opportunities for students to experience belonging, as teachers are often more exposed to different cultures and willing to learn about cultural differences than their counterparts in less diverse schools (Williams, 2018).

Teachers face challenges in establishing meaningful connections with ethnic minority students and incorporating their personal lives into the learning content (Kennedy, 2011). Culturally diverse schools tend to better prepare them to work in ethnically diverse contexts, unlike predominantly white schools, which often lack programs to equip teachers with diversity and equity skills (Sleeter, 2008). Moreover, culturally diverse schools generally offer more inclusive learning content that incorporates ethnic minority students' perspectives (Marchitello & Trinidad, 2019). Consequently, this study addresses the institutional experience by examining students' perceptions of cultural diversity in their schools.

Methodology

The present study used qualitative methods to explore the belonging experiences of Dutch university students with a Turkish or Moroccan minority background during their secondary school. Aligning with the social constructivist paradigm, this study acknowledges that the collected data cannot be isolated from the social environment in which it occurred.

Accordingly, the study assumes that individuals possess unique knowledge influenced by social interactions that shape their understanding of reality (Guba & Lincoln, 1994).

Participants

A total of 14 individuals participated in the study, consisting of 8 participants with a Turkish cultural minority background and 6 with a Moroccan cultural minority background (see Table 1). The sample size of 14 is sufficient to address the research inquiries, given the study's narrow focus and use of selection criteria to obtain a nuanced understanding of students' experiences. Moreover, data saturation was achieved, meaning no new data would yield any new discoveries (Hennink & Kaiser, 2022). The participants in this study were university students who recollected their experiences. Engaging with university students, rather than secondary school students, enriches the data because it allows a certain detachment, which can offer insights into how their past experiences have had long-term impact on their lives (Ready et al., 2007). Participants needed to adhere to the following criteria to be included in the study: a) 16 years or older, b) born and raised in the Netherlands, c) have attended Dutch secondary education, and d) identify with either a Turkish or Moroccan minority group.

Table 1

Demographics of Participants.

Pseudonyms	Ethnicity	Gender	Age
Aiyla Durmaz	Turkish	Female	21
Ceyda Şimşek	Turkish	Female	19
Defne Oğlu	Turkish	Female	19
Elif Özdemir	Turkish	Female	25
Meryem Aydın	Turkish	Female	17

Miray Yıldırım	Turkish	Female	22
Şerife Yılmaz	Turkish	Female	23
Zeynep Çetin	Turkish	Female	23
Bouchra Ziani	Moroccan	Female	20
Imane Messaoudi	Moroccan	Female	24
Ines Bennani	Moroccan	Female	24
Bilal El-Idrissi	Moroccan	Male	21
Rayan Tahiri	Moroccan	Male	21
Youssef El-Moussaoui	Moroccan	Male	26

Research Design

The present study employed qualitative research to address the shortcomings of previous quantitative research by disentangling elements that influence students' experiences (D'hondt et al., 2021). This study conducted semi-structured interviews using a topic list of open-ended questions. This approach allowed open responses from participants, which were needed to gain a deeper understanding of their experiences (Brown & Danaher, 2019). Appendix A provides the operationalization of the interview questions. The topic list encompassed different aspects, including the participant's secondary school background and the institutional, interpersonal, and curriculum factors (see Appendix B). For example, the initial questions were broad, focusing on participants' favorite teachers, while subsequent inquiries focused in on their cultural identity's role in their relationship with their teachers.

Ethics

This study carefully considered ethical aspects. Given the sensitive nature of interview topics, the questions addressed discrimination indirectly, and the interviewer used

terms such as unfair or insulting to broach the subject. The study collected personal data while ensuring the anonymity of participants through pseudonyms. Moreover, participants could withdraw from the study at any time without consequences. Regarding data management, anonymous information was stored and shared securely using YODA, a research platform that upholds rigorous data preservation. According to ethical guidelines, the dataset will be accessible on YODA for seven years (Algra et al., 2018). The Faculty of Social Sciences ethics committee approved the study, ensuring it followed proper ethical measures. Participants were fully informed of these ethical measures through informed consent before participating in the study (see Appendix C).

Procedure

This study initially aimed to recruit secondary school students. However, the study altered participant criteria to university students due to a low response rate. The study used posters featuring a QR code to expand recruitment efforts. By scanning the QR code, students could directly access WhatsApp, where a pre-set message prompted them to provide their availability. The researcher used personal contacts, student associations, and university campuses to distribute this poster. The recruitment posters proved successful in attracting participants. Interviews occurred either in person on campus or online via Microsoft Teams. A snowball technique was used to expand participant recruitment, wherein participants were encouraged to refer other students. Before conducting the interviews, the interviewer informed participants about the study, and participants signed informed consent forms (see Appendix D). The interviews were recorded using a recording device, and Microsoft Teams generated transcriptions. The interview duration ranged from 40 to 90 minutes. The interview language was Dutch, a shared language between the participants and the interviewer. The signed consent forms and recordings were stored in YODA and deleted from the device. Any errors in the Microsoft Teams transcriptions were corrected to reflect the original nature of

participants' verbal messages. The study exclusively used pseudonyms with personal identifying information removed. Finally, the transcripts were translated from Dutch into English for analysis using Deepl Translator.

Data Analysis

This study employed deductive thematic data analysis, following an iterative process outlined by Braun and Clarke (2006). After the transcripts were translated into English, they were organized and analyzed using NVivo12, a qualitative software tool. The data analysis involved several steps. First, each transcript was read and re-read, and notes were taken to obtain a general data overview. Second, the transcripts were examined to identify the three main overarching themes. Third, these themes were checked for potential overlaps, with any overlapping theme being subdivided and integrated within a relevant theme to ensure clarity. Uncoded data was documented to ensure a comprehensive perspective of the data. Fourth, the main themes were systematically open-coded by identifying features and patterns relevant to the research questions. Sub-themes were reviewed for overlaps and if necessary, deleted or recoded under an overarching theme to maintain coherence. Fifth, the sub-themes were reanalyzed and categorized into two broader categories. The sub-themes were further coded to achieve a nuanced understanding. Sixth, any remaining uncoded data was reviewed and transformed into subcategories whenever possible. Seventh, vivid examples were carefully selected to illustrate the identified themes. Finally, themes were selected to relate the analysis to the research questions and applied literature (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Examples of the identified themes can be found in Appendix E.

Positionality and Trustworthiness

Researchers must consider their positionality as it impacts their approach to research encounters, method selection, and interpretation of outcomes, influencing the study's data

(Holmes, 2020). In this study, the researcher acknowledges their dominant socioeconomic position and limited knowledge of Turkish and Moroccan cultures. This cultural gap between the researcher and participants could have dissuaded potential participants from participating. However, as more interviews were conducted, the researcher acquired a deeper understanding of the participants' cultures and religions, enabling the researcher to better articulate the reasons for students' involvement in the research. Notably, the researcher's dominant position may have caused the researcher to interpret participants' statements differently from their intended meaning. Member checks were conducted to address this issue and validate the accuracy of interpretations.

Another consideration is the researcher's lack of a prior relationship with the participants, which could have impacted their willingness to disclose sensitive information. To overcome this issue, the researcher used a respectful tone expressing a willingness to learn from participants. Participants were encouraged to take breaks and were not pressured to reveal any uncomfortable details. The researcher also assured participants that their data would be anonymized and that there were no video recordings. Although the interviewer and interviewees shared the Dutch language, cultural barriers could still arise, potentially causing the researcher to overlook essential nuances in the conversation. Therefore, open-ended questions were used, enabling participants to express their experiences and emotions freely. This approach allowed the researcher to ask clarifying questions when cultural gaps appeared (Brown & Danaher, 2019).

Recognizing that complete objectivity is unattainable, and that the researcher's biases can influence the entire research process (Kennedy-Lewis et al., 2016), this study employed peer debriefing. The research process was critically reflected upon through discussions with a fellow student researcher, confirming the chosen analytical approach and challenging biases and assumptions. Since participants' recollection of past experiences could be vulnerable to

recall bias, where present emotions affect the retrospective estimation of experiences

(Colombo et al., 2020), measures were implemented to address this issue. Interview questions

were designed to prompt participants to reflect solely on their secondary school experiences.

A pilot interview was conducted to identify potential issues with the topic list. Additionally,

criterion sampling was employed to ensure trustworthiness. Participants were recruited based

on specific criteria, enhancing the relevance and depth of the collected data.

Findings

This study seeks to identify how university students have experienced belonging

during secondary school in terms of student-teacher interaction, curriculum, and ethnic

composition of their schools. These experiences will be discussed in this section using seven

recurring themes. The themes of student-teacher interaction include tokenization, cultural

insensitivity, underestimation, and cultural understanding. A theme related to the curriculum

is the lack of a culturally responsive curriculum, and the themes of ethnic composition

encompass cultural identity expression and ethnic homophily.

Tokenization by Teachers in Classroom Discussions

Students' accounts reveal that teachers often treated them as representatives of Islam,

the Middle East, and North Africa expecting they could speak on behalf of the Muslim

community. Students noticed that their teachers would maintain eye contact with them when

discussing topics related to non-Western cultures. For example, Miray from a culturally

diverse school, said: "Every time we talked about the Middle East or Morocco, the teacher

looked at me, and I thought: 'Oh, am I representing that whole area?" According to students,

teachers asked complex questions to challenge them about their knowledge of Islam and non-

Western cultures. For instance, Ceyda from a predominantly white school, stated: "[The

teacher] wanted to expose a flaw in my description of Islam." Seven students stated they felt

belittled and were cautious in selecting their words. Meanwhile, they felt they lacked the

necessary knowledge to respond. Miray said: "I didn't feel qualified or competent enough to

say much about that." In summary, students from predominantly white and culturally diverse

schools described how teachers treated them as representatives of Islam and non-Western

cultures. They noted feelings of pressure, belittlement, and inadequacy when attempting to

respond to teachers' intricate inquiries.

Teachers' Cultural Insensitivity

Students highlighted various instances where they perceived teachers as hindering

their religious practices and treated them differently than white students based on their ethnic

and religious markers. To illustrate, Ceyda from a predominantly white school, explained:

"[When] praying in a corner, the lockers, or behind the curtains, a teacher would say: 'What

are you doing? You're not allowed to pray here.'" During her attendance at a predominantly

white school, Ines experienced insecurity when her teacher insisted she must refrain from

wearing her headscarf:

> I didn't want to take [my headscarf] off, then that teacher always said: "But you have
> such beautiful hair. It's a shame if you hide that from who you are. Are you doing it
> for your father? Do I have to call your father? You'll suffocate if you keep your
> headscarf on while running, so many dangers can happen." She was indoctrinating me
> with fear that I might almost die if I wore a headscarf during PE. (...) I had become
> very insecure about myself, I thought if I kept my headscarf on, then maybe I won't
> pass PE and I really wanted to pass.

In contrast to Ines, another participant, Imane from a culturally diverse school, felt supported

by her teacher, despite the teacher's concerns regarding Imane wearing a headscarf:

> [The teacher] was very annoyed that I started wearing a headscarf. She said: "You are
> much too young, are you sure?" That gave me [the feeling] that she cared about
> something I did, and whether I did it with the right intention and not that I was
> pressured, I really liked that about her.

Students believed that teachers differentiated their treatment based on religious and ethnic

markers. Ceyda stated: "[The teacher] didn't ask as many questions to a Moroccan girl

without a headscarf, despite her being a Muslim." Students mentioned that teachers treated students with accents differently than those without them. Defne, from a culturally diverse school, emphasized: "I'm lucky my mother speaks Dutch quite well, so my Dutch is pretty good, but those who spoke a different language at home were prone to making more language errors, leading [teachers] to perceive them as stupid, even though they weren't." Students noticed that they received heavier punishments than their white peers. Ines illustrated: "[The teacher] treated Muslim, Moroccan, and Turkish students differently than white students. He threw sponges at them or got very angry, which was unfair." Students said that teachers could not explain the reason behind their punishment, leaving them frustrated. Youssef, from a predominantly white school, said: "I was annoyed because I was like, what am I doing wrong? I can never do it right." Imane's teacher ignored her while the teacher interacted with her white peers: "I felt humiliated. I have a Moroccan nationality. I didn't choose that or anything, so I would very much like to be treated the same as others." Generally, students from predominantly white and culturally diverse schools shared experiences where teachers obstructed their religious practices and treated them differently, resulting in feelings of confusion, insecurity, and frustration.

Teacher Underestimation and Students' Pressure to Demonstrate Competence

In their accounts, students divulged teachers' judgments towards them and the subsequent underestimation of their abilities, causing pressure to prove their competence. Students felt unmotivated by teachers' preconceived prejudices against them. For example, Rayan from a predominantly white school, stated: "The first thing [the teacher] said when I entered the classroom was: 'I've heard so much about you already. If it continues like this, you're not going to make it through high school.'" According to students, teachers' judgments of them led to underestimating their abilities. Bilal, from a predominantly white school, demonstrated this: "I was the little Moroccan boy, and when I got all the answers right, the

teacher was like, wow, how is that possible?" Students noticed a difference in grading compared to their white peers. Aiyla, from a culturally diverse school, said: "Anyone who disagreed with their grade for their English presentation could report it to the teacher. Only students with a [cultural] background reported their grades. White students [didn't because they] received higher grades, but they hadn't done much better." Students experienced the need to prove themselves. Defne from a culturally diverse school, stated: "You have to work extra hard because you have to prove yourself more." Bouchra, from a predominantly white school, explained: "I often wanted to read aloud in class while most people didn't want to." In short, students from predominantly white and culturally diverse schools acknowledged their teachers' prejudices and underestimation. They experienced pressure to overcome their teachers' preconceived notions and earn recognition for their academic competence.

Teachers' Cultural Understanding and Support

Students reported feeling stronger connections with non-Western teachers, particularly Muslim teachers, as they engaged in culturally relevant interactions and empathetic gestures. Şerife, from a culturally diverse school, stated: "During iftar, students visited the teacher to break the fast. That warm feeling we shared." Students illustrated that they felt connected with Muslim teachers. Meryem, from a culturally diverse school, said: "I saw [the teacher] as a brother because I felt connected to someone with the same values." Students felt supported through their interactions with non-Western teachers. Rayan, from a predominantly white school, reported: "[The teacher] knew how to approach Moroccan boys [because] she recognized us (…). Through our conversations, I always felt at home in her classroom, making me feel more comfortable at school." However, students from culturally diverse schools also experienced support and understanding from white teachers. Three students said their teachers acquired and incorporated Turkish and Moroccan vocabulary, and Muslim references in class, as Şerife commented: "The teacher said: 'You'll pass [this exam],

Inshallah,' which was so funny." Furthermore, Imane's biology teacher showed empathy toward Muslim students during sex education: "[The teacher] told us: 'I understand this [topic] might be weird for the Islamic students, so if you don't want to [participate], then you don't have to."' In general, students' accounts illustrate that they experienced strong relationships with teachers who demonstrated the ability to empathize and relate to their ethnicity and values. In predominantly white schools, students reported strong relationships with non-Western teachers, whereas, in culturally diverse schools, students experienced support and understanding from both non-Western and white teachers.

Lack of Culturally Responsive Curriculum

Students noticed that the school curriculum heavily emphasized Western cultures while overlooking significant aspects of non-Western history. According to students, these negative misconceptions made them uneasy and insecure about their cultural identity. Bilal, from a predominantly white school, expressed this disappointment: "The Islamic golden ages (…), the arrival of the migrant worker, something I could find myself in wasn't covered, which I thought was a pity." Paradoxically, despite Bilal's disapproval of the history curriculum, he experienced a strong relationship with his history teacher due to their interactive discussions about non-Western topics: "The reason I chose history was to have him as a teacher. We always had discussions about Islam or Turkey with the two of us. I really liked that."

While the history curriculum was negative for Bilal, his experience with the English curriculum was more favorable because it included a novel featuring a Muslim protagonist: "[The book was] about someone like me, I recognized so many things. I thought, wow." Rayan also attended a predominantly white school, and his experiences with the curriculum suggest that non-Western history, specifically the Ottoman Empire, was discussed negatively: "[According to the teacher], the [Carthaginian army] weren't smart enough to get through the

Alps with their elephants yet they were smart because they won every battle. But in class, [the teacher] only discussed their defeat." Students felt uneasy about incorrect discussions of non-Western history in class. Ceyda, from a predominantly white school, explained:

> My history teacher admitted he read about the Ottoman Empire. I was happy because then he knew that [its history] was different and he admitted it too. Yet he still didn't teach it, [which] I thought was a pity. I would have felt more comfortable if others knew [its real history].

As a consequence of this Western-centric curriculum, students felt compelled to explore Turkish or Moroccan history themselves. Ines, from a culturally diverse school, said: "I had to look it all up myself. My parents told me about it, and I wondered what they referred to. I always thought it was a pity I didn't learn about [Moroccan history] at school." According to students, the curriculum's explicit focus on Western cultures caused them to experience insecurity about their cultural identity: "I was always kind of insecure about my identity because my culture was not welcome [in class], [the curriculum implied the message] don't talk about where you're from, pretend you're Dutch" (Ines). Students also noted their white peers' ignorance because of their lack of non-Western knowledge. Rayan explained: "There was so much ignorance. [Peers] asked: "'Can't you drink?' No, Ramadan is an annual thing. A little knowledge about that [would have helped]." However, students felt happy about teachers who deviated from the curriculum and expressed an interest in exploring non-Western history and cultures. Imane, from a culturally diverse school, said: "How cool is my Dutch teacher who went to Morocco, took those pictures and knows more than I do? It was kind of a piece of pride." Overall, students from predominantly white and culturally diverse schools experienced insecurity regarding their cultural identity because of the curriculum's explicit focus on Western cultures. However, they felt proud of their cultural identity when teachers deviated from the curriculum and dedicated time to teaching non-Western history and cultures.

Cultural Identity Expression Depending on Ethnic Composition of Schools

Students from predominantly white schools reported feelings of inferiority and struggled to express their cultural identity. Rayan, from a predominantly white school, explained: "[My school] was very white, [making] you feel inferior as a foreigner." Students from predominantly white schools faced difficulties in expressing their cultural identities: "You can't really [express your cultural identity] when there are so few of you" (Ceyda). Students in these environments felt compelled to suppress their cultural identities to prevent showing behaviors associated with negative stereotypes, Bouchra explained:

> You must be proud to express yourself, but maybe you go too far. Then you're that stereotype, and you don't want that because people will talk badly about you or take advantage of that. [Expressing my cultural identity] couldn't be done because there was just no understanding.

Despite students' efforts to suppress their cultural identity, they were still perceived by their peers as foreigners, as Rayan noted: "Very often [peers] said to me: '[you're] Dutchified.' I didn't express it much, but I was still the Moroccan boy." Bilal, from a predominantly white school, experienced an added pressure to represent the Muslim community because he was the only Muslim student in his class: "[When peers think of Muslims], they're going to think of you, so it's extra important that you behave well." In contrast to other students from predominantly white schools, Bilal found joy in expressing his cultural identity: "I went to school with my djellaba, (…) it was for fun to see people's reactions and you noticed that most people had no idea what it was, which was funny." However, Bilal's happiness was diminished when peers later inquired about his attire: "[Peers] constantly asked questions about why [I did that] and what [it was]."

According to students, school policies in predominantly white schools also constrained their abilities to express their cultural identities: "It hurts when people can wear hats, but a headscarf is refused" (Rayan). Ines attended a predominantly white school before transferring to a culturally diverse school: "[After switching schools], it wasn't weird if you saw peers or teachers with a headscarf. I felt more at home at that school because I identified

with those in that environment." Students from culturally diverse schools felt comfortable because of the large representation of their ethnic background: "About fifty percent in my class were Moroccan, so I felt quite at home at school" (Imane). These students felt they could express their cultural identity at school because peers served as role models. Meryem explained: "There were more people with a cultural background. They were already expressing [their cultural identity], and then I thought, 'If they do it, why shouldn't I?'" Furthermore, these students felt supported to practice their faith, as Şerife noted: "The school converted the bathroom to a prayer room." However, Elif, who also attended a culturally diverse school, experienced the school policy as less supportive: "[During] PE, we preferred to wear long pants. But this wasn't allowed, and we didn't like that." In summary, students in predominantly white schools faced challenges in expressing their cultural identity. Even when downplaying their cultural identity, students were still perceived as foreigners. In contrast, students from culturally diverse schools experienced support in expressing their cultural identity, acknowledging the strong representation of their cultural background and non-Western peers and teachers as role models. Although these students still encountered less supportive school policies, they found support from schools that accommodated their faith.

Ethnic Homophily Depending on Ethnic Composition of Schools

Students from culturally diverse schools noted they interacted with white peers who embraced their culture and religion. In contrast, students from predominantly white schools stated they often sought companionship from other non-Western peers outside their mostly white classrooms, Bilal said:

> We were always the Moroccan club (...). During class, I returned to my very white class. I did have people there that I knew, but I always noticed my real friends. Those were always to be seen in the breaks. I found that very difficult (…), I was living from break to break.

In culturally diverse schools, students were also engaged in non-Western groups of friends, but had meaningful friendships with white peers as well. As Aiyla explained: "Our school

was mixed. All the cultures got along very well, so did the students with a migration background and the Dutch students. I thought that was really nice, just a very warm atmosphere." However, Aiyla also noted her need for caution in expressing her opinion among peers when discussing politics because of their nationalistic views: "I had Armenian peers in class who told me about Turkey's history, and I didn't want that. I learned not to show my Turkish nationality too much to avoid confrontations." In contrast, students from predominantly white schools perceived their interactions with white peers as superficial. Bilal stated: "I didn't fit in. [Peers had] such a different culture. Things that played out in my life didn't play out in theirs, making it difficult to find a connection. For basic conversations, we [got along], but real friendships [with them] were more difficult." These students recognized that their white peers lacked knowledge about their religion and culture: "Many peers didn't know or understand where I came from. They had never been in class with Moroccans, so they weren't always that understanding" (Bouchra). The need to constantly explain their culture and religion to peers led to fatigue. Bilal said: "Expressing it caused many questions to come up, and then I had to explain it again, again, and again." Students from predominantly white schools felt hurt by white peers' hateful comments and aggressions, as Rayan expressed:

> During Ramadan, [white peers] said: "Go have a nice meal or look at me eating! (...) How many criminals are in your family? Does your mother wear a headscarf? Does your mother work?" (...) A white boy grabbed me by my throat, lifted me against the lockers, and threw me to the ground (…). He and his friends were all like *** Moroccan (...). It touched me a lot at the time.

In contrast, students from culturally diverse schools generally found their white peers to be open-minded about their religion and culture. Aiyla demonstrated: "Some [peers] participated in Ramadan for a few days. It was very nice because it showed that they respected my faith and sympathized with what it's like to participate in Ramadan." To summarize, students from predominantly white schools faced ignorance from white peers while seeking solace among

other non-Western peers. Conversely, students from culturally diverse schools experienced a more inclusive atmosphere, with white peers embracing their religion and culture. However, these students needed to exercise caution when discussing politics due to differing nationalistic views.

Discussion

This study focused on exploring the belonging experiences of Dutch university students with a Turkish or Moroccan cultural background during their secondary school. The study explicitly investigated how the contributing factors of student-teacher interaction, curriculum, and the school's ethnic composition influenced their sense of belonging. The findings suggest that these students faced cultural insensitivity during student-teacher interactions. This finding aligns with Amjad's study (2018), which also noted instances of teachers discouraging students from wearing headscarves. Students noticed white teachers' negative attitudes toward them, corroborating the findings of Agirdag and colleagues (2012). According to students, teachers interacted differently with those who visibly expressed their religion due to their biased assumptions, such as perceiving Muslim students with headscarves as more authentically Muslim (Kennedy et al., 2023). Such biased actions caused students to experience a poor sense of belonging as they felt targeted and insecure about their cultural identity (D'hondt et al., 2015).

Furthermore, participants described how teachers treated them as representational tokens, which made them uncomfortable and pressured, unable to defend their faith and provide supporting facts due to their lack of knowledge. Additionally, they felt belittled and cautious because teachers imposed challenging questions. This dynamic caused students to feel uneasy and hindered them from openly expressing their opinions (D'hondt et al., 2015). Moreover, students reported feeling ashamed and confused when their teachers ignored or unfairly punished them (Çolak et al., 2020). Students expressed their constant pressure to

prove themselves due to teachers' lower expectations of them, which negatively affected their sense of belonging (Clycq et al., 2014). Williams (2018) found that teachers' exposure to students from diverse cultural backgrounds enabled them to understand their perspectives better. However, students' accounts revealed that teachers from culturally diverse schools discriminated against them, implying that teaching in a culturally diverse school does not necessarily equip teachers with the skills to address a culturally diverse student population.

Students recalled positive experiences with teachers who showed interest in their lives, positively impacting their sense of belonging. Particularly, relationships with Muslim teachers who shared cultural and religious backgrounds were considered valuable, allowing them to gain a deeper mutual understanding. This finding supports Agirdag et al.'s study (2012), indicating that teachers' characteristics determine their attitudes toward students. For students in predominantly white schools, the presence of non-Western teachers seemed vital for students' sense of belonging, who made them feel more comfortable than white teachers (Boterman, 2019). In culturally diverse schools, students felt understood and supported by non-Western and white teachers. However, it is noteworthy that two participants from predominantly white schools mentioned multiple favorite teachers, including white teachers, indicating a more nuanced perspective. Future research could expand on this area by exploring whether teacher characteristics play a more vivid role in students' belonging experiences.

Participants also indicated that they experienced stronger relationships with teachers who deviated from the curriculum and dedicated time to teaching Turkish or Moroccan cultures. Such experiences provided them with pride and validation for their cultural identities, positively influencing their sense of belonging. This finding contributes to Gray et al.'s theory (2018), highlighting the interconnected relationship between the curriculum and teachers' instruction. Notably, even if the curriculum is culturally responsive, if teachers

cannot interact with students in a culturally responsive manner, ethnic minority students will still encounter discrimination. According to students, a lack of a culturally responsive curriculum contributed to feelings of insecurity about their cultural identity (Leijgraaf, 2022). Students often perceived discussions about Non-Western topics as incomplete or negatively skewed, which created barriers for them to gain understanding and acceptance from peers (Van Caudenberg, 2022). Furthermore, students explained that the explicit focus on Western cultures in the curriculum confused them, as these topics were discussed differently at home, burdening them as they felt the need to explore information about their culture and religion outside of school. Van Tartwijk et al. (2009) showed that culturally diverse schools are more dedicated to incorporating non-dominant perspectives into the curriculum. However, students from culturally diverse schools equally expressed disappointment with the lack of a culturally responsive curriculum. These findings suggest that regardless of the ethnic composition of schools, students felt neglected by their curriculum, which failed to incorporate their perspective. However, some students experienced inclusion by teachers who dared to strain from it, positively contributing to their sense of belonging.

The results indicate that students from predominantly white schools faced challenges because their ethnic background was inadequately represented (Moffit et al., 2019). This finding refutes the theory of D'hondt et al. (2021), which suggested that greater cultural diversity in schools caused ethnic minority students to experience more peer discrimination. In predominantly white schools, students often suppress their cultural identity to evade negative judgments from peers, hindering meaningful connections with them (Moffit et al., 2019). These students faced ignorance from white peers, who asked stereotypical questions or made harmful comments about their culture and religion (Çolak et al., 2020). The students acknowledged that greater knowledge about their culture and religion would have helped decrease such instances. In predominantly white schools, students sought other students with

non-Western backgrounds, which alleviated peer marginalization (Leszczensky & Pink, 2017). Conversely, in culturally diverse schools, students shared strong connections with non-Western and white peers, whom sympathized with their religion and cultural traditions. Students from culturally diverse schools gained understanding and support from white and non-Western teachers through their interactions (Van Caudenberg, 2020). These findings demonstrate the crucial role that non-Western teachers and peers play in contributing to students' belonging experiences, highlighting the importance of cultural diversity in schools.

Implications

The study's findings suggest that teachers should strive to familiarize themselves with students' religions and cultures, enabling better relationships with ethnic minority students. Schools, regardless of their ethnic composition, should educate teachers about non-Western cultures and religions, empowering them to engage in culturally sensitive conversations (Hosseini et al., 2021). Furthermore, teachers should incorporate non-dominant narratives into the curriculum, such as novels featuring Muslim protagonists, to contribute to the belonging experiences of ethnic minority students (Leijgraaf, 2022). Additionally, increasing cultural diversity in predominantly white schools is essential, as it has been shown to strengthen the belonging of ethnic minority students (Demanet et al., 2016). They must recruit teachers from diverse cultural backgrounds and establish connections with students' communities (El Hadioui, 2011). Schools must also refrain from policies that isolate ethnic minority students, such as headscarf bans, and instead provide access to safe and clean spaces for prayer. These efforts can create an inclusive environment fostering a sense of belonging for ethnic minority students.

Limitations

This study is subject to several limitations. First, due to time constraints, the small sample size of 14 participants limits the generalizability of the findings. Second, students'

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experiences determined the cultural diversity of schools rather than relying on percentages, which potentially caused variations in categorizing what constitutes a predominantly white school. A third limitation is gender imbalance in the study, with only three male participants, all from a Moroccan cultural background. The study did not consider gender in its analysis, thereby neglecting potential gender-related factors. Fourth, the study focused specifically on Turkish and Moroccan students, limiting the ability to generalize findings to other Muslim students who may face similar challenges. Lastly, the study relied on participants' recollections, which may have introduced recall bias. Future research should explore the intersectionality of Muslim students by comparing results between predominantly white and culturally diverse schools, using a larger sample size of secondary school students. Additionally, considering numerical data alongside students' experiences can help enhance the validity of the research.

Conclusion

This study aimed to explore the research question: How have Dutch university students with a Turkish or Moroccan minority background experienced belonging during their time in secondary school? The study specifically focused on the contributing factors of student-teacher interaction, curriculum, and ethnic composition of schools. The findings revealed students' accounts of discrimination, making them feel inferior and underestimated. Students reported feeling the need to exercise caution in their interactions due to teachers' lack of cultural sensitivity, which negatively impacted their sense of belonging. Conversely, students valued those teachers who demonstrated interest in non-Western cultures and went beyond the curriculum, fostering stronger student-teacher relationships and reinforcing students' pride in their cultural identities. Students expressed disappointment with the lack of a culturally responsive curriculum that overlooked relevant aspects of non-Western history and cultures, leading to further insecurity about their cultural identity. Students from

predominantly white schools encountered challenges, including ignorance and misconceptions from teachers and peers, while seeking solace among peers from non-Western backgrounds to alleviate feelings of marginalization. In contrast, students from culturally diverse schools formed meaningful connections with both non-Western and white peers. Nevertheless, these students also faced teacher discrimination and noted the lack of a culturally responsive curriculum. These findings emphasize the importance of cultural sensitivity in student-teacher interactions, the necessity of an inclusive curriculum, and the value of cultural diversity within the school environment. Recognizing and addressing these factors can foster belonging among ethnic minority students. These insights highlight the need for continued research and attention in this crucial domain.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Interview Guideline and Analysis Indicators

Concepts	Operationalization	Indicators	Interview Questions
Interpersonal Experience	The discourse between students and their teachers which is the basis for effective student-teacher relationships, instruction, and students' social development.	Student-Teacher Relationship Barriers (Beaty-O'Ferrall et al., 2010). Teacher Underestimation (Clycq et al., 2014; D'hondt et al., 2015; D'hondt et al., 2021; Van Caudenberg, 2020). Misunderstanding and Personal Conflicts Student-Teacher Interaction (Moffit et al., 2019). Discrimination and Stereotypical Behaviors (D'hondt et al., 2015; Kennedy, 2011). Microaggressions (Moffit et al., 2019). Tokenization (Amjad, 2018; Schiff, 2014). Islamophobic Teachers, Cultural Insensitivity (Amjad, 2018).	-Who was your favorite teacher? What was his/her personality? Are these characteristics important to you? -Did being Turkish/Moroccan play a role in the contact you had with this teacher? -What role did language play in the conversations you had with this teacher? Did you share the same native language? Does it matter in your opinion? -What subject did this teacher teach? While teaching this subject, did this teacher also pay attention to Turkey/Morocco? -Who was your least favorite teacher? What did this teacher look like in terms of appearance? What was his/her personality? Are these characteristics important to you? -Does the fact that you are also Turkish/Moroccan play a role in the contact you had with this teacher? If yes, can you give an example of an

			experience in his/her class that is related to your cultural background. How did you feel in this situation? Did you do anything about it afterwards? -What other characteristics do you think make a teacher less good?
Curriculum Experience	The program that offers students opportunities to learn facts, acquire concepts, practice skills, and develop attitudes within a cultural context.	Normativity of Whiteness (Çolak et al., 2020; Graham et al., 2022; Leijgraaf, 2022; Verkuyten & Thijs, 2013). Lack of Culturally Responsive Curriculum (Moffit et al., 2019; Schwarzenthal et al., 2022. Lack of Discussions of Diversity (Moffit et al., 2019). Cultural Practices Enhancing Student-Teacher Relationship (Van Tartwijk, 2009). Cultural Practices Meeting Students' Needs (Kennedy, 2011).	-In history class, you learned about events such as World War II or the establishment of the republic of the Netherlands. Did the history lessons also focus on the history of Turkey/Morocco? If so, how did you feel attention was given to this? If not, how did you feel that no attention was given to this? -How were cultural differences addressed in class? Were these issues discussed in a positive or negative way? How did you feel about this? -In your opinion, how should the school have paid attention to cultural differences?
Institutional Experience	The experiences related to school policy and the numerical	Discriminatory Educational Policy (Moffit et al., 2019). Discrimination and Victimization by Peers (D'hondt et	-What did you like about your school? -What did you like less about your school?

| representation of ethnic minority students within a school. | al., 2015; Moffit et al., 2019).

Lack of Diversity Student And Staff Population (Boterman, 2019; Moffit et al., 2019).

Dynamics Power and Social Support (D'hondt et al., 2015).

Teachers Exposed and Willingness to Learn (Marchitello & Trinidad, 2019; Williams, 2018)

Expression Cultural Identity (Van Caudenberg, 2020).

Ethnic Homophily (Demanet et al., 2016; Leszczensky & Pink, 2017). | -Were there more Turkish/Moroccan students at your school? Were there other students from other cultural backgrounds at your school? How did they make you feel?

-Did you feel that you could express your Turkish/Moroccan identity at school? If yes, can you name a specific situation in which you expressed this? If no, can you name a specific situation in which you wanted to express this but decided not to? |

Appendix B: Interview Guideline

Introductie

1. Hoe was jij als leerling op de middelbare school? Was je veel bezig met school of had je andere dingen waar je mee bezig was buiten school?
2. Wat waren dingen die je als middelbare scholier deed die pasten bij jouw Turkse/ Marokkaanse identiteit?
3. Kun je een schooldag die jou is bijgebleven beschrijven? Wat heb je toen gedaan? Hoe heb je deze dag ervaren?

School

4. Wat vond je leuk aan school?
5. Wat vond je minder leuk aan je school?
6. Zaten er meer Turkse/ Marokkaanse leerlingen bij jou op school? Zaten er nog andere leerlingen met andere culturele achtergronden bij jou op school? Hoe voelde je je daarbij?
7. Had je het idee dat je jouw Turkse/ Marokkaanse culturele achtergrond kon uiten op school? Zo ja, kan je een specifieke situatie noemen waarin je dit uit/hebt geuit? Zo nee, kan je een specifieke situatie noemen waarin je dit wilde uiten maar toen niet hebt gedaan?

Docenten

Favoriete leraar

8. Wie was je favoriete leraar? Hoe zag deze leraar eruit qua uiterlijk? Wat was zijn/haar persoonlijkheid? Zijn deze kenmerken belangrijk voor jou?
9. Speelde het feit dat je Turks/Marokkaans bent een rol in het contact dat je had met deze leraar?
10. Welke rol speelde taal in de gesprekken die je had met deze leraar? Deelde je dezelfde moedertaal? Maakt het volgens jou uit?
11. Welk vak gaf deze leraar?
12. Besteedde deze leraar tijdens het geven van dit vak ook aandacht aan Turkije/ Marokko?

Minst favoriete leraar

13. Wie was je minst favoriete leraar? Hoe zag deze leraar eruit qua uiterlijk? Wat was zijn/haar persoonlijkheid? Zijn deze kenmerken belangrijk voor jou?
14. Speelt het feit dat je ook Turks/ Marokkaans bent een rol in het contact dat je had met deze leraar?
15. Zo ja, kan je een voorbeeld geven van een ervaring in zijn/haar klas die gerelateerd is met je culturele achtergrond. Hoe voelde je je in deze situatie? Heb je er daarna nog iets mee gedaan?
16. Welke andere eigenschappen maken volgens jou een leraar minder goed?

Vakinhoudelijk

17. Bij het vak geschiedenis leerde je over gebeurtenissen zoals de tweede wereldoorlog of het ontstaan van de republiek van Nederland. Werd er in de geschiedenislessen ook wel eens aandacht besteed aan de geschiedenis van Turkije/ Marokko? Zo ja, hoe

vond je het dat hier aandacht aan werd gegeven? Zo nee, hoe vond je het dat hier geen aandacht aan werd gegeven?

18. Hoe werden culturele verschillen in de klas behandeld? Werden deze onderwerpen op een positieve of negatieve manier besproken? Hoe voelde je je hierbij?
19. Hoe had volgens jou de school aandacht moeten besteden aan culturele verschillen?

Religie

20. Was jij actief bezig met het uitvoeren van je geloof door bijvoorbeeld dagelijks te bidden? Zo ja, hoe ging je hiermee om tijdens schooltijd?
21. Wie waren jouw vrienden op school? Waarom waren zij jouw vrienden op school? Hadden jouw vrienden dezelfde religieuze achtergrond als jij? Zo ja, heeft dit jouw geholpen? Zo ja, hoe heeft het jou geholpen?
22. Hoe was het contact op school tussen jou en andere leerlingen die niet Moslim zijn?

Gender

23. Als je door de gangen van de school liep hoe ervaarde je het dan om een meisje te zijn?

Afsluiting

24. We hebben nu veel besproken over je middelbare school ervaring. Zijn er verder nog dingen die je wilt bespreken?

Appendix C: Information Letter

Informatie over deelname aan een sociaalwetenschappelijk onderzoek

De Ervaringen van Nederlandse Leerlingen met een Turkse of Marokkaanse Achtergrond op Witte en Cultureel Diverse Middelbare Scholen: Een Interviewonderzoek.

Ben Ik Onzichtbaar Omdat Jullie Mij Negeren? De Percepties van Turkse Moslimmeiden over Hun Onderwijsuitdagingen in het Nederlandse Voortgezet Onderwijs.

24 maart 2023, Utrecht

Het onderzoek
Met deze brief wil ik aan jou toestemming vragen om mee te doen aan het onderzoek *De Ervaringen van Nederlandse Leerlingen met een Turkse of Marokkaanse Achtergrond op Witte en Cultureel Diverse Middelbare Scholen: Een Interviewonderzoek.* Dit onderzoek heeft als doel om de middelbare school ervaringen in beeld te krijgen van Turkse en Marokkaanse leerlingen op scholen met verschillende mate van diversiteit in de leerlingpopulatie. En aan het onderzoek *Ben Ik Onzichtbaar Omdat Jullie Mij Negeren? De Percepties van Turkse Moslimmeiden over Hun Onderwijsuitdagingen in het Nederlandse Voortgezet Onderwijs.* Dit onderzoek heeft als doel om een beter beeld te krijgen van de middelbare school ervaring van Turkse moslima's.

Wie ben ik
Wij zijn Ashley Snijders en Cato Haccou, studenten aan de masteropleiding 'Onderwijswetenschappen' aan de Universiteit Utrecht. Ashley is geïnteresseerd in de middelbare school ervaringen van Nederlandse leerlingen met een Turkse of Marokkaanse culturele achtergrond. Cato is daarbij specifiek geïnteresseerd in de middelbare school ervaringen van meiden met een Turkse culturele achtergrond.

Voorwaarden voor deelname
Er zijn vier criteria waar jij aan moet voldoen om mee te kunnen doen aan het eerste onderzoek: 1) jij bent 16 jaar of ouder, 2) jij zit of hebt gezeten op een middelbare school in Nederland, 3) jij bent geboren en opgegroeid in Nederland, 4) jij hebt een Turkse of Marokkaanse culturele achtergrond. Er zijn vier criteria waar jij aan moet voldoen om mee te kunnen doen aan het tweede onderzoek: 1) jij bent 16 jaar of ouder, 2) jij identificeert je als vrouw, 3) jij zit of hebt gezeten op de middelbare school in Nederland, 4) jij hebt een Turkse culturele achtergrond.

Het interview
Dit onderzoek zal data verzamelen door het houden van interviews. Voor het interview wordt afgenomen is het onderzoek goedgekeurd door de ethische commissie van Universiteit Utrecht. Dit houdt in dat jij als deelnemer ethisch wordt behandeld tijdens het interview. Het interview zal niet langer dan 45 minuten duren en zal plaatsvinden tussen maart en april 2023. Het is een 1-op-1 interview waarbij jij in gesprek gaat met mij. Het interview wordt met audio opgenomen. Na afloop van het interview zal ik het audiobestand uitschrijven. Nadat het interview is uitgeschreven zal ik het audiobestand verwijderen. Dit zal ik vervolgens met jou delen zodat jij kan kijken of alles wat er tijdens het interview is gezegd klopt.

Wat wordt er van jou verwacht
Wanneer jij deelneemt aan het onderzoek zul jij een eenmalig gesprek voeren met mij als onderzoeker. In dit gesprek zal ik vragen aan jou stellen over jouw ervaringen in het middelbaar onderwijs. Thema's waar ik naar zal vragen zijn diversiteit op de school, docenten, het curriculum, etniciteit, gender en religie. Je kunt vrijuit spreken over jouw ervaringen gedurende 45 minuten.

Voordelen van deelname aan het onderzoek
Een voordeel voor jou als deelnemer is dat jij de mogelijkheid krijgt om vrijuit te spreken over jouw ervaring in het middelbare onderwijs. Dit onderzoek kan daardoor nieuwe inzichten geven over de middelbare school ervaring van Nederlandse leerlingen met een Turkse of Marokkaanse culturele achtergrond en specifiek voor Turkse Moslimmeiden. Deze nieuwe inzichten kunnen zorgen voor nieuwe ideeën als het gaat over het verbeteren, inclusiever en diverse maken van het Nederlandse onderwijs.

Nadelen van deelname aan het onderzoek
Een nadeel voor jou als deelnemer is dat je vragen zal gaan beantwoorden die kunnen gaan over gevoelige onderwerpen.

Vertrouwelijkheid verwerking van jouw antwoorden
Persoonsgegevens, zoals contactgegevens, worden in dit onderzoek verzameld zodat ik het uitgeschreven interview met jou kan delen. Nadat wij contact hebben gehad over het uitgeschreven interview en jij verder geen vragen of opmerkingen hebt zal ik deze contactgegevens verwijderen.

De antwoorden die jij geeft op de interviewvragen, heb ik nodig om de onderzoeksvragen goed te kunnen beantwoorden. Ik vraag hierover niet meer dan nodig voor het beantwoorden van de onderzoeksvragen. De onderzoeksgegevens zullen voor zeven jaar bewaard worden.

De uitgeschreven interviews zullen worden geanonimiseerd. Jouw naam en andere identiteitsgegevens zullen verwijderd worden. Data van dit onderzoek zullen worden opgeslagen op een beveiligde digitale omgeving die YODA heet. Andere onderzoekers kunnen alleen toegang tot deze gegevens krijgen als zij ermee instemmen de vertrouwelijkheid van de informatie te bewaren zoals ook wordt gevraagd wordt in dit formulier.

Vrijwilligheid deelname
Deelname aan dit onderzoek is vrijwillig. Je kunt tijdens het interview op elk moment, zonder een reden op te hoeven geven en zonder nadelige gevolgen, stoppen met het interview. Na afloop van het interview kun je ook bepalen om te stoppen met het onderzoek. **Let op:** wil je stoppen met het onderzoek, maar geef je dit later aan dan 7 dagen nadat het interview is geweest. Dan zal de tot dan toe verzamelde data worden gebruikt voor het onderzoek.

Contact voor vragen en/of klachten
Als je vragen over het onderzoek hebt, kun je contact opnemen met a.benshalom@uu.nl
Voor opmerkingen of klachten over het onderzoek kun je contact opnemen met een onafhankelijk contactpersoon die niet betrokken is bij het onderzoek via klachtenfunctionaris-fetcsocwet@uu.nl

Vragen over privacy

Als je vragen of opmerkingen hebt over de verwerking van jouw gegevens kun je deze stellen aan privacy@uu.nl. Daarnaast kan je ook informatie vinden op: https://www.uu.nl/organisatie/praktische-zaken/privacy/privacyverklaring. Meer informatie over privacy kun je lezen op de website van de Autoriteit Persoonsgegevens: https://autoriteitpersoonsgegevens.nl/nl/onderwerpen/avg-europese-privacywetgeving.

Wil je deelnemen?
Als je na het lezen van deze informatiebrief besluit om deel te nemen aan het onderzoek kan je het bijgevoegde document ondertekenen en in leveren bij mij.

Met vriendelijke groet,

Cato Haccou en Ashley Snijders

Appendix D: Informed Consent Form

Toestemmingsverklaring

Hierbij verklaar ik de informatiebrief met betrekking tot onderzoek *De Ervaringen van Nederlandse Leerlingen met een Turkse of Marokkaanse Achtergrond op Witte en Cultureel Diverse Middelbare Scholen: Een Interviewonderzoek* en onderzoek *Ben Ik Onzichtbaar Omdat Jullie Mij Negeren? De Percepties van Turkse Moslimmeiden over Hun Onderwijsuitdagingen in het Nederlandse Voortgezet Onderwijs* gelezen te hebben en akkoord te gaan met deelname aan beide onderzoeken. Dit betekent dat ik instem met:
1. Deelname aan het onderzoek
2. Deelname aan het interview
3. Het maken van een audio opname
4. Verzamelen van informatie over de thema's diversiteit, docenten, het curriculum, etniciteit, gender en religie
5. Het openbaar maken van de geanonimiseerde data in een geschreven scriptie

Datum: /   / 2023

Naam:

Ik geef toestemming dat er tijdens het interview een audio opname wordt gemaakt. Ik sta toe dat mijn gegevens die verzameld zijn tijdens het interview worden gebruikt voor dit onderzoek. Daarnaast ga ik ermee akkoord dat de informatie uit het interview anoniem mag worden gepubliceerd.

Ik begrijp dat de geanonimiseerde informatie uit het interview, met de begeleider van dit onderzoek kan worden gedeeld.

Handtekening:

Appendix E: Themes, Sub-Themes, and Exemplary Quotations

Main Theme	Sub-Theme 1	Sub-Theme 2	Total N, Coverage (%)	Exemplary Quotation
Student-Teacher Interaction	Culturally Responsive Teacher	Feeling Understood By Non-Western Teacher	8 (2.88)	"When I saw him I talked Turkish faster than Dutch and especially when you talk Dutch and then you don't really get to the word then you can just easily use a Turkish word. He will understand it anyway, so it is easier" (Meryem).
		Feeling Happy About Being Equally Treated	8 (1.30)	"He just treated us all equally. He really didn't care. That's super chill. No, I didn't experience that from him" (Youssef).
		Feeling Personally Supported by Teacher	7 (1.69)	"She was a great listener, so the moment I was struggling with something, she was willing to look at that problem with me in her spare time. So she saw me as her student, but also as a kind of friend and that's why I'm still in contact with her now" (Imane).

	Culturally Insensitive Teacher	Being Underestimated By Teacher	8 (2.12)	"My physics teacher underestimated me the first few lessons because I was the little Moroccan boy that sat in the back corner and when I got all answers right, she was like, wow, how is that possible?" (Bilal)
		Being Tokenized By Teacher	3 (2.83)	"She just had the idea that I knew a lot about that, and I think she didn't know what my background was either, so if she went a little bit in that direction, she wanted my opinion" (Miray).
		Experiencing Unequal Treatment By Receiving Heavier Punishments	4 (3.62)	"There were other people who did a lot more than I did, but I was sent out (..). I thought, this just isn't fair" (Youssef).
Curriculum	Multicultural Perspective	Feeling More Confident About	2 (1.34)	"I think it may have made me more confident in the sense of. I don't have to be ashamed of my faith. I don't have to be

	Cultural Identity		ashamed of the community I belong to. I think that would have helped there" (Ines).
	Feeling More Comfortable Not Having To Explain Everything	1 (1.97)	"That would have made it a little easier for me too, I think instead of having to go and explain everything (…). To have somebody else tell it for me, because then it would have been a little more comfortable for me" (Youssef).
	Feeling Happy About Gaining More Knowledge	2 (1.89)	"Super good, because I got a seven and I was able to graduate because of that too. And it was also fun, (…) I was going to present about a very well-known Turkish architect, so then you really start researching about that on the Internet, so you learn from that too" (Șerife).
Eurocentric Perspective	Feeling Upset About Leaving Out	7 (2.13)	"We skipped the Islamic golden ages completely (...). Especially the arrival of the migrant worker, something I

		Non-Western History		could find myself in was not covered, which I thought was a pity" (Bilal).
		Feeling Unfortunate To Explore Non-Western History By Themselves	4 (1.22)	"I had to look it all up myself. My parents told me about it, and I wondered what they referred to. I always thought it was a pity I didn't learn about it at school" (Ines).
		Experiencing Ignorance From Peers	4 (0.85)	"You just noticed a lot of ignorance from most students and that I did find very unfortunate that not enough attention was paid to" (Bilal).
Ethnic Composition	Culturally Diverse School	Feeling At Ease Expressing Cultural Identity	5 (3.39)	"Yes with the Turkish community sharing the faith. That was easy, because they knew, for example, when Ramadan was and we did things together. They didn't look surprised when someone suddenly started wearing a headscarf or dressed a bit more modestly, so there was a lot of

			understanding, so that was very nice" (Ines).
	Feeling Supported To Practice Faith	1 (1.51)	"Yes even two, one for the boys, one for the ladies and there was then a small office which was not in use. That then became, that was then for the ladies a prayer room. And for the boys it was on the other side of that wing" (Şerife).
	Interacting With Open-Minded Peers	4 (2.40)	"They were always very interested too, like what is that then or if there was a holiday or something. Yes, the Sugar Festival will soon be upon us again and then I would take some sweets with me from school and I would hand them out to my friends and they would wonder why, why is this and they were always very open-minded" (Miray).
Predominantly White School	Looking For Non-Western Peers	5 (4.42)	"My best friends who I really had a group of Afghan, Moroccan, Turkish those

			cultural backgrounds. They were of course also Muslim, so that indeed, we did seek each other out, but it was just because we had a very good relationship, that it was nice to say that we were all Muslim" (Zeynep).
Receiving Hatred From Peers	6 (2.54)		"During Ramadan, they said: "Go have a nice meal or look at me eating! (..) How many criminals are in your family? Does your mother have a headscarf? Does your mother work?" (Rayan).
Feeling Insecure To Express Cultural Identity	1 (1.74)		"What will they think about it? Especially say about how you dress because I did put on just long clothes" (Ceyda).

THE BELONGING EXPERIENCES OF DUTCH ETHNIC MINORITY STUDENTS

Appendix F: Assignment 4 Ethics

Given that this research focuses on ethnic minority students, overcoming many ethically-demanding hurdles is ethically challenging. The researcher will be honest when explaining the aim and procedures to participants, even if this potentially decreases the number of participants. The researcher will not conduct interviews individually but will merge interview questions with a fellow student researcher. It subsequently means that the questions will be constantly reviewed to ensure the best care in designing, undertaking, reporting, and disseminating research. The researcher will create an informed consent in which information is clearly given about the research and will be presented to participants before conducting interviews.

Topics that are presented during the interviews might be difficult to discuss for students. Considering this, the researchers need to find ways to make the participants feel comfortable when meeting them and explain the research's intentions. This awareness includes preventing the researcher from immediately jumping into the interview questions but instead by briefly asking them something about their interests and hobbies. Students also need to be allowed to relocate the interview to a comfortable place in case the school campus is considered unsafe. Students might feel more comfortable with interviewers with a non-dominant background, so the researcher needs to express a willingness to learn to participants. Much emphasis must be placed on respecting people's rights, dignity, and diversity.

The number of participant criteria might impact the flexibility of finding suitable candidates to participate in research. Another aspect is the comparison between predominantly white and culturally diverse schools. There must be enough students with a Turkish and Moroccan minority background in order to make a valid comparison between the

two schools. Despite the pressure, the goal of equal contribution must be conducted in an ethical manner.

When conducting semi-structured interviews, the researchers will refrain from using words such as discrimination but use more sensitive terms such as inconsiderate, unfair, rude, and insulting. This research depends on the participants' efforts. There is no research, without their answers and full description of their belonging experiences. The researcher is aware that this research might not necessarily benefit the participants equally compared to what it will bring to the researchers. It takes much time for participants, so the researcher must be transparent about that.

The downside of conducting interviews is that it takes additional work compared to a quantitative study. The researcher needs to consider this when planning the interviews to have enough time to translate, code, and summarize the most notable findings. Collaboration with a fellow student researcher creates more autonomy in terms of time management compared to conducting a study individually. Even though there is a tight schedule, the planning needs to have flexibility in order to work. Data will be stored in YODA and coded in NVivo. The data in YODA will be stored for seven years. Coding might become more complex when students discussed unrelated themes to this study. The translation from Dutch to English takes additional time. Finally, participants are anonymized before their answers are inserted into a digital translator.