Navigating Islamophobia: Examining the Role of Religion and Community in the Everyday Lives of Muslim Adolescents in England*

İslamofobi ile Başa Çıkma: Din ve Topluluğun İngilteredeki Müslüman Gençlerin Hayatlarındaki Rolünü İnceleme**

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** Bu makale, Sahin ve Francis danışmanlığında hazırlanan "İngiltere'deki 11-16 Yaş Arası Ortaöğretime Giden Müslüman Öğrencilerin İslâm Eğitimi İhtiyacının Araştırılması: Ampirik Bir Araştırma" başlıklı doktora tezinden üretilmiştir (Doktora Tezi, Warwick Üniversitesi, İngiltere, 2023).

Abstract

This study explores the coping strategies employed by Muslim adolescents in reaction to the challenges they face in schools across England. Rather than making broad generalizations about Muslim students in the UK, the study focuses on understanding how these young people navigate stressful experiences—particularly discrimination and Islamophobia—through their own lived experiences. Muslim minority communities in the UK frequently encounter difficulties related to their distinct identities on daily basis. In this context, religion, spirituality, and a sense of community often play a vital role in helping minority communities, including Muslims, cope with everyday challenges. Drawing on a qualitative research methodology, the study involved semi-structured interviews with 14 British Muslim students aged 15 to 16. The findings reveal three key coping mechanisms: religious consciousness, community belonging, and avoidance. Religious consciousness—expressed through prayer and spiritual engagement—supports psychological resilience. Community belonging provides a sense of solidarity and peer support, while avoidance functions as a practical strategy for managing ongoing experiences of discrimination. This research offers deeper insight into the lived experiences of Muslim youth and has important implications for educational policy and practice.

Keywords: Religious Education, Coping mechanisms, Islamophobia, Discirimation, Muslim Adolescents, British Muslims.

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Öz

Bu çalışmanın amacı, İngiltere'deki Müslüman gençlerin okullarda yaşadığı zorluklarla başa çıkma stratejilerini araştırmaktır. Fakat İngiltere'de yaşayan Müslüman öğrencilere ilişkin fazla genelleme yapmak değildir. Bunun aksine, Müslüman çocukların ayrımcılık ve İslamofobi gibi stresli olaylarla mücadelede kendi yaşadıkları deneyimlerden yola çıkarak izlediği yolları incelemektir. İngiltere'deki Müslüman azınlık topluluklar kendilerine özgün kimliklerin dolayı günlük yaşamlarında birçok zorluklarla karşı karşıya gelmektedir. Din, maneviyat ve bir topluluğa ait olma, Müslüman topluluklar da dâhil olmak üzere azınlık topluluklarda yaşanan günlük zorluklarla başa çıkmada önemli rol oynamaktadır. Bu araştırmada nitel araştırma yöntemlerinden yarı yapılandırılmış mülakat yöntemini

kullanarak 15 ve 16 yaşındaki 14 İngiliz Müslüman öğrenci ile mülakat yapılmış ve üç temel başa çıkma yöntemi belirlenmiştir: Dinî bilinç, topluluk aidiyeti ve kaçınma. Namaz/dua ve manevi bağlılık ile tanımlanan dinî bilinç, psikolojik dayanıklılığı geliştirirken, topluluk aidiyeti ise Müslüman akranlar arasında sosyal destek ve birliği geliştirir. Sürekli var olan ayrımcılığın karşısında kaçınma ise pratik bir cevap olarak hizmet eder. Bu araştırma Müslüman gençliğin deneyimlerini kavramayı artırırken eğitim politikaları ve uygulamalarına da ışık tutar.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Din Eğitimi, Başa Çıkma Mekanizması, İslamofobi, Ayrımcılık, Müslüman Gençler, İngiliz Müslümanlar.

Introduction

Adolescence represents a significant developmental stage characterised by various physical, cognitive, emotional, and behavioural transformations (Zammuner, 2019; Cicognani, 2011). Adolescence is a phase when young people navigate a range of often conflicting ambitions and face the challenge of managing fluctuating social expectations placed upon them (Borecka-Biernat, 2022, p.86). According to Forrest-Bank and Dupper (2015, p.263) every adolescent faces difficulties and obstacles during their typical growth and development. The research on adolescents indicates that they often report experiencing school-related stressors, including victimisation from bullying and disagreements with educators, alongside interpersonal stressors such as conflicts with parents, siblings, and peers (Borecka-Biernat, 2022; Zammuner, 2019). For instance, Muslim students encounter difficulties related to their cultural and religious identities within educational institutions in England. Halstead (2018) notes that Muslim pupils encounter alienation and exclusion due to Islamophobia, discrimination, and stereotyping related to their religious identities within educational environments. The challenges that arise from the British education system and the wider British society continue to pose concerns for Muslim students in the UK (Francis & McKenna, 2018). Therefore, it is crucial to investigate how British Muslim adolescents confront these challenges and the coping strategies they employ to enhance their psychological well-being.

Numerous researchers have found that religion serves as a significant factor for individuals facing hardship, offering psychological support (Pargament, 1997). Additionally, being part of religious community also provides collective support, improves shared experiences and develop sense of belonging. On the other hand, avoidance seems to be a coping mechanism in confronting stressors

such as Islamophobia within Muslim minority communities in secular Western societies (Fischer et al., 2010). While religion and community play a crucial role in the lives of Muslim minority communities as coping mechanisms, there has been insufficient attention to the unique coping strategies used by Muslim adolescents in the UK, particularly in school environments.

Overall, this study seeks to investigate the coping strategies employed by British Muslim adolescents in response to the challenges they encounter within their school settings and the broader secular British society, drawing from their personal experiences. The study defines three primary coping strategies derived from qualitative data obtained through semi-structured interviews: religious consciousness, community belonging, and avoidance. As a result, this study examines how British Muslim adolescents employ their faith and sense of community belonging to overcome the challenges they face in school settings.

Young British Muslims and the Challenges They Encounter in UK Schools

The early Muslim presence in the UK was inextricably tied to Britain's colonial expansion. Beginning in the 17th century, seamen from Bengal, Yemen known as 'lascars,' were recruited to work on British merchant ships (Gilliat-Ray, 2010; Seddon, 2014). This early encounter established the foundation for later Muslim migration. The outbreak of the two world wars led Britain to rely on its colonial network to meet resource and manpower needs, particularly by recruiting a significant number of Muslims from the Indian subcontinent. A considerable number of these people continued to reside in Britain following the war, having served alongside with British forces. After the second world war, the pace of migration accelerated rapidly as Britain required more manpower to rebuild its economy. The flow of migrants from diverse backgrounds has made Britain increasingly diverse in religious, cultural, and linguistic terms.

On November 29, 2022, the Office for National Statistics (ONS, 2021) revealed data from the 2021 Census that provides insights into religion and ethnicity in the UK. The statistics show a significant and steady rise in the Muslim population, increasing from 21,000 in 1951 to 55,000 in 1961, 250,000 in 1971, nearly 600,000 in 1981, and just under one million by 1991. When the last three census results are taken into account, the data indicate a rise in the Muslim population from 1.6 million in 2001 to 2.71 million in 2011, and further to 3.87 million in 2021 (ONS, 2021). In terms of overall population percentages, Muslims

accounted for 3% in 2001, 4.8% in 2011, and now represent 6.5%. This makes Muslims the second-largest religious group in England and Wales, following Christians. However, while the Muslim population continues to grow, the number of individuals identifying as Christian has declined, dropping from 59.3% in 2011 to 46.2% in 2021—a decrease of 5.5 million people. Despite this decline, Islam remains the largest non-Christian religious group in England (ONS, 2021).

The Office for National Statistics (2021) indicates that Muslims represent the youngest religious demographic in England, with an average age of 27. Additionally, Muslims make up 8.1% of all school-age children (5–15 years old) in the UK. The predominant population of Muslims in the UK resides in areas marked by cultural and economic deprivation, which adversely affects the prospects of their children (Shah, 2016, p. 113). This has been referenced as one of the explanations for the poor performance of Muslim students who complete their education in British institutions. Moreover, factors such as racism, Islamophobia, bullying in mainstream schools, the implementation of the Preventing Violent Extremism (PVE) programme, and the portrayal of Muslims as a threat to community cohesion all play a role in the low achievement of young British Muslims.

Since the early 21st century, global events such as the 9/11 and 7/7 attacks, along with the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, have triggered a rise in anti-Muslim attitudes, particularly in the UK. British Muslim adolescents have become the focus of intense public and political discourse, with attention shifting from concerns about academic achievement to issues of national security, socio-political integration, and the construction of hostile identities (Shah, 2017). Since the mid-1980s, individuals of Muslim faith in England—particularly boys and young men of Pakistani and Bangladeshi descent—have increasingly been perceived as 'folk devils,' with Muslim boys portrayed as potential threats to the social order (Shain, 2017, p. 17). Muslim adolescents, due to their background and perceived vulnerability to radicalization, have faced heightened suspicion. The shift in public perception—from 'Paki' to 'would-be terrorist'—has intensified hostility toward Muslims, especially those who visibly express their faith through religious attire such as the hijab or beards (Saeed, 2017). These developments, including the 1988 Rushdie riots and the 2001 urban disturbances, have led to a shift in government policy away from multiculturalism toward an emphasis on national identity and community cohesion (Home Office, 2001). This policy change resulted in the implementation of the "Prevent" strategy, designed to combat extremism; however, it has faced criticism for contributing to

alienation within Muslim communities by fostering an atmosphere of mistrust and surveillance in educational institutions (Home Office, 2023).

The Prevent strategy requires educational institutions to monitor students showing signs of radicalisation and to promote British values (Home Office, 2023). Following the 2014 "Trojan Horse" controversy, scrutiny of Muslim students has intensified, with certain schools documenting cases where Muslim children were reported to anti-terrorism officials for minor actions, including wearing a "Free Palestine" badge (Archer, 2024; Sodha, 2022). These actions, combined with Islamophobic rhetoric, have led to a rise in bullying and discrimination targeting Muslim students. For example, the Warwick Religions and Education Research Unit's study on young people's attitudes toward religious diversity, surveying 11,809 students (including 335 Muslims) aged 13 to 15 in UK state schools, found that 25% of Muslim students experienced religion-based bullying, attributing this more to their faith than to ethnicity, race, or name (Francis & McKenna, 2018). Furthermore, Karacan's (2023) research involving Muslim men in the UK revealed that Islamophobic attacks affect any Muslim, regardless of their age, vulnerability, or disability.

In the light of recent events, the Israel-Gaza conflict has intensified Islamophobia in the UK, as British Muslims face increased hostility and hate crimes. Zara Mohammed of the Muslim Council of Britain highlights how anti-Muslim sentiment has been fuelled by far-right groups and political rhetoric, linking peaceful advocacy for Palestine to extremism (Mohammed, 2024). Muslims are experiencing discrimination in workplaces, schools, mosque vandalism, and a polarised public discourse, deepening societal divisions (Mohammed, 2024). According to the UK monitoring organization TellMAMA, (2024), anti-Muslim hate incidents in the UK have surged, more than tripling since the onset of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict in Gaza. These incidents involve a range of hostile actions, including verbal abuse, threats, physical assaults, vandalism, discrimination, hate speech, and the circulation of anti-Muslim materials. Overall, the education system's emphasis on counterterrorism has created an environment of exclusion, failing to address the educational and religious needs of young Muslims in UK schools (MCB, 2007).

Religion and Community Belonging as Coping Method

Research examining the relationship of adolescence and religion/spirituality typically suggests that faith continues to hold significance for many adolescents

(Moodley et al., 2014, p.12; Tastepe, 2023; Wallace et al., 2003). Many studies have indicated that people who adhere to religious beliefs tend to manage crises more effectively. In times of difficulty, individuals often turn to religion to help navigate the challenges of life. Religion is widely recognised as an important resource for coping with stressful circumstances. This key role of religion has been evidenced by a wide range of studies that have highlighted its significant contribution to individual resilience. For instance, one of the most challenging times that humanity experienced on a global scale in recent history was Covid-19 pandemic. The notable influence of religion was particularly evident during this challenging era. This is seen in the Iyer et al. (2024) study, which showed that those who followed a particular religion demonstrated stronger coping strategies during the UK pandemic lockdowns. In a similar vein, a study by Thomas & Barbato in 2020 natural disasters, domestic abuse, divorce highlighted the positive influence of religion, examining how Muslim and Christian residents in the UAE employed positive religious coping strategies during the initial phase of the Covid-19 pandemic. The findings indicated that Muslim participants utilised religious coping strategies to a significantly greater degree than their Christian counterparts (Thomas & Barbato, 2020). This finding underscores the more prominent role of religion in assisting Muslim individuals in managing the stress induced by the pandemic (Thomas & Barbato, 2020).

The role of religious coping has proven to be substantial in navigating various life challenges. Scott, (2018) discovered the importance of religion for young unaccompanied refugees in the UK during times of hardship. Ní Raghallaigh' (2011) study similarly affirms the fact that faith holds significant importance in the experiences of unaccompanied minors. When it comes to coping with ontological and existential questions, such as death, research conducted by Lowis et al., (2011) has demonstrated that religious and spiritual beliefs, along with faith in God, significantly shape one's thoughts and emotions regarding death. Racism is also one of the challenges that minority communities face within host countries. For example, Karaba, (2024) examined the diverse religious coping strategies employed by participants to understand and address racism in her qualitative study involving 43 African nurses working in the NHS in the UK. The study identified the significance of religion in the lives of African nurses in the UK, noting that they utilise religious and spiritual coping strategies to interpret and manage experiences of racism in the workplace, allowing them to continue their work without disruption.

In addition, a number of studies argue that religious ways of coping play a particularly significant role in the lives of Muslim people, as they tend to rely most on their beliefs in times of difficulty. For example, while dealing with stress, religion has become prominent among Muslim minority groups regardless of their ethnicity. Cinici (2024) conducted research involving 353 Muslim students from Turkey, comprising 190 high school students and 163 university students. The research indicated that adolescents frequently employ religious coping mechanisms to address individual, social, and existential difficulties. Among these strategies, actions such as faith in Allah, prayer (salat), supplication (dua), thankfulness, repentance, ablution, attending the mosque, reading the Qur'an, engaging in religious discourse, and volunteering are particularly significant. Furthermore, the findings of Stuart's (2014) study concerning the lived experiences of Muslim immigrant youth in New Zealand indicate that religious beliefs and practices, along with family support, play a crucial role in helping these individuals cope with challenges arising from discrimination and cultural differences. Sproston & Bhui (2002) discovered in their qualitative study of ethnic groups in the UK that religious belief served as a significant coping mechanism for South Asian Muslims facing stressors and difficulties, whereas religion was the least evident coping strategy among British and Irish respondents. Similarly, Ozeto & Allan (2021), in their research on young migrant Muslim women in the UK, explored how perceived stress, religious coping mechanisms, and levels of religiosity were related in this group. The findings indicated that religiosity serves as a mediator in the relationship between religious coping and perceived stress; specifically, individuals exhibiting higher levels of religiosity employed religious coping strategies and experienced lower levels of perceived stress (Ozeto & Allan, 2021, p. 10). Similarly, the study by Loewenthal et al. (2001) looked into how effective different religious practices were in helping to ease depression for 282 participants, with an average age of 25, from the UK. This group included people from various religious backgrounds, including Christianity, Hinduism, Judaism, Islam, and those who identified as non-religious. Many participants reported that faith and prayer were powerful tools for managing life's challenges within a religious context. Muslims showed a stronger belief in the power of religious coping strategies to help manage depression when compared to other demographic groups (Loewenthal et al., 2001). Furthermore, the impact of religious coping can be seen in the well-being of Muslim individuals. Adam & Ward (2016) explored how acculturative stress, religious coping strategies, and subjective well-being are interconnected for Muslims living in New Zealand. The findings showed that

turning to religion helped people feel more satisfied with life and eased the negative impacts of acculturative stress on their overall well-being (Adam & Ward, 2016). Another everyday challenge for the Muslim community in the UK is Islamophobia (Elahi & Khan, 2017; The Runnymede Trust, 1997). In his recent study with Muslim men in the UK, Karacan (2024) found that they tend to turn to their faith (Islam) as a way to cope with Islamophobia, an everyday challenge for them and their families in the UK. The participants perceived Islamophobic incidents as tests from God (Allah); thus, prayer is considered a means of coping with Islamophobia (Karacan, 2024). Overall, while some secular theories suggest that religious influence has declined, real-world evidence shows that Islam remains an important part of the lives of young British Muslims (Francis & McKenna, 2017; Hoque, 2015; Lockley-Scott, 2020; Lynch, 2013; Shah, 2019; Tastepe, 2023).

On the other hand, several studies have indicated that strong community ties play a crucial role in helping minority Muslim people cope with challenges (Cortvriend, 2020; Fischer et al., 2010; Hargreaves, 2016; Paudyal et al., 2021; Snyder et al., 2005; Guerin et al., 2006; Whittaker et al., 2005). Community support has become an important way of coping with challenges for Muslim people compared to Christians. A study conducted by Fischer and his team in 2010 highlights that Muslims often approach challenges with a strong sense of community and social connection, in contrast to Christians. While Christians often find comfort in personal coping strategies that emphasise positive reframing, Muslims typically rely on support from family members, their community, and spiritual leaders for guidance and information (Fischer et al., 2010). Furthermore, a study conducted by Forrest-Bank and Dupper (2015) employed a qualitative methodology to examine a sample of 50 middle and high school students from Catholic, Jewish, Muslim, and Universalist Unitarian backgrounds. The focus was on how these students coped with their religious minority status in public schools dominated by individuals identifying as Evangelical Christians, including students, teachers, and staff. The study indicated that involvement in community religious organizations offered youth a sense of acceptance regarding their religious affiliation. Such participation also served to strengthen their religious identity. Additionally, certain participants established strong affiliations with peers of their own religion to cultivate social support and manage their minority status in the school environment. A portion of this need was addressed beyond the school environment, highlighting the significance of religious affiliation and community. Cicognani (2011) also found that Italian adolescents use domain-specific coping strategies to cope with everyday age-relevant stressors. They rely on parental support for school-related problems and future concerns, and on peer support for academic and social stressors.

In addition, avoidance has also emerged as a practical coping strategy for some individuals. Moodley et al. (2014) conducted a study investigating how age, gender, the importance of religion/spirituality, involvement in church activities, and prayer frequency affect the coping strategies utilized by adolescents. Participants were drawn from ten public high schools in Cape Town, South Africa, totaling 1,184 individuals. Participants' ages ranged from 13 to 20 years. The findings revealed that females engaged in the developing social support coping strategy more often than males, whereas older adolescents were more likely to use avoidance-based strategies than younger adolescents. Age and gender, as personal variables, along with the importance of religion as a faith-oriented variable, were identified as significant factors influencing the development of social support and the use of avoidance as coping strategies among adolescents. Furthermore, Sproston and Bhui (2002) found in their qualitative study that some participants from various ethnic backgrounds employed avoidance by ignoring or denying the existence of distressing problems, effectively pretending these issues were not occurring.

Overall, this subsection highlights the significant role of religion, the importance of strong community ties, and the use of avoidance as a strategy for addressing challenges in the lives of adolescents, as evidenced by recent literature. Therefore, this study aims to examine the coping mechanisms employed by young Muslim people in England to address experiences of Islamophobia, especially in educational contexts.

Methodology

This study utilises data from the Islamic Education Needs of Young British Muslims project to explore the coping strategies used by young British Muslims in confronting their difficulties within their school settings. The study comprised semi-structured interviews with fourteen students, aged 15 to 16 years.[1] Participants were selected based on their voluntary participation in follow-up interviews. These students were selected as they are nearing the completion of their secondary education, which is expected to enhance the quality of the discussion. Among those who took part in the study, seven were identified as female and seven as male. The participants were all born and raised in the UK. In terms of ethnic backgrounds, they exhibited a wide range of ethnicities including Pakistani, Bangladeshi, Somali, Turkish, and Algerian heritages. Participants were deliberately selected to reflect the ethnic diversity of the Muslim

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1 Ethical committee approval for this study was granted by the University of Warwick on March 25, 2020.

population in Britain. In terms of the schools they attend, the students attended various educational institutions, including non-denominational community schools, independent schools (both Muslim and non-Muslim), and Catholic schools. The schools were located in significant urban areas with considerable Muslim demographics, including London, Birmingham, and Leicester, and predominantly characterised as religiously diverse.

This study employed thematic analysis to analyse the qualitative data. Thematic analysis was used to systematically identify the most frequently referenced and significant themes in participants' responses. Consequently, it plays an essential methodological role in the development of the three primary categories. Thematic analysis enabled the researcher to analyse data gathered through semi-structured interviews with students, facilitating a comprehensive understanding of their perspectives. After data collection, the interviews were transcribed, coded, and thematically analyzed to identify recurring patterns and themes.

All participants identified themselves as Muslim. The data collection began in March 2020 and lasted for eighteen months, ending in September 2021. The semi-structured interviews were conducted with participants who volunteered for the study via Zoom. The duration of the interviews ranged from 40 to 60 minutes. With the participants' consent, the interviews were video recorded; however, most participants chose to keep their cameras off for greater comfort. Both the video recordings and the transcripts were securely stored on an encrypted USB drive. To ensure anonymity and confidentiality, pseudonyms were used in the transcripts, despite asking participants for their real names during the interviews. The scope of this study was confined to data derived exclusively from interviews with Muslim adolescents residing in the UK, aligning with the research's predefined parameters and aims. Drawing on the narratives shared by the participants, this article offers a comprehensive analysis of how Muslim adolescents utilize their religious beliefs and sense of connection to the broader Muslim community as a means of coping with the challenges they encounter in UK schools.

Findings

Most pupils reported strategies for coping with stressful experiences such as Islamophobic language, discrimination, and inadequate support. They sought to manage these challenges without escalating issues within the school environment. Their most common coping mechanisms included "religious consciousness and thinking of God," "spending time with other Muslims," and "avoidance."

Religious Consciousness/Thinking of God

Qualitative analysis revealed that religion (Islam) plays an essential role in students' lives, providing critical support as they navigate identity-related challenges. Throughout the interviews, the majority of the participants frequently referenced the importance of prayer and maintaining a connection to their faith to cope with difficulties, emphasising how their faith serves as a source of resilience.

For instance, Sara, a 16-year-old of Somali heritage, attends a community secondary school in Leicester, where the majority of her peers are of Indian heritage, alongside a small Muslim population. Born and raised in Leicester within a practicing Muslim family, Sara has been aware of her Islamic identity from a young age, which she feels has helped her confront Islamophobic comments and negative stereotypes about Muslims. During her interview, she discussed her experiences, stating:

> Um, I would say it's just as long as you're remaining in touch with your own religion and you're doing things like praying and being conscious of your religion that could really help you with like tough times, especially when you're going through these comments. And you just know that these are just stereotypes, but they're just not, they're not me or they're not my people.

Sara stressed that the significance of praying and her consciousness of faith help her in confronting stereotypes associated with Muslims. Her statement indicates the empowering nature of religious consciousness since Islam provides her solace while she suffers the hurtful comments of her peers at school.

Similarly, Haysam, a 15-year-old Year 10 student of Pakistani descent, attends a community school in London characterized by its religious diversity. He was born and raised in a practicing Muslim family, therefore, he perceives Islam as a way of life rather than a set of religious practices. In other words, Islam influences every aspect of his life including his conduct and his interactions with others within the secular context of British society. Haysam emphasized that when confronted with a problem, he engages in supplication (dua) and recites the Qur'an to address the challenges he encounters. He stressed that:

> ...Most of the times I make dua. That's primary thing. And then sometimes I open the Qur'an and then try to find answer yeah. These are the things that primarily I do when I face challenges sometimes.

Haysam appeared to be seeking comfort in his faith for strength, guidance, and support. This indicates that he is relying on Allah for support during challenging times. Moreover, the holy Qur'an appears to provide him with comfort and a clear

sense of direction. Zahid, a 15-year-old student of Turkish descent in year 10 at a London all-boys Catholic school, emphasized the significance of reciting the Qur'an during challenging times for assistance and protection, stating:

> ...And also there's, like, uh, little verses of the Qur'an where you can read for protection or for, for help…

These quotations highlight the important role that prayer, supplication (dua) and reciting Qur'an holds in young adolescents lives, offering strength during difficult times and acting as a guiding influence on her path to success. The participants articulated that prayer and maintaining a connection to their faith are crucial for them in navigating the challenges they face as Muslim students within a secular British society. As a result, a strong connection to religious beliefs offers comfort and aids in countering negative stereotypes for young British Muslims within the diverse context of British society.

Being with Muslims

In addition to the impact of religious consciousness, the sense of belonging to a wider Muslim community emerged as a significant means for Muslim adolescents to address the challenges they face within their school settings. This sense of belonging seemed to provides students a sense of comfort, understanding, and a feeling of togetherness when facing challenges. For example, Nida, a 16-year-old Year 11 student of Somali descent, attends a community school in Leicester, where Muslim students constitute an important proportion of the overall school population. Nida has encountered difficulties stemming from her ethnic and religious background. She has been subjected to stereotypes, often being unfairly labelled a pirate because of her Somali background and a terrorist because of her beliefs. Nida shared her thoughts on how she deals with these stereotypes:

> Um, I grew up mainly around my own culture and ethnicity, so I feel like they understand me where I'm coming from. Even like my school is a public school and there are many people from our religion and my ethnicity, so it is more of an understanding place, so, yeah.

Nida's comments illustrates how her cultural and religious background fosters a sense of belonging and support among those who suffered. Being in a group of friends who share similar experiences facilitates her understanding of her identity within a predominantly secular school environment. Similarly Sara echoed her comments, emphasising the significance of belonging to the Muslim community. She said:

I would, you feel a little bit like a little bit upset of course, because it's your religion, it's your personal identity. Um, but I go to school with so many different Muslims. So, you aren't alone. If I was in a minority, then yeah. I would feel a little bit more upset, but when so many people are being called these things and you, you guys all kind of feel comforted that you guys all go through the same thing. So, I don't feel as upset.

The pupil stressed that facing Islamophobic comments because of her Muslim identity causes her distress but, the sense of togetherness she feels with fellow Muslims who suffer similar experiences of discrimination brings her comfort. This indicates that being part of a community that faces similar challenges tends to play an important role for Muslim minority groups within the context of secular British society. These experiences indicate that the unity among Muslim adolescents provides not only emotional support, but also enhances their collective resilience in facing difficulties they encounter in the secular context of British society. In summary, it can be stated that the shared hardships within the Muslim community serve to offer refuge and assistance when confronted with difficulties stemming from discrimination and prejudice in British schools.

Avoidance

Upon a thorough examination of the coping strategies employed by Muslim young people, it becomes evident that avoidance appears as a practical response to the challenging comments that target the students' religious identity, alongside other coping mechanisms, religious awareness and a sense of community affiliation. For instance, Usman, a 16-year-old of Asian-Bangladeshi descent, is currently in year 11 at an independent mixed school, which has a majority of non-Muslim students despite the presence of some Muslim peers, stated:

It's, it's less a matter of going more ignoring it because it's not going to only happen once. It's not, it's not, it's not only a one-time event, but neither is it a big obstacle. So, ignoring, it's fine. Just going about every day is the best thing I can do…

Usman's experiences with Islamophobic attacks have led to a sense of resignation, resulting in the use of avoidance strategies to preserve his emotional well-being. By ignoring negative comments, he creates a protective barrier against the distress linked to ongoing challenges, enabling him to maintain his daily life. Similarly, Asma seemed to rely on avoidance as a practical response when faced

with stereotypes about Muslim people in British society. Asma, a 16-year-old of Asian-Pakistani descent, currently studies in year 11 at a community school in Birmingham, where the majority of students are White British. She said:

> Um, for girls dressing modestly that's quite hard in the UK, especially because a lot of people don't, they perceive someone to be wearing, an abaya or a niqab to be something like a terrorist. Um, so if you'are wearing a headscarf, even on the bus, people will look and stare, but you have to try and ignore it.

In her response, she explained the various stereotypes regarding Muslims that are common within the wider British society. Furthermore, she faces challenges as a Muslim woman due to the widespread negative stereotypes regarding Muslim women as oppressed, which are perpetuated by the media and subsequently brought into the school environment. This indicates that Muslim woman face additional challenges because of their religious identity that makes it even harder to continue their daily life in a secular British society. However, the awareness of religious identity allows Asma to reject the negative stereotypes about Muslims. Overall, Asma's comment points out that Islamophobic incidents are not isolated incidents for Muslim pupils but rather part of a larger pattern of discrimination that they encounter regularly.

Muslim pupils who face difficulties in their school environment as a result of their religious identity seem to employ avoidance as a practical response due to a lack of support from their school teachers or school authority. This is evident in the case of Hafsa, a 15-year-old Year 10 student of Somali descent attending a community school in Leicester, who tends to ignore Islamophobic attitudes because she receives insufficient support from her teachers.

> You have to tell the teacher but then obviously they don't really do act much on it or you just ignore the person and you move past from the situation and you move on with your life.

She seemed to disappoint with the lack of action of teachers against the Islamophobic incidents they experience within the school environment. This attitude of teachers indicates that there seemed to be a lack of support from their teachers for Muslim pupils in schools in the UK. The teachers' failure to take action against these unfriendly attitudes towards Muslim pupils appeared to result in the students building a reliance on avoidance strategies. Consequently, it can be stated disregarding individuals with Islamophobic attitudes can be regarded as a practical approach for Muslim students in school environment.

In conclusion, Muslim pupils in British education system seems to employ complex approaches to cope with prejudice and stereotyping. Although religious awareness and community support offer essential guidance, avoidance functions as a practical strategy that allows students to cope with the distressing burden of their experiences. These experiences of Muslim students show the importance of fostering a school environment that students feel safe to confront Islamophobia. This might help mitigate the reliance on avoidance and build a more inclusive atmosphere for Muslim students.

Discussion and Conclusion

This study examined the coping strategies utilised by Muslim adolescents in response to challenges encountered in school environments, specifically focussing on issues of Islamophobia and negative stereotyping. Three significant themes emerged as a result of thorough analysis of the qualiatative semi-structured interviews with young British Muslims. The following themes can be identified as; "religious consciousness", "community belonging", and "avoidance." Themes that came out throught qualitative analysis highlight the diverse strategies employed by young Muslims to build resilience and navigate their psychological wellbeing while facing the challenges present in their everyday experiences. The findings of this study align with existing literature that acknowledges faith as an essential source of resilience for individuals confronting distress linked to discrimination, Islamophobia, and negative stereotyping.

The existing body of literature consistently underscores the significance of faith-oriented coping strategies. These strategies offer psychological and emotional assistance to Muslim youth as they deal with difficult educational settings characterised by hostility and bias. In the face of challenges, these young people show great strength by drawing on their religious beliefs and community ties. This shows transformative power of faith among young British Muslims. Individuals involved in this study stressed how important it is to maintain a strong and stable spiritual relationship with Allah through regular prayer. The participants constantly said that their deep religious involvement gave them strength and helped them deal with problems in an effective manner. They also stated that thanks to their religious beliefs they found comfort and solace in the broader secular framework of British society.

Numerous studies have shed light on the significance of faith and spirituality for minority Muslim groups. Regardless of age, gender, and ethnicity, religion

and spirituality serve as a source of resilience, strength, and comfort in the face of challenges such as Islamophobia and negative stereotyping. When considering the literature on how young adolescents navigate the challenges they encounter, the significance of religious coping becomes distinctly apparent. The present study, in line with most published literature on that topic, clearly shows that prayer, dua, reciting Qur'an help young British Muslims to keep a close relationship with Allah—a strategy repeatedly found to be essential for coping. For example, Cinici (2024) aligns with our findings, indicating that Muslim adolescents frequently rely on religious coping mechanisms, including faith in Allah, prayer (salat), supplication (dua), and reading the Qur'an to manage adversity. In addition, the findings of Stuart's (2014) study on the lived experiences of Muslim immigrant youth in New Zealand reveal that challenges arising from discrimination and cultural differences have a significant impact on these individuals. However, the presence of supportive family networks, coupled with a strong commitment to their religious beliefs and practices, has been instrumental in fostering resilience among these youth (Stuart, 2014). Similarly, a study conducted by Altıntas (2023) involving young Muslims reinforces our findings regarding the role of religious faith in promoting resilience. It demonstrates how faith helps young people navigate adversity by offering hope, meaning, and a sense of purpose (Altıntas, 2023). Building on these earlier findings, the present study contributes uniquely by showing how young British Muslims actively draw on their religious awareness to confront Islamophobia and other daily challenges within the UK educational system.

Moreover, the sense of belonging to a community centred around a common religious identity serves as a crucial source of support for young British Muslims. This cohesion allows for the exchange of experiences and emotions. Participants in the research highlighted the feelings of safety and unity that arose from their connections with fellow Muslims. The cultivation of a shared identity helps to foster a sense of collective power for young British Muslims. This seemed to help them to remove the feelings of isolation that many people feel in response to Islamophobic attacks and negative stereotypes. The results of this study align with previous research that highlights the significance of peer support in alleviating the impacts of discrimination and Islamophobia (Cortvriend, 2020; Fischer et al. 2010; Forrest-Bank and Dupper, 2015; Hargreaves, 2016; Zammuner, 2019). For example, the study by Forrest-Bank and Dupper (2015) involving high school students from various religious backgrounds, including Muslims, corroborates the findings of the current research. They discovered that

strong affiliations with peers of the same religion foster social support and assist in managing minority status within the school environment. In addition, Zammuner's (2019) research involving adolescents revealed that the pursuit of social support and effective problem-solving correlated with reduced social loneliness and enhanced levels of positive affect and life satisfaction. Cicognani's (2011) study on Italian adolescents corroborates these findings, indicating that those with greater self-efficacy and family support exhibit reduced withdrawal behaviours, resulting in enhanced well-being. In conclusion, the findings of this study indicate that solidarity among Muslim peers strengthens both individual and collective identity. This solidarity appeared to empower them to tackle the challenges they face within the context of the Muslim minority in the UK.

To this point, we have discussed the importance of religious coping strategies and the sense of community fostered by a shared religious identity among young British Muslims in dealing with the challenges they face in schools in England. Analysis of the semi-structured interviews with these students revealed that they also tended to use avoidance as a coping mechanism, particularly in response to the lack of support from their teachers in British schools. This shows a lack of support accessible to Muslim students in schools in England. The findings of this study align with most of existing literature indicating that avoidance serves as a coping mechanism for adolescents. Moodley et al. (2014) conducted a study with public high school students, demonstrating the prevalence of avoidance as a coping strategy among adolescents. Similarly, Zammuner's (2019) study with adolescents revealed that avoidance was identified as the most prominent coping strategy among this group. Furthermore, Borecka-Biernat's (2022) study on how teenagers manage social conflict revealed that when adolescents lack confidence in their ability to address or resolve an issue, they are more inclined to resort to avoidance coping strategies. However, findings from various studies indicate that utilising avoidance as a coping mechanism may lead to greater psychological distress among Muslim students over time (Holahan et al., 2005; Kunts et al., 2012). For example, Zammuner's (2019) study highlighted that avoidance, as a coping strategy among adolescents, was notably the most harmful, as it correlated with increased emotional loneliness and diminished perceived health. Considering the curicial findings of this study, it has significant implications for educational policy and practice. Initially, educational institutions ought to adopt culturally and religiously sensitive strategies for effectively supporting Muslim students. Secondly, training programs need to enhance understanding of Islamophobia and its impact on the well-being of students. Ultimately, the establishment of clear regulations to address discrimi-

nation incidents could diminish the likelihood of individuals resorting to avoidance as a means of coping. Consequently, these recommendations have the potential to enhance the cohesion within the school and the wider society in the UK.

In conclusion, the deep dynamics of resilience present in these pupils are revealed through the interaction between religious awareness, a sense of community, and the tendency to avoid difficulties. By thoroughly examining these dynamics, educational institutions can significantly enhance their support for the well-being of Muslim youth. Consequently, they can create a welcoming educational atmosphere that acknowledges diversity and genuinely promotes inclusivity. Despite the valuable contributions to the literature, this study has its own limitations. The research sample included fourteen British Muslim children residing in different parts of the UK. To represent the diverse demographics of the British Muslim community, the data was collected through semi-structured interviews with individuals from Pakistani, Bangladeshi, Somali, Turkish, and Algerian backgrounds. The sample was limited to multiple urban cities, including Birmingham, Leicester, and London, where diverse Muslim communities reside. As a result, the findings may not be fully generalizable to the broader British Muslim population. Future research should continue to explore these dynamics within the framework of changing public perceptions toward Muslims and the subsequent implications for identity and coping strategies.

Genişletilmiş Özet

Giriş

Bu makale, İngiltere okullarındaki eğitim gören Müslüman gençlerin yaşadığı zorluklarla başa çıkma stratejilerini inceleyen bir araştırmanın bulgularını sunmaktadır. İngiltere'deki Müslüman öğrenciler kendi dinî ve kültürel kimliklerinden dolayı birçok zorluk yaşamaktadırlar. Halstead (2018) İngiltere'deki Müslüman öğrencilerin kendi dinî kimliklerine yönelik kalıp yargı, İslamofobi ve ayrımcılıktan dolayı yabancılaşma ve dışlanma ile karşı karşıya kaldıklarını ifade etmektedir. Bu sebeple Müslüman gençlerin psikolojik iyi oluşlarını sürdürmek için bu zorluklarla nasıl başa çıktığını ve hangi başa çıkma metodlarını uyguladıklarını incelemek önem arz etmektedir.

Çok sayıda araştırmacı dinin, zorluklarla karşılaşan bireyler için psikolojik destek sunduğunu ortaya koymuştur (Pargament, 1997). Buna ek olarak dinî bir topluluğun parçası olmak da kolektif destek sunar, ortak yaşanmışlıkları artırır ve aidiyet duygusu geliştirir. Diğer taraftan, kaçınma, Batı toplumlarındaki Müslüman azınlık topluluklar için strese neden olan İslamofobi gibi zorluklarla yüzleşmede başa çıkma mekanizması gibi görünmektedir (Fischer et al., 2010). Din ve topluluk (cemaat), başa çıkma mekanizması olarak Müslüman azınlık grupların yaşamlarında hayati bir rol oynarken, İngiltere'deki özellikle okul ortamında Müslüman gençlere yönelik özgün başa çıkma mekanizmalarıyla ilgili çalışmaların yetersiz olduğu görünmektedir.

21. yüzyılda 11 Eylül ve 7 Temmuz saldırıları gibi global olaylar ile birlikte, Afganistan ve Irak savaşları, özellikle İngiltere'de Müslüman karşıtı tutumların yükselişini tetiklemiştir. Müslüman gençler, mevcut kimlikleri ve radikalliğe karşı savunmasız olabilecekleri algısı sebebiyle kendileri hakkında artan şüphelerle karşı karşıya kalmışlardır. Kimlik algısındaki 'Paki' den 'terörist olabilir' e değişim, özellikle dinlerini giyim kuşamlarıyla görünür bir şekilde açığa vuran Müslümanlara yönelik düşmanlığı alevlendirmiştir (Saeed, 2017). Yukarıda bahsedilen olaylara ek olarak, 1988'deki Rushdie ayaklanmaları ve 2001 de kent iç karışıklıkları, hükümet politikalarını çokkültürlülükten, ulusal kimlik ve sosyal uyum politikalarına doğru değişikliğe sevk etmiştir (Home Office, 2001). Bu politika değişimi, aşırılık ile mücadele etmek için "Önleme" stratejisinin hayata geçirilmesi ile sonuçlanmıştır fakat bu politika, eğitim kurumlarımda güvensizlik ve gözetim altında tutmaya çalışma çabalarını artırarak Müslüman toplulukların yabancılaşmasını körüklediği için eleştirilerle karşı karşıya kalmıştır (Home Office, 2023).

Önleme stratejisi, eğitim kurumlarından radikalleşme belirtileri gösteren öğrencileri izlemelerini ve İngiliz değerlerini teşvik etmelerini şart koşmaktadır (Home Office, 2023). "Truva Atı" adıyla bilinen olayı takiben Müslüman öğrencileri denetleme yoğunlaşmış, belli okullardaki Müslüman çocukların "Özgür Filistin" rozeti dâhil olmak üzere küçük eylemlerinin anti-terör görevlilerine ihbar edildiği vakalar belgelenmiştir (Archer, 2024; Sodha, 2022). Bu eylemler İslamofobik söylemlerle bir araya gelince Müslüman öğrencileri hedef alan akran zorbalığı ve ayrımcılıkta da bir artışa neden olmuştur. Örneğin, Warwick Dinler ve Eğitim Araştırma Birimi'nin genç insanların dinî çeşitliliğe karşı tutumları araştırması, İngiltere'deki devlet okullarındaki 13-15 yaş arası 11,809 (335 Müslüman dâhil) öğrenciyle yaptığı anket çalışmasında, Müslüman öğrencilerin %25'inin din temelli akran zorbalığına maruz kaldığını, bu zorbalığın etnisite, ırk veya isimlerinden daha çok dinlerine dayandırdıklarını bulmuştur. Buna ek olarak Karacan'ın (2023) İngiltere'deki Müslüman erkeklerle olan araştırması, İslamofobik saldırıların yaşı, savunmasız oluşu veya engelliliğine bakmazsın her Müslümanı etkilediğini ortaya çıkarmıştır.

İsrail-Gazze çatışması gibi son olaylarlarla birlikte İngiliz Müslümanlar, artan karşıtlık ve nefret suçları ile karşı karşıya kalarak İngiltere'deki İslamofobiyi şiddetlendirmiştir. Britanya Müslüman Konseyinden Zara Mohammed, Müslüman karşıtı düşüncenin, aşırı sağcı gruplar ve politik söylem tarafından Filistin için barışçıl savunmayı aşırılık ile ilişkilendirerek nasıl şiddetlendirildiğini vurgulamıştır (Mohammed, 2024). İngiltere izleme organizasyonu TellMAMA (2024)'ya göre Gazze'deki İsrail-Filistin çatışmasından sonra İngiltere'deki anti-Müslüman nefret olayları aniden yükselmiş ve üç katından fazlasına çıkmıştır. Bu olaylar sözlü taciz, tehdit, fiziksel saldırı, yağma, ayrımcılık, nefret söylemi ve anti-Müslüman materyal dolaşımı gibi çok çeşitli düşmanca eylemleri içerir. Genel olarak eğitim sisteminde terörle mücadeleye verilen önem, dışlama ortamı oluşturmuş, bu sebeple İngiltere okullarındaki genç Müslümanların eğitim ve dinî ihtiyaçlarını karşılamada başarısız olunmuştur.

Yöntem

Bu çalışma Müslüman gençlerin okul ortamında karşılaştıkları zorluklarla, özellikle İslamofobi ve negatif kalıp yargılara odaklanarak onların yararlandıkları başa çıkma stratejilerini incelemektedir. Bu araştırmada nitel araştırma yöntemlerinden yarı yapılandırılmış mülakat yöntemini kullarak 15 ve 16 yaşındaki

14 İngiliz Müslüman öğrenci ile mülakat yapılmıştır.[2] Katılımcılar, mülakatlara gönüllülük esasına dayalı olarak dahil edilmiştir. Görüşmelerin niteliğini artıracağı öngörüsüyle, bu öğrenciler ortaöğretimi (secondary education) tamamlama aşamasında olanlar arasından seçilmiştir. Çalışmaya katılanlar, cinsiyet dengesini sağlamak amacıyla yedisi kız ve yedisi erkek olacak şekilde belirlenmiştir. Katılımcıların tamamı İngiltere'de doğmuş ve burada büyümüştür. Katılımcılar, etnik köken açısından Pakistan, Bangladeş, Somali, Türk ve Cezayir mirasına sahip bireylerden oluşan geniş bir çeşitlilik sergilemektedir. Bu katılımcılar, İngiltere'deki Müslüman nüfusun etnik çeşitliliğini yansıtmak amacıyla bilinçli olarak seçilmiştir. Öğrenciler, mezun oldukları okullar açısından çeşitlilik göstermekte olup mezhebe bağlı olmayan devlet okulları (non-denominational community schools), özel okullar (independent schools) ve Katolik okulları (Catholic schools) gibi farklı eğitim kurumlarına devam etmektedir. Bu okullar, yoğun Müslüman nüfusa sahip Londra, Birmingham ve Leicester gibi dini açıdan çeşitli kent bölgelerinde yer almaktadır. Bu çalışma, nitel verileri analiz etmek amacıyla tematik analiz yönteminden yararlanmıştır.

Bulgular

Genç İngiliz Müslümanlarla yapılmış nitel yarı yapılandırılmış görüşmelerin analizleri sonucu, üç önemli tema ortaya çıkmıştır. Bu temalar "dinî bilinç", "topluluk aidiyeti" ve "kaçınma" olarak tanımlanabilir. Nitel yöntemlerle yapılan analiz sonucu ortaya çıkan temalar, günlük yaşamlarında var olan zorluklarla yüzleşirken, dayanıklılık oluşturmak ve psikolojik iyi oluşlarını yönetmek için genç Müslümanların yararlandıkları çeşitli stratejileri vurgulamaktadır. Bu çalışmanın bulguları ayrımcılık, İslamofobi ve negatif kalıp yargılardan kaynaklı sıkıntılarla yüzleşen bireyler için, dayanıklılığın esas kaynağı olarak inancın doğruluğunu kabul eden mevcut literatür ile uyumludur.

Mevcut literatürün büyük kısmı tutarlı bir şekilde inanç odaklı başa çıkma stratejilerinin önemini vurgulamaktadır. Bu stratejiler, düşmanlık ve önyargı ile karakterize edilen zorlu eğitim ortamıyla baş etmek durumunda kalan Müslüman gençlere psikolojik ve duygusal yardım sağlamaktadır. Bu zorluklar karşısında, bahse konu genç insanlar dinî inançlarından ve topluluk bağlarından yararlanarak büyük bir güç ortaya koymaktadırlar. Bu da, dinin genç İngiliz Müslümanlar üzerindeki dönüşütürücü etkisini göstermektedir. Bu çalışmaya katılan bireyler, dua\namaz yoluyla Allah'la olan güçlü ve istikrarlı manevi

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2 Bu çalışma için gerekli etik kurul izni 25 Mart 2020 tarihinde Warwick Üniversitesi tarafından verilmiştir.

ilişkilerini devam ettirmenin ne kadar önemli olduğunun altını çizmişlerdir. Katılımcılar derin dinî aidiyetlerinin etkili bir şekilde problemlerin üstesinden gelebilmek için kendilerine güç verdiğini ve yardım ettiğini sık sık ifade etmişlerdir. Ayrıca kalıtılımcılar dinî inançları sayesinde seküler yapıdaki İngiliz toplumunda huzur ve teselli bulduklarını belirtmişlerdir.

Birçok çalışma dinin ve maneviyatın azınlık Müslüman gruplar için önemine ışık tutmaktadır. Bu topluluklar, cinsiyet, etnisite fark etmezsizin dinin ve manviyatın, İslamofobi ve olumsuz kalıp yargı gibi zorluklar karşılaşında dayanıklılık, güç ve huzur kaynağı olarak hizmet ettiğini keşfetmişlerdir. Düzenli yapılan dua\namaz, bu insanlara Allah'la olan ilişkilerini yakın tutmasına yardım ettiği bulgularda sık sık tekrarlanan çok önemli bir başa çıkma stratejidir. Karacan (2024) trafından İngiltere'deki Müslüman erkeklerle yapılan araştırma bu bireylerin dinî inançlarını İslamofobi ile başa çıkmada nasıl araç olarak kullandıklarını kanıtlamaktadır. Buna ek olarak Ozeto & Allan (2021) tarafından yapılan çalışmanın bulguları İngiltere'deki göçmen Müslüman kadınların maruz kaldıkları stresin üstesinden gelebilmek için dinî başa çıkma tekniklerinden faydalandıklarını ortaya koymuştur. Sproston & Bhui (2002)'ye göre İngiltere'de yaşayan Güney Asyalı Müslümanlar için dinî inanç; stres etkenleri ve zorlukların üstesinden gelmek için önemli bir başa çıkma mekanizması olarak ortaya konulmuştur. Aynı zamanda, Loewenthal ve diğerleri (2001), İngiliz Müslüman toplulukları içerisinde depresyonla başa çıkmak için din ve namaz\ duanın en yararlı dinî pratik olarak ortaya çıktığını söylemişlerdir. Daha önceki çalışmaların bulgularından yola çıkarak, bu çalışmanın genç İngiliz Müslümanların dinî farkındalıklarını kullanarak İngiltere'deki okul ortamında karşılaşılan İslamofobinin zorluklarını ve diğer günlük hayat güçlüklerini ele alarak alana özgün katkı sunacağı düşünülmektedir.

Ayrıca ortak bir dinî kimlik çevresinde yoğunlaşan bir topluluğa ait olma hissi, genç İngiliz Müslümanlar için çok önemli destek kaynağı olarak hizmet etmektedir. Bu da, tecrübelerin ve duyguların değiş tokuşuna imkân vermektedir. Mevcut araştırmaya katılanlar, diğer Müslümanlarla olan bağlantılarının sonucu olarak güvende olma hissi tecrübe ettiklerini belirtmişlerdir. Ortak kimliğin oluşturulması genç İngiliz Müslümanlar için kolektif güç duygusu geliştirmeye yardım etmektedir. Bu onların, İslamofobik saldırılar ve olumsuz kalıp yargılar karşısında birçok insanın hissettiği izole olma duygularını gidermelerine fayda sağlıyor gibi gözükmektedir. Bu çalışmanın sonuçları önceki araştırmaların sonuçlarıyla uyumlu olarak, ayrımcılık ve İslamofobinin etkilerini hafifletme-

de akran desteğinin önemini vurgulamaktadır (Cortvriend, 2020; Fischer et al. 2010; Hargreaves, 2016). Sonuç olarak, bu araştırmanın bulguları Müslüman akranlar arasındaki dayanışmanın hem bireysel hem kolektif kimliği güçlendirdiğine işaret etmekte ve onlara azınlık Müslüman bağlamında karşılaştıkları zorlukların üstesinden gelmek için güç kazandırıyor izlenimi vermektedir.

Şu ana kadar İngiliz genç Müslümanlar arasında İngiltere okullarındaki karşılaştıkları zorluklarla başa çıkmak için ortak dinî kimlik tarafından oluşturulan topluluk hissinin ve dinî başa çıkma stratejilerinin önemini tartıştık. İngiliz Müslümanlarla yapılan yarı yapılandırılmış görüşmeler neticesinde, onların İngiliz okullarırındaki öğretmenlerden yeterli destek alamadıkları için kaçınmayı da başa çıkma mekanizması olarak kullandıkları görünmektedir. Bu durum, İngiltere okullarındaki Müslüman öğrencilerin erişebileceği destekten mahrum olduklarını göstermektedir. Bununla birlikte çeşitli çalışmaların bulguları, başa çıkma mekanizması olarak kaçınmadan yararlanmanın daha büyük psikolojik sıkıntılara yol açabileceğini işaret etmektedir (Holahan et al., 2005; Kunts et al., 2012). Bu çalışmanın bulguları, eğitim politikası ve pratiği için kayda değer önerileri barındırdığı düşünülmektedir. Öncelikli olarak eğitim kurumları, Müslüman öğrencileri etkin bir şekilde desteklemek için kültür ve dinî bakımdan hassas stratejiler benimsemelidir. İkinci olarak eğitim programları, İslamofobiyi ve onun öğrencilerin iyi oluşları üzerindeki etkilerini anlamak için iyileştirilmelidir. Son olarak, ayrımcı olaylara değinecek açık düzenlemelerin tesis edilmesi bireylerin başa çıkma yolu olarak kaçınmaya başvurma olasılığını azaltabilir. Sonuç olarak, bu önerilerin İngiltere okul ortamındaki ve genel toplumdaki uyumu artırma potansiyeli bulunmaktadır.

Sonuç olarak bu öğrencilerin içerisinde var olan dayanıklılığın derin dinamikleri, dinî farkındalık, topluluk hissi ve zorlukları geçiştirme eğiliminin karşılıklı etkileşiminde kendini göstermektedir. Bu dinamiklerin detaylı incelenmesi yoluyla eğitim kurumları, Müslüman gençliğin iyi oluşları için onlara yapılacak destekleri önemli ölçüde geliştirebilir. Böylece bu kurumlar, çeşitliliği takdir eden ve gerçekten kapsayıcılığı teşvik eden arkadaş canlısı bir eğitim ortamı oluşturabilirler. Literatüre yapacağı katkılara rağmen bu çalışmanın kendi sınırlılıkları vardır. Araştırma örneklemi farklı bölgelerde oturan on dört İngiliz Müslüman öğrenciyi içerir. İngiliz Müslüman topluluğun çeşitli demografilerini yansıtmak için veri, Pakistan, Bangladeş, Somali, Türk ve Cezayir asıllı bireylerle yarı yapılandırılmış görüşmeler yoluyla toplanmıştır. Bu araştırmanın örneklemi Birmingham, Leicester ve Londra gibi çeşitli Müslüman toplulukların yaşadığı kentsel şehirlerle sınırlıdır. Sonuç itibariyle, bu bulgular genel İngiliz Müslü-

man popülasyonuna uygulanamayabilir. Sonraki çalışmalar, Müslümanlara karşı değişen toplumsal algılar çerçevesi içerisindeki bu dinamikleri ve daha sonraki kimlik ve başa çıkma stratejileri için etkileri araştırmaya devam etmelidir.

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