

**Perceived discrimination against Muslim youths and the relation of the perceived
discrimination with Muslim youths' self-esteem**

Nadia Bijenhof (6582087)

Master Thesis
Faculty of Social and Behavioral Sciences
Utrecht University

Casper Hulshof
Annemie Struyff

Words: 5247

Abstract

This study focuses on Muslim pupils in Islamic and non-Islamic primary schools and the difference in perceived discrimination between Islamic and non-Islamic schools. Additionally, this study will examine what the relation is between perceived discrimination and the self-esteem of the Muslim pupils. 78 pupils filled in questionnaires. An independent samples t-test was conducted to measure the difference in perceived discrimination between Islamic and non-Islamic schools and a correlation analysis was conducted to measure the relation between perceived discrimination and self-esteem of pupils in Islamic and non-Islamic schools. Results showed that there is no significant difference in the perceived discrimination between the Muslim pupils in Islamic education and non-Islamic education. The correlations analysis showed no significant relation between the perceived discrimination and self-esteem of pupils in non-Islamic education. There was a significant, strong negative directed relation for the perceived discrimination and self-esteem of pupils in Islamic education. Implications for future research are mentioned.

Keywords

Islam, discrimination, self-esteem, Islamic primary schools

Introduction

During the last 20 years of the 20th century, Islamic primary schools were founded in the Netherlands. The demand to establish Islamic primary schools goes back to the 1960s and the large numbers of Islamic migrants from Turkey (285.000) and Morocco (296.000) who moved to the Netherlands as guest workers. The majority of these guest workers settled themselves with their families in western Europe. Later smaller groups from Afghanistan (31.000), Iraq (27.000) and Somalia (20.000) immigrated to western Europe.

Since the arrival of the first wave of immigrants in 1960s the number of especially Turkish and Moroccan students has grown considerably. In 2010 5,4% of the total number of students in primary education were Turkish or Moroccan (Merry & Driessen, 2016). Over time, some Muslim parents became dissatisfied with the schools their children attended. The largest reason for their dissatisfaction was the absence of Islamic instruction in the schools (Merry & Driessen, 2016).

The Netherlands currently has 49 Islamic primary schools, this is 0.7% of all primary schools (Beemsterboer, 2019). All of these schools are state-funded, which means that there are national standards for teacher training and qualification. Application of these standards are mandatory in order to get the state funding (Merry & Driessen, 2016). Yet since the first establishment in 1988, Islamic schools have been confronted with many obstacles by the ministry of education and media such as the 9/11 attacks, nuisance and criminal behavior of Muslims and statements of Dutch politicians (Bouma & Ruig, 2015; Merry & Driessen, 2016).

Muslims are one of the most discriminated groups in current day western-Europe. Many people hold the view that Islam is an alien religion and incompatible with mainstream values (Thijs et al., 2018). Those opposed to Islamic education fear that Muslim students are segregated and isolated and do not acculturate to the Dutch norms and values (Merry & Driessen, 2016). It can be difficult for Muslim children to grow up in a society with these assumptions and the aim of providing Muslim children with a safe environment in school, where they can safely develop and express their religious identity has not gone undisputed (Thijs et al., 2018).

Research from various countries such as America, France, the Netherlands, England, and Sweden have shown that Muslim youths are a particular vulnerable population of being discriminated against in primary and secondary schools (Bergen et al., 2021; Bouma & Ruig, 2015; Aroian, 2012). Ample evidence from systematic research reviews, population studies, and studies focused on specific racial and ethnic groups show that perceived discrimination has negative impacts on mental health of children. In particular, the detrimental effects on the self-

esteem (Aroian, 2012; Ahmed, Kia-Keating, & Tsai, 2011; Thijs et al., 2018; Brondolo et al., 2008; Coker et al., 2009; Paradies, 2006; Pasco & Richman, 2009). However, Thijs et al. (2018) mention that children experience less discrimination when they have fewer ethnic-out group classmates and experience increased discrimination when they have more ethnically diverse classmates (Benner & Graham, 2013).

Considering the growing population of Muslim students, the risks of being discriminated against and the negative impact on mental health of children, this study has the aim to examine the perceived discrimination and self-esteem of Muslim children in Islamic schools and non-Islamic schools (Merry & Driessen, 2016; Bergen et al., 2021; e.g., Aroian, 2012).

Theoretical Framework

Characteristics of Islamic Schools in the Netherlands

Islamic education can be defined as a form of education that is based on the principles and values of Islam (Tan, 2012). The biggest difference between Islamic and non-Islamic schools is that students in Islamic schools' children attend Koran classes. The Koran classes are not a mandatory part of the national curriculum. All primary schools in the Netherlands have the same national curriculum, except for the addition of religious classes in religious schools, such as Islamic schools. The national curriculum is the basis for the nation-wide test at the end of primary schools. Participation in this test is obligatory for obtaining access to the secondary education (Dronkers, 2016).

All Islamic primary schools have co-education and only-boys or only-girls' classes do not exist in the Netherlands, also not in the Koran classes. In some Islamic schools there is an exception for some lessons such as gymnastics and swimming where boys and girls are not mixed (Dronkers, 2016).

Perceived Discrimination of Muslim Youths

Discrimination is described as the unjust or biased treatment of individuals, particularly on the grounds of religion, race, age, or gender (uddin et al., 2022). Different studies show that racial/ethnic discrimination is common among minority youth in schools and public places, with both peers and adult authority figures being responsible for the discrimination. Children reported experiencing various forms of unfair treatment, such as receiving lower grades from teachers than they deserve, facing excessive discipline from authority figures, being wrongly suspected of wrongdoing, being excluded from peer groups, and being subjected to verbal (e.g., teasing, bullying) and psychological abuse from classmates (Benner & Graham, 2013; Kessler et al., 1999; Rosenbloom & Way, 2004; Maes et al., 2014).

Bouma and Ruig (2015) conducted research in the Netherlands on Muslim discrimination in secondary education. In total 301 teachers filled out questionnaires. More than 83% of the teachers reported to be a witness of students making insulting comments about Islam and Muslims in general (group discrimination), and 60% of the teachers reported to be a witness of students making insulting comments about Islam directed at Muslim students (personal discrimination). In 80% of the cases, the cause was media attention on the nuisance and criminal behavior of Muslims, in 75% of the cases it was media attention from politicians, and in 71% of the cases it was terrorism. Additionally, the conflict in the Middle East was the cause of discrimination in 39% of the cases.

Out-group status has been identified as a critical predictor for discrimination. Studies conducted in North America, in which members of visible minority groups, such as African-Americans, feel that they are subjected to discrimination much more than members of non-visible out-groups (Krahé et al., 2005). Moreover, Jasinskaja-Lahti et al. (2006) mentioned that behavior and experiences of discrimination may actually reinforce each other. Perceiving discrimination may lead to ethnic minorities to stick only to each other. As a consequence, the ethnic minorities are considered to be troublemakers and are unwilling to fit in.

The relation between discrimination and the quality of contacts with ethnic out-group members is complex. Perceived discrimination reduces the motivation to engage in personal contacts with ethnic out-group members. At the same time, positive personal contacts with ethnic-out group members reduces the risk of being discriminated (Krahé et al., 2005).

Discrimination in Relation to Self-esteem

Self-esteem refers to a person's personal subjective evaluation of his or her worth as a person (Orth & Robins, 2014). Previous findings in research on immigrant and ethnic minority groups showed that perceived discrimination is linked to a lower level of psychological well-being, in particular self-esteem (Aroian, 2012; Maes et al., 2014).

Research by Verkuyten (1998) examined the direct effect of perceived discrimination on the self-esteem of minority adolescents in the Netherlands (78 Moroccan and 92 Turkish). The results of this study showed that personal perceived discrimination had a direct negative effect on the personal self-esteem on the adolescents. Another research by Rumbaut (1994) showed that perceived discrimination is associated with a decrease of self-esteem. This research is conducted among a sample of more than 5000 immigrant children (grades 8 and 9) in southern California and Florida.

The relation between perceived discrimination and self-esteem offers mixed results and even though research proved that there is a direct negative effect between perceived

discrimination and self-esteem, there is also evidence that perceived discrimination sustains one's self-esteem (Every & Perry, 2014; Verkuyten, 1998). For example, a study by Crocker and Mayer (1989) argued that attributing negative feedback to discrimination rather than personal shortcomings can protect one's self-esteem in the face of failure. Crocker et al. (1991) found evidence to support the idea that attributing negative feedback to discrimination is a self-protective mechanism. This is related to the study of Ghaffari and Ciftci (2010) in which they mention that victims of perceived discrimination attribute their disadvantage to the prejudice of others instead of involving characteristics of themselves to the cause of the discrimination. Moreover, overcoming the barriers of discrimination and achieving success can also boost one's self-esteem (Crocker & Mayer, 1989).

Current Study

Taking previous research into account, the present study will explore what the difference is in perceived discrimination for Muslim pupils in Islamic and non-Islamic primary schools. Previous research conducted showed that discrimination increases when children have more ethnically out-group peers in class (Benner & Graham, 2013). In the contrary, positive contacts with ethnic-out group peers reduces the risk of being discriminated (Krahé et al., 2005). Similarly, the effect of perceived discrimination on self-esteem. Research conducted showed a direct negative effect of discrimination on self-esteem, but also explained that perceived discrimination can sustain one's self-esteem (Every & Perry, 2014; Verkuyten, 1998). Given these contradictions in previous research, this study aims to answer the following questions; "To what extent does the degree of perceived discrimination of Muslim students in Islamic education differ from Muslim students in other schools, such as denominational and public schools?" and "What is the relation between the perceived discrimination and measured self-esteem of the Muslim students?".

In addition, this research is made possible by the University of Utrecht, Faculty of Social Sciences. This research is part of a larger research project being conducted by in total three student researchers.

Method

Research Design

The design used in this study is explanatory quantitative survey research. This type of research is used to describe the differences in perceived discrimination between Islamic and non-Islamic schools and to understand the relation between the perceived discrimination and self-esteem of Muslim pupils. The aim is to generate a comprehensive understanding.

Therefore, surveys are used to collect the data. Causality cannot be explained in this particular research design (Neuman, 2014).

Participants

Due to the specific narrowly defined population, purposive sampling is used (Neuman, 2014). A priori power analysis was computed for the t-test as well as the correlation analysis, using the tool G*Power (HHU, 2020) to determine the minimum sample size required. Results indicated the required sample size to achieve 95% power for detecting a medium effect ($r = .3$) at a significance criterion of $\alpha = .05$, was $N = 134$. Participants will be sixth grade primary school pupils from Islamic schools and non-Islamic schools. Participation requires the students to be Islamic. At least 5 Islamic primary schools will participate and at least 15 non-Islamic primary schools will participate. In contrast to Islamic schools, urban public schools have considerable ethnic diversity (Dronkers, 2016). To have an equivalent representation of the sample and assuming that there will be less Islamic students in non-Islamic primary schools, more non-Islamic schools will participate.

Instrumentation

Perceived Discrimination

To assess children's perception on personal perceived discrimination the child perceived discrimination questionnaire (CPDQ) (la Font et al., 2018) was used in combination with the questionnaire used in the study of Thijs et al. (2018) to measure personal and group discrimination towards Muslim children. The items of the questionnaire used by Thijs et al. were based on previous research on children's perception of discrimination in the Netherlands (verkuyten & Thijs, 2002). The items used in the questionnaire of this study are based on both of the questionnaires and used response scales ranged from 1 (no!) to 5 (yes!). However, not all of the items of both questionnaires are used and all of the items used in the questionnaire of this study had to be adjusted in order to be age appropriate for sixth grade children and related to Islam. Examples of items are: "Have you been bullied by other children because you are Muslim?" "Did a teacher unfairly punish you because you are Muslim?". Cronbach's alpha is used to measure the internal consistency of the questionnaire. Cronbach's alpha for the 9-item child perceived discrimination questionnaire was .95. This can be considered adequate for research purposes (Field, 2017). The original questionnaire and the questionnaire used in this study can be found in the appendix.

Self-Esteem

To assess children's perception on self-esteem, the Rosenberg self-esteem (RSE) questionnaire was used (Rosenberg, 1965). Some of the items in the RSE questionnaire were

worded in a negative direction and some were worded in a positive direction. With response options on a 4 Likert-scale from 1 (strongly agree) to 4 (strongly disagree). The scores from positive items (item 1,3,4,7 and 10 in the RSE questionnaire) were reversed so that higher number are always associated with high self-esteem. Examples of items are: “generally, I am happy with myself” and “I sometimes feel useless”. Cronbach’s alpha is used to measure the internal consistency of the self-esteem questionnaire. Cronbach’s alpha for the 10-item RSE questionnaire was .82. This can be considered adequate for research purposes (Field, 2017).

The original questionnaire and the questionnaire used in this study can be found in the appendix.

Procedure

Data was collected during the second semester of the school year (February, march). It was important that the data is collected in at least march, since the pupils participated in the mandatory nation-wide test in April and May. Assuming that participation in this study in combination with the participation of the nation-wide test might cause the student’s to be distracted. First the principals of all the primary schools were informed by a letter and asked for their consent to conduct research. After consent of the principals, the principals did send a letter to the parents and children with information about the study and were asked for consent to participate. As well as the parents and children needed to give active consent for participation.

During the data collection all the schools were visited by the researcher. The children completed the questionnaire during regular class hours and was made in Qualtrics. The questionnaire had an approximate duration of a half hour. Before the children started filling in the questionnaires, they received explanation by the researcher about the general purpose of the study, how to fill out the questionnaire and that the anonymity of all the children was guaranteed. The researcher also explained that it is only possible to withdraw before or during the data collection. Since the data was collected anonymous, it was not possible to withdraw after participation. Data was destroyed after the study.

The questionnaires are part of a larger investigation and therefore also included additional scales in addition to the scales of interest of the present study.

Data-analysis

The analysis was conducted in SPSS. The independent variable is the school denomination (Islamic versus non-Islamic) and the dependent variables are the perceived discrimination and self-esteem. An independent samples t-test was used to measure the difference in perceived discrimination between Islamic and non-Islamic schools and a correlation analysis was used to measure the relation between perceived discrimination and

self-esteem of pupils in Islamic and non-Islamic schools. Before conducting the t-test or the correlation analysis, the data was analyzed with the missing value analysis in order to display information about the pattern of the missing data within the dataset. Participants might have missed items from the surveys (accidentally or deliberately) and left them unanswered. Little's missing completely at random test was conducted. This is a statistical test that assesses if the pattern of missing data is random or not. When the test outcome is not significant, the missing data can be considered randomly missing (MCAR) (Field, 2017). The correlations of the analysis can be found in table 1.

Table 1

Covariances for the missing value analysis

	Discrimination	Self-Esteem
Discrimination	.71	
Self-Esteem	-.04	.21

Note: Little's MCAR test: Chi-Square = 2.91, DF = 1, $p > .05$.

The percentage of missing values varied from 1.2% to 10% for the different variables' discrimination and self-esteem. The Little's missing completely at random test output showed that the missing data is considered to be randomly missing and not systematically tied to the other variable, as this value is non-significant, $p = .09$. El-Masri and Wasylyshyn (2005) suggest that listwise deletion is appropriate only if less than 5% of the data is missing and if the data is missing completely at random (MCAR). Generally, imputation methods are preferred over deletion methods because they preserve the sample size and maintain statistical power. Among the existing techniques, the Expectation-Maximization Algorithm (EMA) is often viewed as superior because it provides unbiased parameter estimates when the data is MCAR. The expectation maximization algorithm (EMA) was conducted in SPSS and used for further statistical analysis.

Prior to the analysis, a pilot study was conducted on a sample of participants $N=14$. The purpose of the pilot study was to identify potential problems in the items and to make necessary adjustments. An example of an adjustment could have been that the items of the RSE questionnaire were not age appropriate and understandable for the sixth-grade children. The pilot study showed no particularities and therefore no adjustments were made. Cronbach's alpha was used to measure the internal consistency of the survey.

Results

An independent sample t-test and a correlation analysis were conducted. Before conducting the Independent samples t-test, the assumptions normality was checked and during the assumption homogeneity of variance was checked. The assumptions scale of measurement is a methodological assumption and therefore already addressed before and during the data collection. The assumption of homogeneity of variance was not violated. Yet, the assumption of normality was found to be violated. A visual inspection of the normal Q-Q and the detrended Q-Q plots for discrimination showed that it was not normally distributed. According to the central limit theorem the violation of the normality assumption should not cause problems when the sample size is above $N = 30$ (Field, 2017). Since the group of pupils from the Islamic schools was below ($N=23$), a Mann-Whitney U test is conducted as an alternative test to compare the discrimination between the different schools (Field, 2017).

The Mann-Whitney U test indicated that the perceived discrimination of pupils from non-Islamic schools (*Mean rank* = 40.85, $N=55$) was not significantly different than the perceived discrimination of the pupils from the Islamic education (*Mean rank* = 36.26, $N=23$), $U=558.00$, $Z = -.841$, $p = .400$, 2 tailed.

To assess the strength and direction of the relation between the perceived discrimination and self-esteem of the Muslim pupils a bivariate correlation was calculated. Before conducting the correlation analysis, the assumptions normality, linearity and homoscedasticity were checked. The assumption independence is methodological and therefore already addressed before and during data collection. After a visual inspection of the plots, the normality was found to be violated for the variable self-esteem, but not for the variable discrimination. linearity and homoscedasticity found to be violated for both of the variables. For this reason, Spearman's Rho is used to measure the association between discrimination and self-esteem. Spearman's Rho is a suitable alternative to the Pearson's correlation, because of the violated assumptions (Field, 2017).

First the relation between perceived discrimination and measured self-esteem of the Muslim pupils in non-Islamic education was assessed and the Spearman's Rho showed a correlation coefficient close to $r = .0$, indicating no relation between perceived discrimination and self-esteem. In addition, the relation is not statistically significant, $r = -.06$, $p = >.656$, two-tailed, $N = 55$. Therefore, there is not enough evidence to conclude that there is a relation between perceived discrimination and self-esteem for pupils in non-Islamic education.

For the relation between the perceived discrimination and self-esteem of the Muslim pupils in Islamic education, the correlation coefficient is more than $r = .5$ and negative,

indicating a strong negative relation between perceived discrimination and self-esteem. Negative means that as perceived discrimination increases, self-esteem tends to decrease significantly. In addition, the relation was statistically significant, $r = -.66$, $p = <.001$, two-tailed, $N = 23$. Therefore, there is evidence to conclude that there is a strong relation between perceived discrimination and self-esteem for the pupils in Islamic education. In Islamic educational settings, perceived discrimination appeared to have a more negative association with self-esteem compared to the non-Islamic educational settings.

Discussion

Given the contradictions in previous research, such as the contradictions within having ethnic-out group contacts and the inconsistent effects of perceived discrimination on self-esteem (Benner & Graham, 2013; Krahe et al., 2005; Every & Perry, 2014; Verkuyten, 1998), this study aimed to contribute to the body of knowledge on discrimination towards Muslim youths and subsequent aimed to answer the following questions; “To what extent does the degree of perceived discrimination of Muslim students in Islamic education differ from Muslim students in other schools, such as denominational and public schools?” and “What is the relation between the perceived discrimination and measured self-esteem of the Muslim students?”.

The results revealed that there is no significant difference in the perceived discrimination between the Muslim pupils in Islamic and non-Islamic primary schools. It might be possible that the Muslim pupils in the non-Islamic education experience positive personal contacts with the out-group peers and non-Muslim teachers. Research conducted by Krahe et al., (2005) showed that positive contacts with out-group members reduces the risk of being discriminated. In addition, the study of Jasinskaja-Lahti et al. (2006) conducted research on the impact of social support networks from the host country on overall well-being of immigrants and specifically the role of social support in the effects of perceived discrimination. The results of the study showed that social support of the host society is especially effective in improving the well-being of the immigrants when they face significant discrimination. Similarly, Zine (2000) conducted research in public educational settings in which Islamic student associations offer Muslim students social support while organizing events aligned with Islamic principles. The Muslim youth groups indicated that these organizations assist them in navigating their Islamic identities and managing the challenges of being a religious minority in a secular environment. It might be possible that there is no significant difference found in perceived discrimination, due to the protective role of positive contacts with out-group members, such as peers and teachers.

The positive influence on perceived discrimination from social support and positive contacts with out-group members can also play a role for Muslim pupils in Islamic education. Thijs et al., (2018) mentioned in their study that Islamic schools in the Netherlands have many teachers that are not Muslim and with a Dutch background. They mentioned that the non-Muslim teachers could potentially act as “a bridge to the Dutch society”. This is especially beneficial for the children in Islamic education that have limited contacts with Dutch natives and non-Muslims people. Moreover, research conducted in the past indicated that Islamic schools offer a safe place for Muslim pupils, free from racism and religious discrimination that Muslim pupils experience in public schools (Elbih, 2012). This might have had an influence on the reported perceived discrimination of the pupils in the Islamic education.

The correlation between the perceived discrimination and the self-esteem of the pupils in Islamic education is statistically significant with a strong negative correlation, indicating that when the perceived discrimination against a Muslim pupil is higher, the self-esteem of the pupil tends to be lower and vice versa.

In the Netherlands, Turkish and Moroccan Muslim youths have similar family situations and living conditions. Compared with native Dutch, Turkish and Moroccan families experience more physical and mental health inequities, higher unemployment, housing problems and lower income. In addition, they are more likely to drop out of school and face increased risk for mental health problems (Bergen et al., 2021). On top of the existing risk for mental health problems, Muslims show greater perceived discrimination to be associated with mental health problems (Uddin et al., 2022). We can say that the Muslim pupils in general face more challenges with mental health, because of certain family situations and living conditions. Perceived discrimination in school might reinforce these already existing risks, resulting in higher mental health problems and lower self-esteem.

The correlation between the perceived discrimination and self-esteem of the pupils in non- Islamic education was not significant, which means that there is no correlation found between the two variables. It might be possible that this finding is in line with the findings of the research conducted by Crocker et al. (1991) in which attributing negative feedback to the discrimination is working as self-protective mechanism. By attributing the negative feedback to the discrimination rather than to personal shortcomings one’s self-esteem can be protected. In addition, the study of Ghaffari and Ciftci (2010) indicated that victims of perceived discrimination attribute their disadvantage to the prejudice of others instead of involving characteristics of themselves to the cause of the discrimination.

Limitations

There are several limitations in this study. First, the small sample size ($N = 78$) increases the likelihood that the sample will be biased, leading to results that do not accurately reflect the characteristics of the overall population. A small sample size decreases the study's power, making it harder to detect significant differences or relations between variables. This increases the risk of Type II errors which means failing to detect an effect that might have been present in a larger sample size (Field, 2017). In addition, for the independent t-test and the correlation analysis an alternative statistical analysis had to be conducted, due to the assumptions being violated (Field, 2017).

Second, the RSE questionnaire has a 4 Likert-scale that didn't allow the children to have a neutral answer. According to Raaijmakers et al. (2000) there is a higher chance for participants that they are forced to choose an answer or face higher risks of withdrawing. With the possibility of giving a neutral answer, children are still able to give a genuine response, even though the child is not yet able to express a definite opinion. In addition, to have a broader understanding of the perceived discrimination (group) in-depth interviews should have been conducted (Bergen et al., 2021).

Finally, this study had up to 10% missing data for the variable perceived discrimination. The expectation maximization algorithm (EMA) was used to calculate a mean for the missing data. It has to be taken into consideration that this might have had an effect on the results of this study, in particular for the indicated significant result in the relation between perceived discrimination and self-esteem for Muslim pupils in Islamic education. The conducted EMA, together with the small sample size and the absence of the neutral option in the questionnaire could have led to less accurate results in this study.

Future Research

For future research it is first of all relevant to find out what the role is of (positive) out-group contacts. It might be possible that there is no significant difference found in perceived discrimination, due to the protective role of positive contacts with out-group members, such as peers and teachers. This study made a distinction between Muslim pupils in Islamic education and non-Islamic education, while (positive) contacts with out-group members can occur in both of the educational settings.

Second, the studies of Crocker et al. (1991) and Ghaffari and Ciftci (2010) mentioned a self-protective mechanism to sustain or protect their self-esteem, when faced with discrimination. For future research it is relevant to find out in what way Muslim pupils process perceived discrimination related to their self-esteem. In addition, it is important to consider a longitudinal study when measuring the self-esteem. Research conducted by Orth and Robins

(2014) showed that self-esteem can fluctuate in response to external contingencies, for example experiences of success and failure.

third, the gender of the Muslim pupils should be taken into consideration. Conducted research in the past showed a significant effect on perceived discrimination between boys and girls, in which girls face higher risks of being discriminated against. Research of Abdelgadir and Fouka (2020) found evidence that the French law in 2004 that banned the use of religious signs in primary and secondary public education led to increased discrimination among Muslim girls. On the other hand, Abdelgadir and Fouka found a small effect of the law on school-age Muslim boys. Similarly, the study of Torres-Zaragoza and Llorent-Bedmar (2024) indicated that the inclusion of Muslim female students in higher education is hindered by gendered Islamophobia, because of wearing the headscarf. This form of Islamophobia manifests through the prejudices and discriminatory behaviors of teachers and peers. In addition, the decision to wear a headscarf strains their relationship with teacher and peers and can lead to reduced social interactions, exclusion and discrimination. For future research it is relevant to know whether a symbol of religion, such as the headscarf, increases the risk of being discriminated.

fourth, the geographic location of the schools should also be considered in future research. Bouma and Ruig's (2015) study found out that teachers in less urbanized areas witnessed incidents more frequently (73%) than those in highly urbanized areas (45%). The less urbanized the area, the more likely teachers are to witness discrimination against Muslims. In addition, the study of Bouma and Ruig (2015) indicated the difference in individual and group discrimination against Muslim students. More than 83% of the teachers reported to be a witness of students making insulting comments about Islam and Muslims in general (group discrimination), and 60% of the teachers reported to be a witness of students making insulting comments about Islam directed at Muslim students (personal discrimination). In regards to self-esteem, Thijs et al., (2018) mentioned that personal discrimination may have more negative influence on the self-esteem than group discrimination. In fact, Muslim children may feel even better about themselves when they witness discrimination against religious in-group peers.

Conclusion

The conclusion that can be drawn is that this study did not contribute to the body of knowledge on discrimination towards Muslim youths and the relation with the perceived discrimination, since this study could not answer the research question; To what extent does the degree of perceived discrimination of Muslim students in Islamic education differ from Muslim students in other schools, such as denominational and public schools?" This study did not find evidence to support the difference in perceived discrimination against Muslim pupils

in the non- Islamic and Islamic educational settings. There is also no evidence to support that perceived discrimination is correlated with the self-esteem for these Muslim pupils, except for the pupils in the Islamic education. Therefore, we could answer the research question; “What is the relation between the perceived discrimination and measured self-esteem of the Muslim students?”. In Islamic educational settings, perceived discrimination appeared to have a more negative association with self-esteem compared to the non-Islamic educational settings.

However, several limitations in this study must be considered, such as the methodological challenges related to data collection and analysis, particularly in detecting subtle differences or nuances in the relationship between perceived discrimination and self-esteem.

Research conducted in the past (Bouma & Ruig, 2015; Crocker et al., 1991; Ghaffari & Ciftci, 2010; Jasinskaja-Lahti et al., 2006; Krahe et al., 2005; Thijs et al., 2018; Zine, 2000) showed that it is important to consider the role of out- group members (peers and teachers), the self- protective mechanism in sustaining and protecting self-esteem, gender, individual- and group discrimination and the geographic location of the schools. This study made a distinction between Muslim pupils in Islamic and non-Islamic education, while these factors can occur in both of the educational settings. For future research a combined, quantitative and qualitative study is recommended. A qualitative study is particularly important to understand experiences in perceived discrimination and self-esteem, because it can gain insights that are often difficult to capture through quantitative methods (Neuman, 2014).

References

- Abdelgadir, A., & Fouka, V. (2020). Political secularism and Muslim integration in the West: Assessing the effects of the French headscarf ban. *American Political Science Review*, 114(3), 707-723.
- Ahmed, S. R., Kia-Keating, M., & Tsai, K. H. (2011). A structural model of racial discrimination, acculturative stress, and cultural resources among Arab American adolescents. *American Journal of Community Psychology*, 48(3-4), 181-192. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10464-011-9424-3>.
- Aroian, K. J. (2012). Discrimination against muslim american adolescents. *The Journal of School Nursing*, 28(3), 206-213. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1059840511432316>
- Beemsterboer, M. (2019). Islamitische scholen dragen bij aan integratie. *Tijdschrift Voor Religie, Recht En Beleid*, 10, 26-36.
- Benner, A. D., & Graham, S. (2013). The antecedents and consequences of racial/ethnic discrimination during adolescence: Does the source of discrimination matter? *Developmental psychology*, 49(8), 1602. <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0030557>
- Bouma, S., & De Ruig, L. (2015). *Moslimdiscriminatie in het voortgezet onderwijs: een onderzoek onder docenten*. Panteia.
- Brondolo, E., Brady, N., Thompson, S., Tobin, J. N., Cassells, A., Sweeney, M., ... & Contrada, R. J. (2008). Perceived racism and negative affect: Analyses of trait and state measures of affect in a community sample. *Journal of social and clinical psychology*, 27(2), 150-173. <https://doi.org/10.1521/jscp.2008.27.2.150>
- Coker, T. R., Elliott, M. N., Kanouse, D. E., Grunbaum, J. A., Schwebel, D. C., Gilliland, M. J., ... & Schuster, M. A. (2009). Perceived racial/ethnic discrimination among fifth-grade students and its association with mental health. *American journal of public health*, 99(5), 878-884.
- Crocker, J., Voelkl, K., Testa, M., & Major, B. (1991). Social stigma: The affective consequences of attributional ambiguity. *Journal of personality and social psychology*, 60(2), 218. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.60.2.218>
- Crocker, J., & Major, B. (1989). Social stigma and self-esteem: The self-protective properties of stigma. *Psychological review*, 96(4), 608. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0033-295X.96.4.608>
- Dronkers, J. (2016). Islamic primary schools in the Netherlands. *Journal of School Choice*, 10, 6-21. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15582159.2015.1131508>

- Elbih, R. (2012). Debates in the literature on Islamic schools. *Educational Studies*, 48(2), 156-173. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00131946.2011.647147>
- El-Masri, M. M., & Fox-Wasylyshyn, S. M. (2005). Missing data: An introductory conceptual overview for the novice researcher. *Canadian Journal of Nursing Research Archive*, 156-171.
- Every, D., & Perry, R. (2014). The relation between perceived religious discrimination and self-esteem for Muslim Australians. *Australian Journal of Psychology*, 66(4), 241-248. <https://doi.org/10.1111/ajpy.12067>
- Field, A. (2017). *Discovering Statistics Using IBM SPSS Statistics: North American Edition*. SAGE Publications.
- Ghaffari, A., & Çiftçi, A. (2010). Religiosity and self-esteem of Muslim immigrants to the United States: The moderating role of perceived discrimination. *International Journal for the Psychology of Religion*, 20(1), 14-25. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10508610903418038>
- HHU. (2020). *G*Power*. Retrieved January 28, 2023, from <https://www.psychologie.hhu.de/arbeitsgruppen/allgemeine-psychologie-und-arbeitspsychologie/gpower>
- Jasinskaja-Lahti, I., Liebkind, K., Jaakkola, M., & Reuter, A. (2006). Perceived discrimination, social support networks, and psychological well-being among three immigrant groups. *Journal of cross-cultural psychology*, 37(3), 293-311. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0022022106286925>
- Kessler, R. C., Mickelson, K. D., & Williams, D. R. (1999). The prevalence, distribution, and mental health correlates of perceived discrimination in the United States. *Journal of health and social behavior*, 208-230. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2676349>.
- Krahé, B., Abraham, C., Felber, J., & Helbig, M. K. (2005). Perceived discrimination of international visitors to universities in Germany and the UK. *British Journal of Psychology*, 96(3), 263-281. <https://doi.org/10.1348/000712605X48296>
- LaFont, S. R., Brondolo, E., Dumas, A. K., Lynk, N. C., & Gump, B. B. (2018). The development and initial validation of the child perceived discrimination questionnaire. *International journal of culture and mental health*, 11(2), 208-219. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17542863.2017.1356337>
- Maes, M., Stevens, G. W., & Verkuyten, M. (2014). Perceived ethnic discrimination and problem behaviors in Muslim immigrant early adolescents: Moderating effects of

- ethnic, religious, and national group identification. *The Journal of Early Adolescence*, 34(7), 940-966. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0272431613514629>.
- Merry, M. S., & Driessen, G. (2016). On the right track? Islamic schools in the Netherlands after an era of turmoil. *Race Ethnicity and Education*, 19, 856-879. [10.1080/13613324.2014.985586](https://doi.org/10.1080/13613324.2014.985586).
- Neuman, W. L., & Robson, K. (2014). *Basics of social research*. Toronto: Pearson Canada
- Orth, U. & Robins, R. W. (2014). The Development of Self-Esteem. *Current Directions in Psychological Science*, 23(5), 381–387. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0963721414547414>
- Paradies, Y. (2006). A systematic review of empirical research on self-reported racism and health. *International journal of epidemiology*, 35(4), 888-901. <https://doi.org/10.1093/ije/dyl056>
- Pascoe, E. A., & Smart Richman, L. (2009). Perceived discrimination and health: a meta-analytic review. *Psychological bulletin*, 135(4), 531. <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0016059>
- Raaijmakers, Q. A. W., Hoof, A. v., Hart, H. t., Verbogt, T. F. M. A., & Wollebergh, W. A. M. (2000). Adolescents' midpoint response on Likert-type scale items: Neutral or missing values? *International Journal of Public Opinion Research*, 12(2), 208-216.
- Rosenberg, M. (1965). Rosenberg self-esteem scale (RSE). Acceptance and commitment therapy. *Measures package*, 61(52), 18.
- Rosenbloom, S. R., & Way, N. (2004). Experiences of discrimination among African American, Asian American, and Latino adolescents in an urban high school. *Youth & Society*, 35(4), 420-451. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0044118X03261479>.
- Rumbaut, R. G. (1994). The crucible within: Ethnic identity, self-esteem, and segmented assimilation among children of immigrants. *International migration review*, 28(4), 748-794. <https://doi.org/10.1177/019791839402800407>
- Tan, C. (2012). *Islamic education and indoctrination: The case in Indonesia*. Routledge.
- Thijs, J., Hornstra, L., & Charki, F. Z. (2018). Self-esteem and national identification in times of Islamophobia: A study among Islamic school children in the Netherlands. *Journal of youth and adolescence*, 47, 2521-2534. [10.1007/s10964-018-0906-6](https://doi.org/10.1007/s10964-018-0906-6)
- Torres-Zaragoza, L., & Llorent-Bedmar, V. (2024). Barriers to inclusion of Muslim migrant students in western schools. A systematic review. *International Journal of Educational Research*, 125, 102363. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijer.2024.102363>
- Uddin, M. F., Williams, A., & Alcock, K. (2022). Visibility as Muslim, Perceived Discrimination and Psychological Distress among Muslim Students in the UK. *Journal of Muslim Mental Health*, 16(1). <https://doi.org/10.3998/jmmh.135>

- Van Bergen, D. D., Feddes, A. R., & de Ruyter, D. J. (2021). Perceived discrimination against Dutch Muslim youths in the school context and its relation with externalising behaviour. *Oxford Review of Education*, 47, 475-494. [10.1080/03054985.2020.1862779](https://doi.org/10.1080/03054985.2020.1862779)
- Verkuyten, M., & Thijs, J. (2002). Racist victimization among children in the Netherlands: The effect of ethnic group and school. *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 25(2), 310-331. [10.1080/01419870120109502](https://doi.org/10.1080/01419870120109502)
- Verkuyten, M. (1998). Perceived discrimination and self-esteem among ethnic minority adolescents. *The Journal of social psychology*, 138(4), 479-493. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00224549809600402>
- Zine, J. (2001). Muslim youth in Canadian schools: Education and the politics of religious identity. *Anthropology & education quarterly*, 32(4), 399-423. <https://doi.org/10.1525/aeq.2001.32.4.399>
- Zine, J. (2000). Redefining resistance: Towards an Islamic subculture in schools. *Race Ethnicity and Education*, 3(3), 293-316. <https://doi.org/10.1080/713693042>

Appendix A

Questionnaire with the two constructs and items used in this study

Perceived discrimination

1. Word jij weleens uitgescholden omdat je een moslim bent?
2. Doen mensen weleens gemeen tegen je omdat je moslim bent?
3. Word jij weleens gepest omdat je een moslim bent?
4. Word jij weleens buitengesloten door andere kinderen omdat je moslim bent?
5. Spraken andere kinderen weleens slecht over je omdat je moslim bent?
6. Vertrouwde een leraar je niet om je een moslim bent?
7. Behandelde een leraar je oneerlijk omdat je een moslim bent?
8. Strafte een leraar je oneerlijk omdat je een moslim bent?
9. Nam een leraar slechte dingen aan over je omdat je een moslim bent?

Self-esteem

1. Over het algemeen ben ik blij met mezelf.
2. Soms denk ik dat ik nergens goed voor ben.
3. Ik vind dat ik een aantal goede eigenschappen bezit.
4. Ik ben in staat dingen net zo goed te doen als anderen.
5. Ik heb het gevoel dat ik niet veel heb om trots op te zijn.
6. Ik voel me soms nutteloos.
7. Ik vind mezelf waardevol, op zijn minst gelijkwaardig aan anderen.
8. Ik zou meer respect voor mezelf willen hebben.
9. Over het algemeen heb ik de neiging mij een mislukkeling te voelen.
10. Ik heb een positieve houding over mezelf.

Appendix B

Rosenberg self-esteem scale

Hieronder staat een lijst met beschrijvingen die gaan over algemene gevoelens over jezelf. Als je het **sterk eens** bent omcirkel het getal 1. Als je het met de stelling **eens** bent omcirkel 2. Als je het **oneens** bent omcirkel je 3. Als je het **sterk oneens** bent, omcirkel 4.

	Sterk eens	Eens	Oneens	Sterk oneens
1. Over het algemeen ben ik blij met mezelf.	1	2	3	4
2. Soms denk ik dat ik nergens goed voor ben.	1	2	3	4
3. Ik vind dat ik een aantal goede eigenschappen bezit.	1	2	3	4
4. Ik ben in staat dingen net zo goed te doen als anderen.	1	2	3	4
5. Ik heb het gevoel dat ik niet veel heb om trots op te zijn.	1	2	3	4
6. Ik voel me soms nutteloos.	1	2	3	4
7. Ik vind mezelf waardevol, op zijn minst gelijkwaardig aan anderen.	1	2	3	4
8. Ik zou meer respect voor mezelf willen hebben.	1	2	3	4
9. Over het algemeen heb ik de neiging mij een mislukkeling te voelen.	1	2	3	4
10. Ik heb een positieve houding over mezelf.	1	2	3	4

Appendix C

Ik ben moslim

Deze vragen gaan over hoe jij het vindt dat je moslim bent en hoe jij tegen jezelf aankijkt. Zet

bij elke vraag een kruisje in het hokje dat jij het best vindt passen bij de vraag. Jouw juf komt niet te weten wat je hebt ingevuld.

	NEE	Nee, niet echt	SOMS	Ja, best wel	JA!
Vind je het fijn dat je een moslim bent?	0	0	0	0	0
Ben je er trots op dat je een moslim bent?	0	0	0	0	0
Vind je het belangrijk dat je een moslim bent?	0	0	0	0	0
Word jij weleens uitgescholden omdat je een moslim bent?	0	0	0	0	0
Worden andere kinderen wel eens uitgescholden omdat ze moslim zijn?	0	0	0	0	0
Doen mensen weleens gemeen tegen je omdat je moslim bent?	0	0	0	0	0
Doen mensen wel eens gemeen tegen andere kinderen omdat ze moslim zijn?	0	0	0	0	0
Word jij weleens gepest omdat je een moslim bent?	0	0	0	0	0
Worden andere kinderen wel eens gepest omdat ze moslim zijn?	0	0	0	0	0
Als andere mensen iets goeds over moslims zeggen is het net alsof ze iets goeds over mij zeggen	0	0	0	0	0
Als andere mensen iets naars over moslims zeggen is het net als ze iets naars over mij zeggen	0	0	0	0	0
Sommige kinderen zijn tevreden met zichzelf. <i>Jij ook?</i>	0	0	0	0	0

	NEE!	Nee, niet echt	Soms	Ja, best wel	JA!
Sommige kinderen vinden het prima zoals ze zijn. <i>Jij ook?</i>	0	0	0	0	0
Sommige kinderen voelen zich vaak gelukkig met zichzelf. <i>Jij ook?</i>	0	0	0	0	0
Sommige kinderen zijn erg tevreden over hoe ze veel dingen doen. <i>Jij ook?</i>	0	0	0	0	0
Sommige kinderen vinden hun leven vervelend. <i>Jij ook?</i>	0	0	0	0	0

Appendix D

The Child Perceived Discrimination Questionnaire (CPDQ)

CPDQ Item

Discrimination by Children

1. Other children picked you last for a team or group
2. Other children called you names
3. Other children texted or talked badly about you behind your back
4. Other children threatened to hurt you
5. Other children actually hurt you or tried to hurt you
6. You were left out by other children
7. Other children threatened or harassed you online
8. Other children excluded you online

Discrimination by Adults

9. A teacher did not call on you in class
10. A teacher or another adult unfairly punished you
11. A teacher or other adult ignored you or did not pay attention to you
12. A teacher or another adult did not trust you
13. A teacher or other adult assumed bad things about you
14. A teacher or another adult threatened to hurt you
15. A teacher or another adult excluded you from something
16. A teacher or another adult treated you unfairly

Appendix E

Assignment 4 – Academic integrity

In this assignment, the university asked me to reflect on possible issues, risks, and/or dilemmas and to describe what measures I will take concerning the following aspects of my research plan:

Sample characteristics and consent procedures

Issues that can occur for the sample characteristics are that the children are asked to give information that is not necessary in conducting this study. Examples can be that I will ask the origins of the country where their parents are born, where they live in the Netherlands etc. This is information that is not necessary for me to be able to conduct my research, so I should also not ask for it. I should never, in any circumstance ask for private information of the children. This would be for example asking to give their address or telephone number. I would never ask for private information or information that is not necessary to ask. Since this study is a part of a larger study with two other students, it is very important to communicate clearly about what we are going to ask from the children and if it is necessary information for our study.

Consent procedures are obliged, since we are working with people and in particular with minor children. So, we need consent from parents as well as the children themselves. Not only permission is necessary, but also an informed consent. This is a statement about the study and what the rights* are of the children. This statement will be signed by the parents. In this case the parents, because it is minor children. Since we are also depending on the school staff for this informed consent, it is very important that there is a clear and open communication. This is necessary to avoid the risk that there is a child participating in this study, while the parents did not give permission.

*rights are that children can refuse to participate, their privacy is guaranteed and participation is anonymous.

Choice of instruments and possibly sensitive questions

We chose questionnaires as instruments, because it will be the best, most simple and quickest way to obtain the information that we need. The questions that we ask can be sensitive. For example, questions about bullying, teasing and being left out can be difficult for some children to answer. Thus, it is important to let the children know that they can never give a wrong answer and they can always choose to stop the participation if they want to.

Effort required from participants and how this weight against the relevance of the study

The children should never be asked to do things that they do not want, can give them stress, harm them etc. no matter what the relevance of this or any other study is. We will be working with children in the sixths grade. A risk can be that we will maybe distract or give them stress by letting them fill in the questionnaire around the time that they have to participate in the wide nation tests for primary schools. We will communicate clearly with the staff of the school what is the best time to conduct the data.

Data handling and storage

The data will not be stored at our own devises. There is a special folder made available by the university to store the data. When I use the data in the analysis, I should not adjust the data to have a certain outcome for my owns study. Besides that, I should be honest with interpreting and reporting the results of this study. It might be a risk that I (by mistake!) differently interpret the data or the results. To take away this risk it is important to ask feedback from the fellow students participating in the same study and through the feedback of the teachers.

Any other issues concerning the academic integrity of your study

For my profession I often visit primary schools in Ede. There will be probably some schools in Ede participating in this study. It is important for me that it concerns schools that I have never visited, to avoid bias.

Appendix F

Timeline

January

In January I will be still finalizing the research plan. I received feedback from Casper on the third of February. I submitted the research plan on the 10th of February. In awaiting if the plan is a go or no-go, together with the other two students we are contacting primary schools for permission of participation. After that we will have to inform parents.

February

Depending on if the plan is a go or no-go, I might be still working on the research plan. It is also important to get the permission from the ethical commission. The permission from the ethical commission should be announced before we start to collect the data. In the meantime, we are still reaching out to schools and aim to start collecting the data end of February and beginning March.

March

In March I will be collecting the data, analyzing the data and start with writing the results.

April

In beginning April, I will be writing the results and start writing the discussion section. In April I will hand in the first draft for feedback.

May

Processing the feedback given on the draft. Finalizing the thesis.

June

The master thesis will be uploaded in June and I will have to give a presentation about my Master Thesis.