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**The Intercultural Communication Experiences of Arab Muslims
Studying in New Zealand: Academic and Social Perspectives**

A thesis

submitted in fulfilment

of the requirements for the degree

of

Doctor of Philosophy

at

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by

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Abstract

The number of Arab Muslim students in New Zealand has increased significantly in recent years, yet there is a lack of New Zealand studies that investigate this phenomenon. Studies that have examined the experiences of these students in Western academic contexts suggest, however, that there is a need for further investigation to understand the extent to which these students (re)construct and (re)negotiate their identities as a result of their intercultural communication experiences. The purpose of this study is to examine how universities' communication practices influence the negotiation process of these students' cultural and religious identities. In addition, the study investigates which communication practices adopted by students facilitate, or inhibit, good communication with New Zealanders. Cultural identity theory and structuration theory were used as the theoretical framework to understand the reconstruction and renegotiation of students' cultural and religious identities.

In-depth phenomenological interviews were conducted with 45 male and female participants to elicit their personal stories. Eight university administrators were also interviewed, and university documents were analysed to explore the organisational perspectives in dealing with the presence of these students. Thematic, content, and structuration analyses were conducted with the assistance of NVivo software. Given that the researcher is also an Arab Muslim student, methodological and ethical challenges (e.g., recruiting and engaging with participants, and conducting semistructured face-to-face interviews) were explored reflexively.

Analysis of the data for this study suggested three main findings. First, both Islamic and cultural values guided the direction of Arab Muslim students' daily lives. Participants noted a number of issues that reflected their emphatic, forthright identification with their own cultural and religious heritage. These issues involved insisting on the role of social networks to protect feminine identity and the integrity of people's social reputation; the importance of consuming *halal* food and securing a space to perform daily prayers; the avoidance of working with

the opposite sex, and avoid any university and community activities that include practices contrary to their own values.

Second, the negotiation of power between universities and participants was observed. As New Zealand universities used human and nonhuman resources, they were able to wield power over participants and influence them to negotiate and reflect on their own values and norms. Participants appealed to the concept of the purification of Islam to rationalise their motivation for reflecting on and questioning their own values and norms. This reflection resulted in the adoption by students of guidelines and strategies for interaction, avoidance, and normalisation.

Third, the students' length of residence appeared to be an indicator of disidentification with their own values and identification with the dominant values in matters relating to the segregation of the sexes and modesty. A redefining of concepts of gender roles, being alone, freedom, and others was observed over time. The experience of negotiating cultural and religious identities affirmed that cultural identity is constructed in the intercultural communication context as participants worked out a sort of two identities which combines elements from the old and the new.

The study contributes significantly to existing research on intercultural communication by hearing Arab Muslim students' voices on issues that arise as they encounter new cultural values, seek to maintain their cultural and religious identities, and navigate between home and host values. Among significant contributions to theoretical knowledge, we can include conceptualising the gender roles, being alone in a Western country, gender relations, segregation of the sexes, modesty, freedom, *hijab*, and personal freedom. In particular, the study enriches the extant literature examining the negotiation process of individual identity from the structuration and cultural identity point of view. In addition to these contributions, implications were drawn for educational institutions, government policies, and future Arab Muslim students to help them obtain constructive intercultural communication experiences in a dominant culture. The suggestion for future studies was made to further explore the role of female gender and length of residency in the reconstruction and renegotiation of cultural identity.

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ¹

Dedication

This thesis is dedicated to those who have been a great source of motivation and inspiration and have greatly influenced me to achieve my educational dream. I lovingly dedicate this work to my beloved mother and father, my lovely wife, Naeema, and my best friend, Abdulazes Alkharusi. The thesis is also dedicated to my sisters and brothers, and to my extended family and tribe.

¹ In the Name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

This study emerged from a personal interest in the general issue of intercultural communication and the relationship between Muslims and non-Muslims. As immigrants cross-cultural boundaries for varying lengths of residency and with different purposes, they encounter different people and become “citizens of the world” (Holmes & O’Neill, 2012, p. 702). One group of these immigrants is international students, who resettle for a short term into an unfamiliar environment for the educational purpose (Kim, 2005). These students experience two significant issues: losing their surroundings and cultures, and desiring to establish healthy and functional interactions and relationships with host people (Duderija, 2007; Henry, Hamdi, & Shedid, 2009; Kim, 2005; Oberg, 2006). Cultural and religious dissimilarity can impact these intercultural relationships and interactions (Moores, 2008; Mostafa, 2006; Novera, 2004). Thus, a study of intercultural communication experiences of international students must take into account the fact that these students do not form a single entity but, rather, are a diverse group of individuals varying in culture, religion, motivations, and desires (Koehne, 2005) .

This chapter introduces the study’s background and my personal interest in studying the intercultural communication of Arab Muslim students. Next, the rationale to support the need to investigate this line of study is outlined. The significance of the study is also presented, along with research definitions, the study context, its objectives, and research questions.

1.1 Background

The current study focuses on the intercultural communication experience of Arab Muslim students in New Zealand society. Arab Muslim students are those who come from Arabian Gulf countries: namely, Oman, Kuwait, Bahrain, Qatar, United Arab Emirates, and Saudi Arabia. A number of rules and values determine these students’ daily interaction and communication with others. The first norm is the ways that women are regarded by Arab men. Women are important family

members, are treated with great respect, are representatives of the family and the tribe's honour, and are in need of protection (Ajrouch, 2004; McDermott-Levy, 2011; Schvaneveldt, Kerpelman, & Schvaneveldt, 2005). However, the need for protection, for example, does not come from the vulnerability of these women. Rather, cultural and religious values obligate men to look after women in different circumstances, to fulfil their needs and wants, and to accompany them when they go outside the home (Archer, 2002; Aroian, Katz, & Kulwicki, 2006; Jamjoom, 2010).

The second norm relates to gender relations. These relations are universally recognised in Arabian Gulf countries and are a matter observed inside the house as well as outside in the community (Carty, Moss, Al-zayyer, Kowitlawakul, & Arietti, 2007). In the Arab culture, segregation by sex is normally practised by providing separate rooms in order for both sexes to meet their own gender in their social gatherings (Baki, 2004). It is not religiously and culturally accepted for strangers to live with the family and, if there are exceptional circumstances necessitating their presence, strangers would be accommodated outside the main building, so their interaction and communication with the family members are limited. Furthermore, gender segregation is also observed in social life, such as attending social events and activities, appointing different places for prayer, locating separate rooms in hospitals, and meeting a doctor who should be from the same gender. These issues are closely related to the Islamic concept of modesty, which guides male-female interaction and communication (Boulanouar, 2006).

Islamic modesty is also evident in another important area, that of dress code. Islam sets rules that govern dress for both sexes. The general guidelines include covering the body, wearing loose clothing and avoiding thin material that can be seen through, along with other rules (El Guindi, 1981). *Hijab* is a dress code that is practised by women. It can also refer to a particular form of headscarf. Muslim women are guided by several interpretations in wearing the *hijab* (Samovar, Porter, & McDaniel, 2007). While Islamic rules might direct these women in their view of dress, their cultural heritage can be a significant influence in determining which style of headscarves women choose to adopt (Munawar, 1997; Veelenturf,

2006). Muslim women are obligated by Islam to wear the *hijab* only in the presence of any male whom they can marry².

Religious and cultural norms and values influence the educational systems of Arabian Gulf countries (Kniffka, 1992). This influence involves structuring educational institutions by building single-sex schools, employing same gender teachers, and providing mosques or rooms for performing prayers. It also determines interaction and communication between students, and between students and teachers, outlining what topics may be discussed in classrooms and deciding what educational and social activities can be organised and conducted in schools (Bahiss, 2008; Baki, 2004). Schools are not allowed to discuss unacceptable educational subjects that might have an effect on Islamic morals, such as discussing contraception or organising activities that involve exposing parts of the body, touching, or organising concerts. These social and educational features frame Arab Muslim students' educational experiences.

Leaving home to study in a Western country like New Zealand is a new experience for these students, most of whom are being granted a government scholarship to pursue their educational goals. Arabian Gulf countries send their students to developed countries for educational purposes, and by providing a full

² Allah mentions most of the categories of women whom males are prohibited to marry: "And do not marry those [women] whom your fathers married, except what has already occurred. Indeed, it was an immorality and hateful [to Allah] and was evil as a way. Prohibited to you [for marriage] are your mothers, your daughters, your sisters, your father's sisters, your mother's sisters, your brother's daughters, your sister's daughters, your [milk] mothers who nursed you, your sisters through nursing, your wives' mothers, and your step daughters under your guardianship [born] of your wives unto whom you have gone in. But if you have not gone in unto them, there is no sin upon you. And [also prohibited are] the wives of your sons who are from your [own] loins, and that you take [in marriage] two sisters simultaneously, except for what has already occurred. Indeed, Allah is ever Forgiving and Merciful. And [also prohibited to you are all] married women except those your right hands possess [i.e., slaves or war-captives who had polytheistic husbands]. [This is] the decree of Allah upon you. And lawful to you are [all others] beyond these, [provided] that you seek them [in marriage] with [gifts from] your property, desiring chastity, not unlawful sexual intercourse..." [Qur'an 4: 22-24]

scholarship that covers all their expenses, encourage them to gain qualifications and skills (Al-nusair, 2000; McDermott-Levy, 2008). When they graduate, these students can compete for professional jobs, which, at present, are mostly filled by foreigners (Al-nusair, 2000).

In terms of individual interests, the most significant motivation for international students, like Arab Muslim students, to study overseas include learning the English language, achieving a higher education, gaining theoretical and practical learning experiences, generating useful knowledge and critical thinking skills, being offered opportunities to practise their knowledge, and obtaining social reputation by studying in a Western country (Holmes, 2005; Yang, Noels, & Saumure, 2006). These factors initially contributed to these students' decisions to leave their homeland and select New Zealand institutions, and constructed and framed their expectations of New Zealand universities. They expect to meet certain objectives from their study at these universities in terms of their learning outcomes, in their socialisation with people in both learning and social aspects, or in connection with needs arising from their cultural and religious identities.

Religious values and cultural differences are the main factors that may affect the interactions and relationships between Arab Muslims students and non-Muslims in New Zealand. They experience religious and cultural dissonance when moving to New Zealand because they are of a different religion and culture from those of the dominant society. The first factor involves religious differences. Religious values and beliefs play a significant role in the everyday cultural life of this group of students and may cause a gap in understanding the new host culture and interacting with people (Faragallah, Schumm, & Webb, 1997). The students come from home countries where Islam is widely practised; however, when moving to non-Muslim countries like New Zealand and encountering people who have different worldviews, misunderstandings and misconceptions regarding these religious views may result.

The second factor that affects interaction among different cultural groups is cultural differences. Establishing effective interaction between Arab Muslim students and New Zealanders requires an understanding of each other's culture. Interaction between these peoples is influenced by both the cultures and the

individuals. Holmes (2005) asserted that unshared cultural patterns cause misunderstandings in intercultural communication. Misunderstandings also appear as people who come from different cultures have different expectations (Li, 2005). Arab Muslim students come from countries where cultural patterns are different in some respects from those practised by many people in New Zealand. These cultural differences may lead these students to segregate themselves or seek to reconstruct their identities and to implement new communication strategies in order to have successful interaction with others.

Studying in a Western educational system is explicitly different from the Arabian Gulf educational system. The two educational systems are based on the dissimilar educational approaches and philosophies that structure them. New Zealand universities are guided by their own culture, and communication practices, which certainly shape their learning contexts and daily social activities. The classroom context is the first space that Arab Muslim students have to encounter at New Zealand universities. They have to study with both genders, to conduct group work, and to interact and communicate with their classmates who are either from this country or from other nationalities.

In addition, academic life at universities includes social events where students from diverse backgrounds come along and are involved in various activities. These are organised and conducted by the universities and carry their hidden values and norms. Arab Muslim university students are among those who are expected to participate and contribute to these activities. However, these students, like other international students, may encounter certain difficulties that limit their interaction and communication with host national students. Misunderstanding the new culture, having difficulties establishing communication with domestic students, and dealing with challenges in adapting to Western culture are the fundamental stresses that face international students (Butcher & McGrath, 2004; Lowes, Peters, & Turner, 2004).

For example, the annual “freshman survey” conducted by a research institute at UCLA indicated that while slightly over 60% of students expected to socialise with other people who come from a different racial or ethnic group, in 2004 it was found that “a growing number of students appeared unlikely to have a diverse set

of friends in college” (Farrell, 2005, p. 1). The study explained why the reality the students face in an international academic context does not meet their expectations for socialising and interacting with groups other than their own. So how do Arab Muslim students view their involvement and integration in these events and activities? What do they expect from these activities? What are their main experiences of socialisation and participation? Specifically, are they guided by their own religious and cultural identities in determining what learning and social activities they participate in? In brief, how do they experience learning and social activities at New Zealand universities, and how do these universities’ communication practices influence the negotiation process of these students’ identities?

Although learning at New Zealand universities is one aspect that Arab Muslim students encounter in this country, living and socialising off campus with New Zealanders is another aspect of their experience. Moving into New Zealand society and encountering different cultural norms and religious views play a crucial role that may affect these students’ experiences and identities. Were students aware of cultural differences they might encounter in New Zealand before coming to the country, and, if they were, what preparation had they made? Upon arrival in New Zealand, how did the students view their first experiences? Additionally, students might have the opportunity to interact and communicate with New Zealanders in different places, such as living with a homestay family, or flatting, meeting people at social events and activities, and making contact with them in normal life situations. Thus, how do these students view their interaction and communication experiences with New Zealanders? What factors might promote or inhibit their intercultural communication experiences and how might these experiences influence students’ cultural and religious identities?

1.2 Personal Interest in This Intercultural Communication Study

My interest in conducting this research has developed in two phases. The first phase emerged when I was doing my master’s degree in Islamic Education at Sultan Qaboos University, which is located in my home country, Oman. At that time, the September 11, 2001 attacks against the United States took place. People all over the world were shocked and confused. Arabs/Muslims from the Middle

East and other countries were also surprised at these terrifying incidents. Nevertheless, some were proud because of the policies of the USA in the Palestine-Israel conflict and in other Muslim countries, as witnessed by much of the media reporting in the aftermath of the attacks. Over time, many attacks conducted by people who claim to be Muslims have affected people in several European countries. Relationships and interactions between Arabs/Muslims and others have been significantly affected. For example, Americans have become less friendly to Arabs/Muslims and Arab-Muslim students have faced more challenges with visa requirements (Deumert, Marginson, Nyland, Ramia, & Sawir, 2005).

Arab Muslim immigrants face both political and social challenges in the West. The integration of Arab Muslim immigrants into Western countries has raised political and social issues, provoked nervousness over Arabs/Muslims generally, and Arab Muslim students in particular (Bastedo, 2007; Peek, 2003; Varady, 2008). Tilbury and Henderson (2003) indicated that “conflict and terrorism have added another dimension to the complexity of the political, social, environmental and cultural relationships of the world” (p. 82). Arabs/Muslims all over the world face what Al-Romi (2000) termed the “equating of Islam with terrorism” (p. 637), and the “war on terror” has been used in reality as a “war against Islam” which has implicitly targeted Arab Muslim countries such as Afghanistan and Iraq (Joppke, 2009). These incidents encouraged me to study and understand the intercultural communication experiences of Arab Muslim students with non-Muslims in social and learning contexts in a Western country, New Zealand.

At another level, this study has also been influenced by my experiences as an Arab Muslim, with both a bachelor’s and master’s degree in Islamic education, who is studying in New Zealand. My first experience occurred at the end of 2006 when I arrived in New Zealand in order to study the English language before pursuing doctoral studies. I lived with a British family who normally drank alcohol at dinner time. I was very shocked and confused by this behaviour because it was the first time I had sat down with people who drank alcohol. It was a very new experience. Although I knew what Muslims should do in this situation, I asked an Islamic scholar how I should deal with this situation. He told me that I had to avoid sitting with them while they were drinking alcohol as much as

possible. But this meant I would have less time to practise English and to learn the new culture. Although I did not compromise my religious identity, I adopted other communication practices in order to enhance my interactions with this family and with others while learning the English language.

I believe that studying in Western universities should include both obtaining further education and also engaging with the people who reside in those communities. I attempted to engage deeply with members of this family by seizing opportunities to interact with them, asking different questions regarding Western culture and their ways of life, attending social events with them and visiting different places in New Zealand. In mid-2008, I started postgraduate study at the Waikato Management School. However, I had fewer opportunities to communicate with New Zealand students and others, which was a disappointment. I wondered how I and other students who are in similar situations could benefit from our social surroundings and academic study if there were few opportunities in social and academic contexts to communicate with others.

The second experience that prompted my interest in this topic occurred in March 2009 when an Islamic scholar gave a lecture at the Hamilton Mosque and concluded his speech by saying that Muslim students should not engage with people who may affect their Islamic culture. This incident significantly influenced my thinking concerning the reasons and benefits that motivate the sojourn of Arab Muslim students in New Zealand. These experiences and situations motivated me as an Arab Muslim student to find out about the experiences of other Arab Muslim students studying and living in New Zealand, and to reveal how they respond to these experiences with regard to their cultural and religious identities.

1.3 Rationale

Although my personal experiences have shaped my direction in terms of the field of study, this research has not originated from personal interest alone. Rather, many researchers have shown such interest and suggested that further investigation into intercultural communication experiences among different cultural and religious groups should be undertaken (Butcher & McGrath, 2004;

Chen, 2003; Guidry Lacina, 2002; Halualani, Chitgopekar, Morrison, & Dodge, 2004; Holmes, 2004, 2005; Peltokorpi, 2007; Spencer-Rodgers & McGovern, 2002; Volet & Tan-Quigley, 1999). This work also responds to several studies that found there is a lack of interaction and opportunities for overseas students to interact with academic staff, local students and people, and even with other students from different cultures (Deloitte, 2008; Novera, 2004; Zimmermann, 1995).

The subject of Muslim students in the West has been studied from a variety of angles. These include examining Muslim students' experiences as a religious minority (Speck, 1997; Zine, 1997), investigating the experience of female Muslim students wearing a veil and how that influenced their interactions with others (Cole & Ahmadi, 2003), studying female Muslim students' adjustment to the New Zealand academic context (Bahiss, 2008), understanding Muslim students' integration and interaction with Western university staff and students (Asmar, 2000; Asmar, Proude, & Inge, 2004), demonstrating the ability of Muslim students to maintain and negotiate their Islamic identity and cultural differences in Western public schools and college campuses (Ahmad & Szpara, 2003; Nasir & Al-Amin, 2006; Zine, 2001), and exploring how Muslim students respond to difficulties in studying in Western universities and constructing their identities (Oikonomidoy, 2007).

Of the literature reviewed, these studies suggested that further research to explore Arab Muslim students' experiences on Western campuses is needed in order to understand how Arab Muslim students engage in intercultural interaction with other students (Asmar et al., 2004), to question and explore (in depth) those students' experiences in terms of faith and learning (Gresham & Walsh, 2008), to understand how heterogeneous individuals perceive their intercultural communication experience (Halualani et al., 2004), to consider the function of Islamic religion in constructing and reconstructing Arab Muslim students' identities (Britto & Amer, 2007), to examine how the passage of time affects Arab Muslim students in their cultural and religious identities in the dominant culture (Abukhattala, 2004), to study "how everyday events and incidents contribute to transformations and renegotiations in the relational spaces of [Arab Muslim

students' lives] in and out of school” (Oikonomidou, 2007, p. 26), and last, and most importantly, to investigate the connection between Arab Muslims and non-Muslims in New Zealand and how these relationships may affect Arab Muslims’ identity (Veelenturf, 2006).

To date, a review of extant research has revealed that previous studies contain particular limitations. These studies examined the experiences of Arab Muslim students in Western institutions as a religious minority and what difficulties and challenges they encounter as Arab Muslims in the academic environment. In particular, students from Arabian Gulf countries were underrepresented in previous studies in terms of their international experiences in interacting and communicating with non-Muslims in Western institutions and how these experiences influence the students to reconstruct and renegotiate their Islamic and cultural identities, communication framework, and practices in order to benefit socially and academically from the new host culture. I could not locate any published scholarship dealing with how both cultural and religious identities guide Arab Muslim students in their intercultural communication experiences and how these experiences affect their identities. Employing these two identities in the investigation is needed because the association between Islam and culture is virtually inseparable (Bangura, 2004; Collet, 2007; Peek, 2005), and any change in one identity can affect the other identity.

Indeed, there is little research on Muslims in general in the New Zealand context (Bahiss, 2008; Bishop, 1997; Shepard, 2002; Veelenturf, 2006). Historical, social, and societal characteristics of Muslims in New Zealand were examined in two studies (Bishop, 1997; Shepard, 2002). In contrast, the experiences of Muslim women in working and learning contexts were the main focus of attention of two other studies (Bahiss, 2008; Veelenturf, 2006). For example, Bahiss (2008) conducted her study at the University of Waikato. The study had some limitations, such as examining only five women Muslim students who came from different Muslim countries, investigating their first experiences in adjusting to the academic context, and restricting the research investigation to the academic context without including the social problems that these students faced in the New Zealand community. These limitations justify the need for conducting this far

more detailed study because none of these studies examined the experiences of Arab Muslim students in negotiating their cultural and religious identities. The uniqueness of the New Zealand context compare to other Western countries, especially after the event of September 11 in US and other tragic events in other European countries which resulted in a milestone experience for Arabs and Muslims in the West. Incidents of racism, suspicion, abuse, threats, violence, religious discrimination and social exclusion against Arabs and Muslims have increased in both Western social and academic contexts (Cainkar, 2002; Poynting & Noble, 2004). Therefore, the New Zealand's openness and acceptance of cultural diversity and other cultural background in general, and towards Muslims in particular (Kolig, 2006b) will enable the process of the cultural negotiation, as negotiation is based on relationships and interactions (Collier, 1998; Collier & Thomas, 1988).

Most importantly, this study examines the development and negotiation of cultural identity from a new theoretical lens that involves both institutional and interpersonal negotiations. Most previous studies focused on how students interact with people in classrooms but not within the larger institution. It is important to take these two approaches into consideration because people negotiate their identity through their interaction with both people and institutions. Therefore, this study employs cultural identity as negotiable and structuration theory to examine how Arab Muslim students negotiate their cultural identities through their interactions with other people and at New Zealand universities.

A number of reasons motivated me to focus on this particular group of Arabian Muslim students. First, in the last five years, New Zealand and Arabian Gulf countries have started developing relationships in different areas (Ministry of Foreign Affairs & Trade, 2013). John Key, the Prime Minister of New Zealand, pointed out that "the states of the GCC (Gulf Cooperation Council) have recognised the value that New Zealand can offer them in terms of food security, education and investment. Now it is up to New Zealand to take up the challenge" (Ministry of Foreign Affairs & Trade, 2013, p. 1). For example, in the area of educational relationships, the number of Arabian Gulf students who study in New

Zealand has increased significantly over the last five years (Ministry of Education, 2008).

Thus, New Zealand educational strategy aims to increase its value as a partner to the GCC by calling for action to

Attract more students from Gulf countries and to broaden the education offering in New Zealand. This includes working with New Zealand polytechnics to meet the demand for vocational and technical education as well as summer school programmes. There are also opportunities for receiving Gulf government scholarship students in areas such as tourism, police, health, defence, aviation, and public administration (Ministry of Foreign Affairs & Trade, 2013, p. 15).

Given that New Zealand has experienced a decrease in the number of international students (Budde-Sung, 2011), a study that focuses on Arabian Gulf countries might contribute to investigating the educational and social experiences of this group. Importantly, the study assists in understanding cultural and religious diversity in New Zealand learning and social contexts. Since this group of Arab Muslim students contributes to the diversity of New Zealand universities and the community at large through their own cultural and religious identities, this research may contribute to attracting more of them to New Zealand. It may also open the door for other studies that attempt to provide a better understanding of the specific characteristics of the students and reveal their own ways of interacting and communicating with others on and off campus. A key aim of New Zealand educational strategy is to make the country a preferred educational destination for Arabian Gulf students (Ministry of Foreign Affairs & Trade, 2013). Thus, this study is both timely and relevant because of the increased number of these students in New Zealand tertiary institutions, because many of the students' families also visit New Zealand, thereby contributing to tourism, and because Gulf Arab states will grant more scholarships in the future.

Second, although Arab Muslim students share the same cultural and religious identities, and share common values and behaviours with other Muslim students, one should be careful not to assume that all Muslim students have the same experiences, needs, customs, and attitudes (Hussain & Cornelius, 2009).

Differences in cultural values and behaviours exist among Arab Muslim students who come from the same geographical region but from different countries even though they speak the same language and share similar religious and traditional customs (Meleis, 1982; Sarroub, 2010). Abukhattala (2004) explained that even though Muslims share the same religion, they interpret it differently.

However, all these historical, religious, and cultural traits may be considered common ground for Arabian Gulf Muslim students and thus make it possible to investigate these people as a group (Meleis, 1982). Above all, global crises, such as the events of September 11, 2001, and political situations in Middle Eastern countries and similar events around the world, have caused complications for Arabs/Muslims in general and Arab Muslim students in particular. This situation calls for further investigation of the experience of these students in Western environments and how they are able to communicate and interact effectively with other people from different cultures and backgrounds (Britto, 2007; Mansouri & Kamp, 2007; Mansouri & Trembath, 2005).

Third, and most important, research of students' intercultural communication experiences in New Zealand has tended to focus on international students who come from different nations, generally from Asia. One might expect different results when studying the intercultural communication experience of Arab Muslim students who come from Arabian Gulf countries. Research with this specific focus is scant and there is a complete lack of this kind of study in the New Zealand context. Thus, this study is both necessary and timely in examining this area of research.

1.4 Significance of the Study

This study is significant because much attention has been paid to international students' experiences in New Zealand learning and social contexts. The New Zealand government has become increasingly aware of the growth in the numbers

of international students through (a) establishing different regulations in order to systematise the relationship between local educational institutions and international students, such as the mandatory code of practice for the pastoral care of international students (Ministry of Education, 2003), and the International Education Appeals Authority (IEAA) (Ministry of Education, 2009); and, (b) promoting a strategy called The International Education Agenda, (2007-2012), in order to attract and retain international students in New Zealand (Ministry of Education, 2009). Thus, my study contributes to the New Zealand government's interest in international students by focusing on the experience of Arab Muslim students in the university and community contexts, and assisting the education sector in this country to attract Arab Muslim students to study in its institutions.

Additionally, the Ministry of Education in New Zealand conducted two surveys, in 2003 and 2007, in order to understand international students' experience in New Zealand (Deloitte, 2008; Ward & Masgoret, 2004). However, Arab Muslim students from Middle Eastern countries represented only 1%, categorised as “other” nationalities in the 2003 survey. The 2007 survey made no mention of the religion factor. These two surveys concluded that there was little interaction between international students and domestic students, and also that international students had few opportunities for such interaction and faced significant challenges in conducting group assignments with domestic students. These studies suggested further research is needed in order to understand communication similarities and differences between international students and domestic students in Western educational institutions, to examine difficulties that students encounter in communicating and interacting with local academic staff and students, and to identify strategies that assist Western universities to attract and retain cross-border students on campuses.

Studying Arab Muslim students' experiences complements the efforts of researchers in investigating the experience of other international students in New Zealand. As previously stated and as the review of the literature revealed, there is limited research dealing with the intercultural communication experiences of Arab Muslim students in the New Zealand context. Scholars have concentrated on the experiences of international students in terms of learning, adjusting, and

interacting with others in the New Zealand learning and cultural environments (Bahiss, 2008; Butcher & McGrath, 2004; Guidry Lacina, 2002; Holmes, 2000, 2004, 2005; Li & Campbell, 2008; McDermott-Levy, 2008).

Two main studies have focused on the experiences of Muslim women in New Zealand life. While the first study examined veiled Muslim women's experiences of discrimination in New Zealand (Veelenturf, 2006), the second study specifically dealt with the experiences of Muslim university women students in adjusting to the academic context (Bahiss, 2008). Although these two studies helped New Zealanders to understand the difficulties that Muslim women face in this country, a study focusing on Arab Muslim students' experiences in interacting and communicating with non-Muslims in New Zealand learning and community contexts will explicitly contribute to those efforts. This research can add to the intercultural communication area of knowledge by gaining insight and understanding into the intercultural communication experience of Arab Muslim students in New Zealand.

Thus, examining Arab Muslim students' experiences in interacting and communicating with non-Muslims in New Zealand social and educational contexts is fruitful. The present study is significant in:

1. Sharing the voices to Arabian Gulf students to describe their intercultural communication experiences in a Western country, and contributing to the understanding of how these experiences affect, and are affected by, their cultural and religious identity;
2. Providing assistance to New Zealand academic and administrative staff, domestic and overseas students, and local people in understanding Arab Muslim students' experiences, including how their religion, culture, and communication affect and contribute to life in New Zealand;
3. Offering benefits in the educational and social contexts, such as encouraging collaboration between New Zealand and Arabian Gulf institutions, and helping to address issues of difference and misunderstanding concerning religion and culture;

4. Assisting Arabian Gulf governments and agencies who grant scholarships to their students to understand opportunities and challenges that these students encounter in New Zealand society; and
5. Contributing to the literature on intercultural communication and providing much needed theory for promoting awareness and understanding of Arab Muslim students' intercultural communication experiences in English speaking social and learning contexts, in particular in New Zealand.

1.5 Research Definitions

The following concepts are defined to provide readers with contextual meanings as they read the study:

1.5.1 Arabian Gulf Muslim Students

This study focuses on Arab Muslim students who come from Arabian Gulf countries and are studying in New Zealand. The Arabian Gulf countries include the six Arab countries that are located in the Arabian Gulf, namely Oman, Kuwait, Bahrain, Qatar, United Arab Emirates, and Saudi Arabia. All people in these countries speak Arabic and the majority believe in Islam. In order to provide an accurate definition, Roald (2001) defines an Arab as a person who speaks Arabic as his/her first language. The word "Arabic" for Arabs means a sense of belonging (Abukhattala, 2004). Some of these Gulf Arab countries contain a small number of Christian and Jewish people, so the study excluded any students who were Arab but not Muslim and Muslims who are not from the Arabian Gulf. Given these parameters, any Gulf Arab Muslim student who comes from one of these countries was included and was eligible to participate in this study.

1.5.2 Culture

Culture and communication are the fundamental core concepts of intercultural communication (Gudykunst & Kim, 1997). Defining the concept of culture is not an easy task because it involves a variety of meanings and it has been understood differently by intercultural communication scholars (Collier & Thomas, 1988). However, it is agreed that culture involves certain fundamental components. This

study maintains that the experience, communication, and identification of individuals form the basis and focus of conduct (Collier & Thomas, 1988). In this context, culture is defined as a “socially constructed and historically transmitted pattern of symbols, meanings, premises, and rules” (Philipsen, 1992, p. 7). This definition is “definitive and [entails] a broad understanding of what may constitute intercultural communication” (Collier & Thomas, 1988, pp. 102-103). Carbaugh (2007) explained this definition by saying that cultural structures and meanings shape the interaction of people. This explanation involves two main points.

First, cultural structures include particular structures of norms and rules that guide people’s daily activities (Collier & Thomas, 1988) and contain concepts and phrases that are “deeply felt, commonly intelligible, and widely accessible to participants” (Carbaugh, 2007, p. 170). Secondly, as people interact with each other, they actually communicate different cultural meanings and symbols of being, relating, acting, feeling, and place-making (Carbaugh, 2007; Collier & Thomas, 1988). Thus, culture should be understood as socially constructed, processed, and interacted. It is continuously constructed and reconstructed through communication (Yoshitake, 2004). For example, the headscarf is a popular item among Muslims; it assists others to identify this specific group of people; and, it carries symbolic or cultural meanings that affect Muslims and their interactions with others and shape their communication practices.

1.5.3 Communication

The second core concept in intercultural communication is communication, which is defined as a symbolic process whereby meaning is shared and negotiated (Martin & Nakayama, 2007). Symbols are created by humans and culturally shaped (Carbaugh, 2007; Leeds-Hurwitz, 1989). Verbal and nonverbal symbols have no inherent meaning but, rather, those meanings exist when two or more people share and negotiate the same meaning for a given symbol (Moon, 2002). However, these symbols and their verbal and nonverbal features are significantly influenced by cultural structures and meanings (Carbaugh, 2007). In other words, each culture has its own values, norms, customs, social rituals, and verbal and nonverbal communication styles, which significantly affect communication

practices and interaction between people (Adelma & Lustig, 1981; Carbaugh, 2007; Spencer-Rodgers & McGovern, 2002).

Thus, intercultural communication occurs when individuals share systems of culture and when they view themselves and others as representing two separate systems of culture (Collier & Thomas, 1988). As one individual cannot communicate alone, he/she has to be actively involved in communication with others, which means that the negotiation of meaning between individuals occurs in a dynamic process (Martin & Nakayama, 2007). In this situation, the communication practices of Arab Muslim students are framed by their own cultural structures and meanings. When these students move to New Zealand and interact with other people who have their own communication practices, they must negotiate their own and others' communication practices. Thus, Arab Muslim students are required to understand other cultures, to share and negotiate communication meanings, and to adapt their communication practices in order to achieve good interaction with non-Muslims.

Conceptualising culture and communication in this way helps to understand that intercultural communication is socially processed and constructed. Each concept significantly influences the other. Therefore, intercultural communication can be conceptualised as a process of interactions between people of different cultural backgrounds and identities within a cultural context (Collier, 2000; Collier & Thomas, 1988; Folb, 2000; Rogers, 1999). The discussion of these two concepts indicates that there are mutual influences between culture and communication, and reveals that these two concepts are dynamically interconnected and interdependent processes. In other words, "communication is dialogical and culture is dynamic in nature" (Yoshitake, 2004, p. 18).

1.5.4 Identity

Identity is a complex issue and has been defined in different ways. Three approaches are used to examine identity—as a fixed of the self, as the social construction, and as a changing of the self (Croucher, 2008). Identity has been differently conceptualised to mean self-identity (Ting-Toomey, 1993, 2005), social identity (Croucher, 2008; Hecht, Warren, Jung, & Krieger, 2005; Imahori

& Cupach, 2005), cultural identity (Collier, 1998; Collier & Thomas, 1988; Croucher, 2008), ethnic identity (Britto, 2008; Croucher, Turner, Anarbaeva, Oommen, & Borton, 2008), and racial identity (Bigelow, 2008). Different disciplines take different approaches when attempting to examine and understand identity (Shin & Jackson, 2003), as these diverse conceptualisations reflect.

In this study, identity is understood in terms of cultural identity (Collier, 1998; Collier & Thomas, 1988), which includes both cultural and religious identities of Gulf Arab Muslim students. In this sense, cultural identity can be referred “to an individual’s sense of self derived from formal or informal membership in groups that transmit and inculcate knowledge, beliefs, values, attitudes, traditions, and ways of life” (Jameson, 2007, p. 207). Identity is conceptualised as a negotiable entity (Collier, 1998) that exists in the relationships of these students with others in the New Zealand academic and social contexts.

1.6 The Study Context

Since the 1950s, New Zealand has been involved in international education, but it was not until the 1980s that the country began recruiting international students from all over the world to study in its academic institutions, including secondary schools, polytechnics, private English language schools, and universities (Hawke, Dresler-Hawke, Vaccarino, & Hawke, 2011; Jiang, 2005; Martens & Starke, 2008; Smith & Rae, 2006). This study was carried out in only four New Zealand public universities in different cities. New Zealand has eight public universities: University of Auckland, Auckland University of Technology, University of Canterbury, University of Lincoln, University of Massey, University of Victoria, University of Otago, and The University of Waikato. These universities are located in different locations.

The largest number of international students studying at these public universities comes from the Asian region (Budde-Sung, 2011; Smith & Rae, 2006). However, the presence of Arab Muslim students has significantly increased at New Zealand universities. According to the figures provided by the New Zealand Ministry of Education, the number of Arabian Gulf students increased dramatically from 2,143 students in 2006 to 6,343 students in 2011 (Ministry of Education, 2013).

Yet, this number dropped significantly to 4,900 students in 2012 (Ministry of Education, 2013). At present, Saudi Arabia is the fifth largest student market by country among other seven regions that their students have been enrolled in the New Zealand universities (Ministry of Education, 2013; Ministry of Foreign Affairs & Trade, 2013). The number of Saudi students in New Zealand has grown because of the King Abdullah Scholarship Programme (Bailey, 2009; Shaw, 2010). The main motivation for the students to come to New Zealand is to study English and then matriculate in its universities and embark on graduate and postgraduate studies.

1.7 Objectives and Research Questions

The overall purpose of this research was to investigate the intercultural communication experiences of Arab Muslim students in New Zealand. The study was intended to fulfil the following objectives:

1. To explore the extent to which cultural and Islamic identities and religious beliefs impact everyday interaction and communication with non-Muslims in both the university and community contexts;
2. To reveal the challenges that face these students in presenting their Islamic and cultural identities;
3. To investigate the extent to which Arab Muslim students (re)construct and (re)negotiate their religious, cultural (and other) identities;
4. To explore the extent to which New Zealand university structures and communication practices and processes influence the negotiation process of Arab Muslim students' cultural and religious identities; and
5. To explore the extent to which Arab Muslim students adopt communication practices in their everyday interactions that may lead to acceptance or exclusion.

The study attempted to examine the following research questions:

1. How do New Zealand universities' communication practices influence the negotiation process of Arab Muslim students' identities?

2. What communication practices do Arab Muslim students adopt in managing acceptance or exclusion, and how successful are they?

1.8 Thesis Overview

The thesis consists of seven chapters including the introduction. The second chapter focuses on two theories that provide a theoretical framework for the study: cultural identity, and structuration. The two theories are used to conceptualise the understanding of how Arab Muslim students negotiate and renegotiate their cultural and religious identities in the context of intercultural communication.

The third chapter reviews studies that address Arab Muslim students' experiences in the West. It maps literature relating to the conceptualisation of being an Arab Muslim in the West and how cultural and religious identities affect and are affected by participants' intercultural communication. In this review, several issues are examined, including the students' first impressions of Western educational and social contexts, the importance of social and spiritual values in these students' lives, the issue of misunderstood cultural and religious identities that have led to religious discriminatory incidents, and the experience of negotiating two worlds. These social and educational issues are examined in terms of intercultural communication. Finally, the review of the literature identifies its limitations and thus frames research questions.

The fourth chapter includes two parts. The first part discusses in greater depth the philosophy behind the selection of interpretivism as the study paradigm, and, in particular, why the phenomenological methodology of in-depth interviews was chosen to examine the lived experience of Arab Muslim students. The second part describes the study's design in detail. This part begins with a discussion of ethical considerations and moves to a description of the research participants. This section is followed by the protocol for interviews as the main method of data collection, and a presentation of the use of NVivo to analyse the interviews thematically and ensure the quality of the study.

The two chapters following the methods chapter present the findings in relation to the two research questions. In these two chapters, stories of Arab Muslim

students' experiences in their intercultural communication are interpreted and discussed with reference to the previous studies, theories, and literature cited in chapters two and three. The fifth chapter pays the attention to the interaction and communication experiences of Arab Muslim students on campuses. The analysis of this chapter is based on stories from student participants, administrators' interviews, and university documents. Three main structural issues were found: gender relations, socialisation, and *hijab*. These issues influenced the actions and behaviour of Arab Muslim students and both enabled and constrained them in their intercultural communication with others. The discussion focuses on the influence of cultural and religious identities, and university communication practices, on the experiences of these students, and on the process of identity negotiation. These influences are interpreted through the three structural dimensions of signification, domination, and legitimation.

In chapter six, the discussion singles out the communication practices these students adopt by being Arab Muslims in New Zealand society. The discussion begins by considering the first experience of these students upon arrival in the country. Differing social values, encountering difficulties in performing Islamic practices, and seeing public displays of affection evoke culture shock for participants who attempt to cope with manifestations of host culture issues. The discussion moves on to participants' experiences in interacting and communicating with New Zealanders and others in the community. The preference for retaining cultural and religious values and, simultaneously, the desire to be accepted into the host culture result in creating a double identity.

The final chapter, chapter seven, draws together the key themes and the main conclusions that emerge from the study findings. It also presents practical and theoretical implications that would benefit both Arabian Gulf and New Zealand academic institutions. The final part explores the limitations of the study and follows up by providing recommendations for further studies.

Chapter 2

Theoretical Framework

This chapter outlines the study's theoretical framework, which primarily discusses the negotiation process of Arab Muslim students' identities in intercultural communication contexts. The study is driven by two theories: cultural identity theory and structuration theory. The first section focuses on the notion of cultural identity in the intercultural communication context. It reviews and integrates five different perspectives that conceptualise cultural identity. Cultural identity as negotiable in intercultural communication guides the theoretical framework of the current study. In the second section, structuration theory is reviewed by discussing its core concepts: structure, agents, and the duality of structure.

2.1 Cultural Identity Negotiation

This section contains two main issues: perspectives on cultural identity, and a development of a cultural identity framework in an intercultural communication context. The initial section reviews a broad range of literature addressing general issues of cultural identity by focusing on Kim's (2007) five different perspectives on conceptualising cultural identity. The next section proposes the specific framework for conceptualising cultural identity as a negotiable entity that is used for this study.

2.1.1 Perspectives on Cultural Identity

Cultural identity has been conceptualised and investigated from a wide array of perspectives. Different disciplines and approaches, proposed by interpretive, critical, and social scholars, provide different conceptualisations of cultural identity (Collier & Thomas, 1988; Shin & Jackson, 2003). The interpretive approach views cultural identity as dynamic and negotiable (Collier, 1998; Collier & Thomas, 1988) and emphasises the role of culture and communication in negotiating identity. Although critical scholars understand cultural identity as negotiable, this negotiation is significantly affected by cultural domination and privileged power over a cocultural group (Moriizumi, 2011; Shin & Jackson,

2003). The social science perspective underlines cultural identity as a membership that defines an individual as a member of one or more groups, and distinguishes him/her as part of a group distinct from others (Berry, Poortinga, Segall, & Dasen, 2002; Britto & Amer, 2007; Collier & Thomas, 1988).

The formation of intercultural relationships between minority-majority individuals in a dominant society develops a different conceptualisation of cultural identity. For example, Kim (2007) reviewed cultural identity and found five different perspectives for conceptualising cultural identity: adaptive, negotiable, personal choice, communal communication practices, and nonnegotiable. These five perspectives overlap with each other and can be combined to study cultural identity (Gomzina, 2012; Kim, 2007; Otten & Geppert, 2009). In the following subsections, the five different perspectives of conceptualising cultural identity are reviewed.

2.1.1.1 Cultural Identity as Adaptive

The first perspective concerns the issue of adapting immigrants and minorities to a dominant society. This perspective understands cultural identity as an adaptive and evolving entity (Kim, 2007). It is based on the privileging of a narrow definition of cultural identity as a unique culture or group, nationality, and country (Jameson, 2007). For example, Hofstede (1980) defined culture as the “collective programming of the mind” (p. 13), and focused on nationality to study cultural differences. According to Sussman (2000), nationality is exclusively related to culture when she noted that “the terms *culture* and *country* are used interchangeably” (p. 355). Others view culture as a hierarchy with a national level on which a dominant culture is viewed as an umbrella over cocultures (Chaney & Martin, 2007). The privileging of nationality or one culture reflects the Western philosophy of patriotism and nationalism (Jameson, 2007).

Privileging one culture or nationality over others evokes intercultural conflicts. These conflicts occur when a cocultural group moves into a dominant culture, in which the latter advocates the ideological assimilationism that signifies the importance of minorities adapting to the whole society (Kim, 2007). The integrative communication theory of cross-cultural adaptation explains that the

adaptation process occurs through interactive communication activities and embraces narrow terms such as assimilation—the acceptance of the dominant values by individuals (Kim, 1995, 2001, 2005). The process of adaptation is clearly seen in immigrants and refugees who relocate for long-term residence and attempt to build and maintain a healthy relationship with the host environment through acculturation (or learning new values) and deculturation (or losing the old values) (Kim, 1995, 2001, 2005a). The assimilation or “the melting pot” ideology focuses on the most significant concern among minorities within dominant cultures. It refers to “the process whereby a group or whole society gradually adopt, or are forced into adopting, the customs, values, lifestyles and language of a more dominant culture” (Ward, Bochner, & Furnham, 2001, p. 29).

By employing a “melting pot” metaphor (Kim, 1999, p. 597), assimilation ideology aims to integrate minorities socially and culturally into the dominant culture (Kim, 1999; Zine, 2001). A melting pot occurs when the dominant group imposes and enforces its cultural identity onto cocultural groups (Ward et al., 2001). Ideological assimilationism celebrates individuality, questions categorical thought, and demands equality for all individuals (Kim, 1999). These values emphasise and advocate assimilation that guides interethnic relations (Kim, 2007). Thus, individuals in cocultural groups begin to ignore their own native cultural identity, experience the weakness of it, and desire or show strong integration with the dominant group (Berry et al., 2002; Ting-Toomey, 2005).

2.1.1.2 Cultural Identity as Flexible and Negotiable

Viewing cultural identity as an adaptive entity which must assimilate into a dominant culture contradicts the view of cultural identity as negotiable. The second perspective understands cultural identity as a flexible and negotiable entity (Kim, 2007). Ideological integrationism works together with the view of a flexible and negotiable identity (Kim, 2007). Integration reflects the desire of minorities to retain their core values and simultaneously accept and accommodate certain dominant views (Ward et al., 2001). Minority individuals search for “reconciliation”, straddling the assimilationist and pluralist ideological positions (Kim, 1999, p. 601). Such a position of reconciliation and integration can be

easily developed and adopted within a society that encourages multicultural groups, acknowledges individuality, and promotes cultural diversity (Kim, 1999).

Pluralism as an ideological position understands the distinctiveness of each group and thus acknowledges that the dominant social norms might not fit the nondominant groups (Kim, 2007). This view enables cultural diversity and promotes multiculturalism by advocating the acceptance of people maintaining their cultural identity and engaging in the larger society (Berry et al., 2002, p. 375). When the dominant culture does not promote cultural diversity and the acceptance of others, it instead cultivates racism, prejudice, and discrimination, and marginalisation emerges (Myers & Collier, 2005). Marginalisation is defined as an individual's weak attachment to both their own and the dominant identities (Ting-Toomey, 2005).

Although identity guides individuals in their lives, these individuals are able to practise some flexibility in their identities. Imahori and Cupach (2005) developed an identity management theory that viewed cultural identity as a way of life that guides and mentors individuals' behavioural expectations. These different expectations rely on various social identities that connect individuals and mentor their behaviours in relationships with others (Hecht et al., 2005). Individuals do, however, exercise some flexibility in applying these rules when interacting and dealing with others who are culturally different (Imahori & Cupach, 2005). This flexibility allows individuals to acquire new knowledge and skills in an unfamiliar culture which, in turn, enables identity negotiation (Ting-Toomey, 2005).

Along with flexibility, individuals are also able to negotiate their cultural identities through communication. Cultural identity is negotiable in relationships and interactions with others (Imahori & Cupach, 2005; Witteborn, 2004). Both the communication theory of identity (Hecht et al., 2005), and the identity negotiation theory (Ting-Toomey, 2005) view identity as a negotiable communicative entity. In developing identity negotiation theory, Ting-Toomey (2005) viewed identity as a process of intercultural negotiation in which individuals attempt to confirm or redefine their own and others' desired self-images. Negotiating identity through interaction and communication is evident. Moriizumi (2011) interviewed five Japanese-American married couples in the U.S., examining their negotiation of

cultural, relational, and family identities. The study found that these couples negotiated their cultural identities through their close relationships and interactions (Moriizumi, 2011). This negotiation can be successful only if an individual is “able to hold two polarised value systems and to be at ease with the dynamic tensions that exist between the vulnerability spectrum and the security spectrum” (Ting-Toomey, 2005, pp. 229-230).

2.1.1.3 Cultural Identity as Social Category and Personal Choice

The third perspective views cultural identity as a social category and a personal choice (Kim, 2007). In each community, individuals have their own social identity even as they share biological, historical, ethnic, political, and religious affiliations with others, (Collier, 2000; Hecht et al., 2005). These affiliations categorise the self into various social groups and connect individuals through the sense of membership in their own communities (Hecht et al., 2005; Imahori & Cupach, 2005). The possibility of distinguishing the self from the other suggests that cultural identity can be identified in relationships to and with others who may share membership in similar or different cultural groups (Berry et al., 2002; Myers & Collier, 2005).

Both social and personal identities encompass “subjective identity” (Jameson, 2007, p. 207). Personal identity is constructed by personality, uniqueness, character, spirit, style, and other unique elements (Jameson, 2007). These distinctive characteristics “we associate with our individuated self in comparison to those of others” (Ting-Toomey, 2005, p. 212). In this sense, cultural identity represents uniqueness, distinctiveness, and reflects our oneness (Young, 2008). These two levels of personal and social identities reflect our own and others’ views of our self-image (Ting-Toomey, 2005).

Cultural identity is also an individual choice as the individual has the ability to adhere to a certain cultural group through an act of voluntary and involuntary identification (Jameson, 2007; Kim, 2007). The process of voluntary and involuntary affiliations shows which components of cultural identity can be concealed and which cannot (Collier, 1998; Jameson, 2007). Being in a dominant culture and adopting the integrationist-pluralist ideology allows minority

individuals to have two cultures. The integrationist-pluralist perspective allows individuals to show commitment to the original culture and, simultaneously, to adopt new values (Kim, 2007).

Viewing cultural identity as a personal choice works together with integrationist-pluralist ideology, which allows immigrants to choose one of four approaches in their relationships and interactions with the dominant society. For example, the questioning of beliefs, values, customs, norms, and attitudes essentially determines what individuals or cocultural groups will adopt from ideological positions or levels of acculturation (Berry, 1984; Kim, 2007). To some degree, the questioning of one's own values and norms shows either positive or negative emotions towards one's original cultural identity, and this results in several responses (Jameson, 2007). Morizumi (2011) argued that having a strong self-image with regard to one's own affiliation encourages an individual to behave in a way that is consistent with his/her own group.

Ting-Toomey (2005) also explained that strong or weak membership associations reflect high or low cultural identity salience. Minority groups are freely able to select any form of the acculturation model to describe their relationships and connections with the dominant group (Berry, 1984; Berry et al., 2002). Kim (2007) pointed out the ability of individuals to choose one form of these ideological positions. Conceptualising cultural identity as individual choice emphasises that communication with others is a personal matter, rather, than a cultural group consideration (Jameson, 2007).

2.1.1.4 Cultural Identity as Communal

The fourth perspective views cultural identity as a distinctive feature of communal communication practices (Kim, 2007). This approach emphasises that each community has the unique features of a communally shared system of communication practices and styles, which are different from those of other communities (Collier, 2005; Kim, 2007). Jameson (2007) affirmed that the process of communication and the contrasting communication styles of people from different groups are influenced by a complex combination of cultural differences. An interpretive theory of cultural communication and speech code

theory offer a foundational framework that identifies the basic characteristics of cultural communication that differentiate one society from another (Philipsen, 1992, 2002; Philipsen, Coutu, & Covarrubias, 2005).

For example, the theory of cultural communication asserts two issues: different groups have different communicative practices, and communication constitutes a significant resource “in managing discursively the individual-communal dialectic” (Philipsen, 2002, p. 53). Although individuals in each community conduct a communal conversation, differences in communal conversations appear as each group has distinctive features of culture and meaning in communication (Philipsen, 2002). A number of studies have investigated culturally distinctive communicative practices in a specific society. For instance, Winchitz (2001) conducted observations over a 10-month period and 50 in-depth interviews to identify how German native speakers use pronouns of personal address (*du* and *Sie*) in their daily interactions and to investigate the pronouns’ culturally distinctive features of social meaning. The study found that Germans used the formal pronoun *Sie* to define their relationships with others with 25 different social meanings, including “age, adulthood, anger, closeness, dignity, distance, friendship, and others” (Winchitz, 2001, p. 346).

Responding to a new call to explore communication ethnography, speech code theory has been developed (Philipsen, 2002; Philipsen et al., 2005). The theory provides an explanation of the principal cultural characteristics of communication to distinguish one speech community from another (Philipsen et al., 2005).

Philipsen (2002) described speech code theory in the following way:

A speech code, the theory posits, implicates a distinctive way of answering the following questions: What is a person, and how is personhood efficaciously and properly enacted communicatively? What is an ideal state of sociation, and how do people efficaciously and properly link themselves into such states through communicative conduct? What are efficacious and proper means of communication, and what meanings are expressed in and through their situated use? (p. 56)

Individuals from different cultures use words differently. Philipsen et al. (2005) noted that words and expressions about communicative conduct are used differently across cultures. Previous studies have found substantial differences in speech codes across societies. For example, a study of linguistic speech acts in business meetings at a Hong Kong airlines corporation found that Chinese participants used words of promise and commitment in a way different from that of Western participants (Bilbow, 2002). Highlighting the distinctiveness of cultural communication practices for each community suggests a pluralistic ideology that differentiates between *us* and *them* (Kim, 2007). This ideology challenges messages of assimilationism, recognises cultural distinctiveness, and acknowledges that each group of people share sameness (Kim, 1999).

2.1.1.5 Cultural Identity as Nonnegotiable

The fifth and final perspective conceptualises cultural identity as nonnegotiable (Kim, 2007). Kim (2007) presented a number of critical scholars' views of conceptualising cultural identity, including one view that conceptualises cultural identity as nonnegotiable. She argues that the strong influence of domination upon minority people can severely affect and even damage an identity. Thus, the possibility of negotiating and choosing cultural identity is given less attention by some critical scholars (Kim, 2007). However, the argument of nonnegotiable identity is not accepted by all critical scholars. For example, the postcolonial perspective emphasises the role of the dominant power upon cultural identity (Jameson, 2007). Postcolonial scholars assert that individuals own their social constructions of race, sex, gender and class, and that they are able to negotiate these constructions even though they hold less power (Collier, 1998). The main objective of the postcolonial approach is to show explicitly how minority people negotiate their social constructions, which may indicate oppression, marginalisation, and less power (Collier, 1998; Jameson, 2007).

The view of negotiable identity in a discursive dominant context is significantly influenced by critical scholars who have recently contributed much to intercultural communication studies (Kim, 2007). Critical conceptions of cultural identity call significant attention to discursive interactions and messages, reveal cultural domination and privileged power, shed light on structural forces, uncover levels

of agency, and place less emphasis on victimised minorities (Collier, 2009; Kim, 2007; Myers & Collier, 2005; Thompson & Collier, 2006). Human agency refers to the ability to conduct, create, produce, and reproduce actions (Giddens, 1984). The relationship between dominant individuals and codominant individuals is affected by those of the dominant people who have higher status and privilege than others (Collier, 2009).

There is a connection between the construction of identity and power (Shin & Jackson, 2003). Cultural identity is imposed by the hegemonic power of the dominant culture (Moriizumi, 2011; Shin & Jackson, 2003) and is intertwined with power and privilege (Jameson, 2007). The privilege of power allows the creation of standards for the acceptance and assimilation of minority individuals into a mainstream culture (Jameson, 2007; Shin & Jackson, 2003). The negotiation of cultural identity is based on “levels of privilege” (Collier, 2005, p. 241; Thompson & Collier, 2006, p. 503) and “levels of agency” (Chen & Collier, 2012, p. 59; Collier, 2009, p. 354).

For example, the lack of agency limits individuals’ power which, in turn, influences them to control their external perceptions (Jameson, 2007). Thus, minority individuals take a great risk and experience a variety of consequences in expressing their own preferences and emotions (Collier, 2005). The invisibility of dominant individuals influences cocultural people to react and interact in different ways. The result is assimilation or resistance of the dominant practices. The latter are emphasised in the ideology of separatism (Kim, 2007; Myers & Collier, 2005; Thompson & Collier, 2006). Separatist ideology calls for a significant distance in in-group-out-group relations (Kim, 1999). Ideological separatism is fostered by messages from the extreme right and the extreme left and is based on self-superiority and glorification, and the rejection of other groups (Kim, 1999, 2007). Berry et al. (2002) explain that separation occurs when a cocultural group asserts its own cultural identity and avoids any connection with others.

To conclude, this analysis has been an attempt to describe the scope of cultural identity and to identify how cultural identity has been conceptualised by different scholarly approaches. Kim’s (2007) framework of cultural identity underlies a number of concepts that define cultural identity in intercultural communication

contexts. The framework reviews five perspectives of cultural identity—adaptive, negotiable, personal choice, communal communication practices, and nonnegotiable— through the formation of intercultural relationships between minority and majority groups.

The degree of cultural identity negotiating varies depending on ideological positions: assimilationism, pluralism, integrationism, and separatism. Viewing cultural identity as adaptive, forces cocultural people towards assimilation in which minority people have no choice, and in which they must observe the dominant values. On the other hand, refusing assimilation and retaining a strong loyalty towards one's own identity results in marginalisation and the experience of separation. Accordingly, the lack of agency and power are neutralised. Living in a pluralist society that supports cultural diversity is the best environment for enabling minority individuals to negotiate their cultural identities without any enforcement or loss of agency.

2.1.2 A Cultural Identity Framework

This section sketches a framework that conceptualises cultural identity as contextually negotiated and interacted, and as one that guides this particular study. An interpretive rationalisation is given to emphasise the importance of viewing cultural identity as negotiable. A model of cultural identity is then developed, acknowledging three main attributes to view cultural identity as negotiable: relational, interactive, and dynamic (Collier, 1998; Collier & Thomas, 1988). This model fits with Kim's (2007) conceptualisation of cultural identity as flexible, negotiable, and personal. In the intercultural communication context, which occurs within the integrationist-pluralist perspective, individuals are able to negotiate and navigate between home and host values, and to show commitment to the original culture and, simultaneously, to adopt new values (Kim, 2007).

The current study attempts to understand the intercultural communication experiences of Arab Muslim students in New Zealand and to reveal how these experiences affect and are affected by students' cultural and religious identities. It is based on the interpretive approach that aims to focus on understanding and describing human behaviour (Moriizumi, 2011), to "build understanding of how

[people] come to do, or be, or know their cultural identities” (Collier, 1998, p. 130), and to reveal how these people recognise their identities in relation to and in communication with others (Collier, 1998). This approach is most appropriate for investigating the trend that views cultural identity as negotiable in particular intercultural communication contexts (Collier, 1998; Collier & Thomas, 1988; Jameson, 2007; Moriizumi, 2011). This negotiation exists only when an individual or a group begins to contrast the self with others, something that only occurs in an intercultural communication context (Collier & Thomas, 1988). By emphasising the construction of the self in relation to others, the term “cultural identity” refers to “an individual’s sense of self derived from formal or informal membership in groups that transmit and inculcate knowledge, beliefs, values, attitudes, traditions, and ways of life” (Jameson, 2007, p. 207).

This conceptualisation of cultural identity emphasises the role of culture in the construction and reconstruction of cultural identity and acknowledges the interactive negotiation of identity in a particular context that is influenced by contextual factors (Chen & Collier, 2012; Shin & Jackson, 2003). Acknowledging an interactive negotiation emphasises that adopting an intercultural communication theory must be based on an interactive method that recognises the role of individuals in communication with others (Jameson, 2007). Thus, cultural identity is “negotiated by individuals across situations, in relationships, and in groups” (Collier, 1998, p. 137). The notion of “constructing identity” refers to identifying an individual within a particular group, whereas the term “negotiation” means the utilisation of the rules and values of that group in conducting practices (Holmes, 2000). This negotiation occurs through relationships and interactions with others, which results in a dynamic identity.

Three main attributes—relational, interactive, and dynamic—constitutes the conceptualisation of cultural identity as negotiable in an intercultural communication context. The following subsections review these three attributes.

2.1.2.1 Cultural Identity Is Relational

Cultural identity is negotiated in relations with others. Collier (2005) affirmed that dialectic and personal relationships among in-groups and out-groups contribute to

the view that cultural identity is a lived, negotiable experience. A person acquires a sense of self through a close relationship with others, which gradually modifies his/her identity (Jameson, 2007). This relationship can exist among ingroup individuals as well as outgroup people. Kim (2007) explained that intergroup interactions and relationships between individuals result in a negotiable identity. The intergroup relationship relies on increasing contact between diverse groups as a result of globalisation and immigration. This contact has fundamentally added to the importance of the consideration of how people construct and/or reconstruct their identities within a new culture (Abrms, O' Connor, & Giles, 2002; Lapresta & Huguet, 2008).

The relational aspect is associated with the level of intergroup relations. Individual interaction is fundamentally affected by one's own cultural identity. Consequently, in intercultural communication contexts, sharp differences exist among cross-cultural groups in a number of aspects, such as understanding one's own identity and that of the other group, differing views of events, and asserting one's own identity against that of others (Collier, 1998). First, although an identity's representations are culturally accepted in one country, they might be prohibited in others (Young, 2008). The intersection of cultural differences makes the cultural identity of a group become salient (Collier, 1998). For example, the mingling of male and female students is not acceptable in Arab Gulf States. However, this phenomenon is accepted as normal in Western educational institutions. Thus, the identity of Arab Muslim students becomes salient.

Second, the relationship between groups is also affected by the attitude of the dominant group towards the minority. Collier (2005) argued that majority individuals are significantly responsible for taking the initial step or action concerning social problems, such as racism and discrimination. The behaviour manifests negative feelings against the other cultural identity (Jameson, 2007). This negativity results in holding stereotypes and misconceptions against another group, and affects the holders' interactions and relationships, and the identity negotiation process (Collier, 2005; Jameson, 2007). Individuals enact multiple identities. However, an individual's cultural identity may become more or less salient across day-to-day situations and contextual changes, depending upon such

contextual factors as agency and hierarchy (Collier, 2005, 2009; Jameson, 2007; Moriizumi, 2011; Thompson & Collier, 2006).

In addition, the relationship between groups is affected by both personal and self-identities, constructed by ascribed and avowed identities. According to one explanation of the development of identity, identity can be defined as “our reflective views of ourselves and other perceptions of our self-images at both the social identity and the personal identity levels” (Ting-Tomney, 2005, p. 212). Personal and collective identities are two subcategories of subjective identity, whereas social identity is a part of collective identity (Jameson, 2007). Personal identity means our unique, individual features compared to those of others in the ingroup regardless of the degree of concern to our social identity, while social identity refers to other features of identity and it includes ethnic membership and religious affiliation (Croucher, Faulkner, Oommen, & Long, 2010; Ting-Toomey, 2005). Britto (2008) explained social identity by pointing out that identity is a dynamic process in life and “is multidimensional, consisting of diverse aspects such as sex, occupation, education, cultural background, family structure, and race and ultimately emerges from an interaction between the self and the context” (p. 853).

People enact their multiple identities in comparison with other groups. Enacting multiple identities allows individuals to distinguish themselves, “the insiders,” from others, the “outsiders,”... through “avowal and ascription” processes (Collier, 1998, p. 132). While the avowal concept stresses how individuals see themselves and their identities, the notion of ascription is used to describe how people are identified by others (Chen & Collier, 2012). Cultural identity becomes evident through the process of avowed, or private, and ascribed, or public, perceptions (Jameson, 2007; Myers & Collier, 2005). For example, Arab Muslim students see Islam as a peaceful religion. However, some people who have been directly or indirectly affected by the bombing of the World Trade Centre in New York and other bombing attacks in European countries attributed to Muslim organisations view Islam as a violent and terrorist religion.

These different views indicate that individuals interpret actions differently (Young, 2008), creating a contradiction and struggle for cultural identity (Collier, 2009;

Moriizumi, 2011). Accordingly, the differences in these views may cause cultural misunderstanding and communication breakdown between Arab Muslim students and others who represent a majority. Collier (1998) explained that in identity enactment, the dominant group holds privilege and power over the nondominant group. Minority individuals may lack the ability to control public perceptions of their cultural identity, which shows their limited power and privilege in the dominant culture (Jameson, 2007). Chen and Collier (2012) found that a lack of agency imposed constraints on the negotiation and communication of cultural identity.

Third, asserting the characteristics of identity also affects the differences between two cultures. A declaration is made when individuals desire to assert their own identity in their interactions with others who are culturally different (Guirdham, 1999). Young (2008) explained that individuals who present their unique and distinctive identities by asserting or observing certain practices, such as wearing the *hijab*, also indicate similarity to others who share similar interests.

2.1.2.2 Cultural Identity Is Interactive

Cultural identity is a negotiable entity as it exists in the context of communication and interaction. Identity is essentially linked to communication (Hecht et al., 2005). As people choose to communicate and express their cultural identity to others and are conscious of this process, they show an acceptance of negotiation (Jameson, 2007). Scholars indicate that cultural identity is renegotiated, reconstructed, reframed, and challenged while interacting and communicating with others (Collier, 2000; Collier & Thomas, 1988; Guirdham, 1999; Hecht et al., 2005; Ting-Toomey, 2005; Witteborn, 2004; Young, 2008). It occurs in a communicative context and undergoes contextual change (Collier, 2005). From this point of view, identities are not simply created by the individuals themselves but, rather, are socially constructed through an individual's interactions, experiences, and social changes (Abrms et al., 2002; Peek, 2005; Shin & Jackson, 2003).

Cultural identity is negotiated, constructed, and framed through intercultural communication (Chen & Collier, 2012; Jameson, 2007; Young, 2008). It is fluid

and dynamic (Collier & Thomas, 1988; Hecht et al., 2005) since communication plays a significant role in developing identity (Hecht et al., 2005). Cultural identity is not only constructed in interaction and relationships through internal group membership but it also emerges and is cocreated through our relationships and interactions with others, such as a dominant group (Collier, 1998, 2000, 2009; Myers & Collier, 2005). Hecht, Jackson, and Ribeau (2003) noted the mutual influences between identity and interaction when they asserted that:

Interaction is constituted and interpreted through identity. Thus, interaction is central to the notion of identity and vice versa. Identity is formed, maintained and modified through social interaction. Identity then begins to influence interaction through shaping expectations and motivating behaviour. (p. 61)

Being in a multicultural society enhances the opportunity to communicate with those from other cultures. The multicultural context requires individuals to interact and communicate in different ways with other groups (Berns McGown, 1999; Shin & Jackson, 2003). Berry et al. (2002) argued that cultural identity is explicitly constructed as a result of social interaction between cross-cultural groups. However, not all aspects of cultural identity can be communicated, as people vary in the way they communicate their cultural identity and may choose to express only certain aspects (Collier & Thomas, 1988; Jameson, 2007). In this sense, identity can be “invoked, used, interpreted, displayed, performed, and so on in particular social scenes” (Carbaugh, 1996, p. 23). As people choose to communicate their cultural identity, they reveal a sense of negotiation in a particular discourse (Jameson, 2007). So, negotiation of cultural identity takes place in communication.

2.1.2.3 Cultural Identity Is Dynamic

Cultural identity consists of internal and historical aspects that build up one’s individuality. The cultural identity of a particular group is constituted by enduring and changing properties (Collier, 1998). These properties construct and reconstruct the individuality of each identity. Each community has its own identity because it is based “on what members of a group or community say and

do and think and feel as they affiliate with others who share their history, origins, or biology” (Collier, 2000, p. 22). These multidimensional constructions of historical, religious, political, physical, environmental, personal, and other contextual factors explicitly construct and shape group individualities (Britto & Amer, 2007; Collier, 2000; Collier & Thomas, 1988; Guirdham, 1999). In this sense, identity represents our uniqueness, distinctiveness and reflects our oneness (Young, 2008). Peek (2005) indicated that an individual’s identity is constructed through “internal subjective perceptions, self-reflection, and external characterisations” (p. 217). For example, the rules of dress and behaviour of one group constitute norms that distinguish this group from other social groups (Hogg & Reid, 2006).

At the individual level, each person also has enduring and changing properties in his or her identity. Individual identity is depicted as both fragmented and changing (Jameson, 2007; Young, 2008). Collier (2000) explained this point by stating that individuals make up a group’s identity; however, each individual has his/her own voice and subidentities which might become more or less prominent when contacting and interacting with others. For example, an individual has separate subidentities reflecting nationality, ethnicity, race, gender, and one identity can become prominent, depending on contextual situations (Collier & Thomas, 1988). Jameson (2007) proposed that a cultural group is constituted by a number of individuals who share membership in it by holding six common components: “vocation, class, geography, philosophy, language, and biology” (p. 211) that become more or less salient according to different contexts.

Cultural identity is contextual. It is a “complex construct” (Imahori & Cupach, 2005, p. 197) because identity is constructed by the overlapping nature of subidentities (Collier, 1998). It contains subidentities that might become more or less salient for a person in contextual interactions (Collier, 1998). Thus, cultural identity is contextually negotiated and experienced (Collier, 1998; Collier & Thomas, 1988). For example, recent events in the world have affected Arab Muslim students. As a result, they are considering their identity anew and many have begun to ask what it means to be an Arab Muslim in these times. As Collier (2000) noted, this enquiry demonstrates that “cultural identities change because of

economic, political, social, psychological, and contextual factors” (p. 24). These internal and external factors greatly influence cultural identity and lead us to recognise cultural identity as a unique aspect and dynamic function in contextual relationships and interactions.

Cultural identity evolves. The components of variability and stability convey the meaning of dynamism and change (Jameson, 2007). People move from one condition to another throughout their lifetimes. Although people may be able to change their religious beliefs, cultural norms and traditions, economic class, educational background, or professional jobs, they cannot change their native language or original ethnicity or race (Jameson, 2007). Thompson and Collier (2006) interviewed 12 volunteer couples with regard to their interracial relationships and cultural identification. The study found that the couples negotiated who they were in their relationships with others by emphasising being a couple, rather, than being a product of race or ethnic identity categories, which reveals that cultural identity is contextually negotiated and changes over time.

To conclude, as the current study focuses on Arab Muslim immigrant students, their cultural identity represents the most significant aspect to be negotiated in the dominant culture. The study draws on the interpretive perspective in particular because it assumes that the cultural identities of Arab Muslim students are negotiated through social relationships and interactions with others. Individuals negotiate their cultural identity in relationships with others who either do or do not share similar identities. This negotiation is affected by the degree of people’s contacts, the mismatch of cultures, the acceptance of a new coculture in a dominant society, and the enactment of identity through the avowal-ascription process. The interaction environment across individuals is also affected by these factors.

Cultural identity is constructed and negotiated in the context of intercultural communication. Moving from one culture to another, interacting and communicating with other individuals who hold different cultural identities, and facing unexpected changes in circumstances are all factors that affect individuals as they attempt to manage the new situations and conditions. Arab Muslim students who hold an Islamic identity and live in a different culture need to

recognise that New Zealand is a multicultural society and must understand how to interact and communicate properly with other people in societies made up of varied and disparate groups. Thus, the religious and cultural identities of these students become salient in the context of New Zealand culture.

Interacting and communicating with other individuals who hold different cultural identities and face unexpected changes in circumstances all affect individuals as they attempt to manage new situations and conditions. Managing these unexpected situations can be achieved through viewing identity as something that is negotiable and enables the recreation of new understandings of one's own identity and ultimately the creation of a new form of identity. This view of identity explains how cultural identity constructs and is constructed by contextual factors through the negotiation of relationships and interactions and how change in the cultural identity of minorities occurs over time. In other words, cultural identity is contextually negotiated and dynamic in intercultural relationships and interactions.

2.2 Structuration Theory

Along with the theory of culture identity, structuration theory is also used in order to investigate the negotiation process of Arab Muslim students' identities from the organisational perspective. Focusing on the organisational perspective is important because individuals' identities are negotiated and constructed in both social and organisational contexts (Ashforth, Harrison, & Corley, 2008; Dick, Wagner, Stellmacher, & Christ, 2004; Pal & Buzzanell, 2008; Wiesenfeld, Raghuram, & Garud, 1999). Jameson (2007) explained that individual cultural identity is constructed by an organisation's norms, values, attitudes, and cultural practices. Similarly, Kim (2005) has proposed three contextual layers: the communicator, the situation, and the environment, including organisational contexts in a hierarchical arrangement, to understand the construction of identity in an intercultural communication context. In terms of the environment layer, each organisation sets up certain policies and rules that mentor and guide its members' daily behaviours, interactions, practices, and activities (Kim, 2005). This layer stands for "the prevailing ideology of the society" (Kim, 1999, p. 594). Taking this organisational perspective allows an understanding of the influence of New

Zealand universities' communication practices in the negotiation process of Arab Muslim students' identities.

Researchers apply different theories and frameworks to examine the organisational-individual relationship. Structuration is one of these that can be employed as a theoretical framework in understanding different aspects of a variety of subjects (Olufowote, 2003). This study draws upon the structuration framework established by social theorist Anthony Giddens (Giddens, 1984) and elaborated on by Scott, Corman, and Cheney (1998). The theory is applied to examine how universities influence the negotiation process of Arab Muslim students' identities while interacting and communicating with others.

Structuration theory has been used in several areas in organisational communication. The potential contribution of structuration theory in the communication and organisation arenas has existed since the 1980s when it was recognised as a richly grounded theory (Pozzebon & Pinsonneault, 2000; Seyfarth, 2000). It has since become a dominant theory increasingly adopted to examine any aspect in communication research (Banks & Riley, 1993; Kirby & Krone, 2002; Lamba, 2003; Olufowote, 2003, 2007; Pozzebon, 2004; Seyfarth, 2000). For example, the theory can be applied by researchers who are interested in understanding human life-experience in organisations. Conrad (1993) argued that Giddens' creativity in developing and analysing structuration theory has influenced researchers to utilise this theory when studying human experience.

The theory encompasses both social structure and human action in a common framework, which enables communication researchers to investigate both individual and institutional actions (Poole & McPhee, 2005; Seyfarth, 2000). Applying structuration theory in organisational communication research entails explicit advantages, such as indicating the on-going individual-organisation interaction, managing issues resulting from the individual-organisation relationship, and understanding changes that occur to either individuals or organisations (Berends, Boersma, & Weggeman, 2003; Husain, 2009; Olufowote, 2007; Poole & DeSanctis, 2000; Pozzebon & Pinsonneault, 2000; Pozzebon & Pinsonneault, 2005).

Structuration theory consists of three core concepts: structure, agency, and duality of structure. Structure refers to rules and resources that influence human action in a social system (Giddens, 1984). By drawing and enacting rules and resources, structure becomes both the medium and the outcome of social practices (Day Ashley, 2010). Human agency refers to the ability to conduct, create, produce, and reproduce structures by enacting rules and resources (Giddens, 1984).

Structuration theory looks at the interactive link between structure and the human agency through the concept of duality between structure and system (Healey, 2006). The duality of structure means that “the structural properties of social systems are both the medium and outcome of the practices they recursively organise” (Giddens, 1984, p. 25). Thus, structuration is defined “the structuring of social relations across time and space in terms of the continuity or transmutation of structures, and therefore the reproduction of social systems” (Day Ashley, 2010, p. 341). The following subsections focus on structure, agency, and duality of structure.

2.2.1 Structure

Structure is one of the three components of structuration. Giddens (1984) viewed structure as influences and, as such, structure is influenced by individual action. It refers to rules and resources which affect people’s action within a social organisation (Giddens, 1984). While rules consist of formal and informal principles and ethics that guide and affect people’s behaviour and interaction, resources are the ability to influence material objects as well as nonmaterial objects, such as other individuals’ activities (Healey, 2006; Jones, 2007). Giddens (1984) explained that rules can be interpretative or normative. Interpretative rules refer to the actors’ interpretation of their own life and world, whereas normative rules denote legitimised actions (Berends et al., 2003). Resources constitute authoritative resources and allocative resources (Giddens, 1984). While authoritative resources deal with the ability to rule and empower individuals, allocative resources refer to the ability to dominate material objects and goods, and the ability to access these goods (Giddens, 1984; Jarzabkowski, 2008).

Both rules and resources attempt to guide and control actors’ behaviour and actions (Jones, 2007). One form of rules is identity. In fact, Scott et al. (1998)

renamed structure using the term “identity”. Identity is viewed as the function of structures that monitor individuals through ascertaining which activities are appropriate, which are not, and empowering people to perform these activities (Scott et al., 1998; Yuthas & Dillard, 1999). For example, Arab Muslim students use their own cultural and religious rules and resources to direct, maintain, shape, and sustain their own daily activities, which at the same time reveal their own unique identity. However, each student holds the possibility for innovation that may influence the individual to behave differently from the rest of the group (Day Ashley, 2010). Giddens (1984) alluded to this issue by saying that

To be able to act otherwise means being able to intervene in the world, or to refrain from such intervention, with the effect of influencing a specific process or state of affairs. (p. 14)

It is clear that rules and resources play an essential role in distinguishing and exposing individual identities.

Arab Muslim students may recognise the structure of their identities that direct their actions or behaviours. Yet, there are other structures that are invisible and cannot be recognised by these students. Yuthas and Dillard (1999) pointed out that structures cannot be acknowledged by people while engaging in action and might not be easy to change or may be difficult to resist as a result of their internalisation within actors. Jones (2007) explained clearly that “as rules and resources are not observable social structures, they do not exist in a physical sense, instead they emerge as instances of social action and impressions of past activity” (p. 4). Both predictable and imperceptible structures function as factors that constrain or enable people when conducting activities (Giddens, 1984).

2.2.2 Agents and Agency

This section starts by defining the concept of agency in the structuration context. Then, five main aspects—knowledgeability, reflexivity, rationalisation, motivation, and the ability to control actions—explain the relationship and connections between agents and action.

Structuration theory highlights that human agents also play a significant factor in producing and reproducing social practices. Agency is the second element of structuration theory and can be best understood through Giddens' model of the agent (Giddens, 1984). Agents refer to individual actors who are guided by structures in their social practices (Yuthas & Dillard, 1999). Agency is constituted through social life seen in human activities (Giddens, 1984). It refers to the ability to conduct, create, produce, and reproduce structures by enacting rules and resources (Giddens, 1984). Structures mentor individuals' actions and activities but do not control them; instead, human agents have the ability to draw upon the rules and resources in daily interaction and to act in the social world, which results in producing and reproducing structures (Jones & Karsten, 2008). This ability to act in a purposeful way explains that human agents are able to intervene in the world through power, which is exercised by authoritative and allocative resources (Day Ashley, 2010).

There is a reciprocal relationship between structure and agent. This relationship between agents and structures is critical to the Giddens theory of structuration (Giddens, 1984) that explains mutual relationship without giving priority to one concept over the other. Yuthas and Dillard (1999) illustrated this connection simply by saying

The relationship between structures and agents is reciprocal. At the same time structures influence the actions of agents, they are continually reproduced through actions of those agents. Without the agents, the structures cease to exist. (p. 341)

The main aspects—knowledgeability, reflexivity, rationalisation, motivation, and the ability to control actions—clarify the relationship and connections between agents and action or activities (i.e., agency) (Giddens, 1984).

The first aspect is knowledgeability. The conceptualisation of agents' knowledgeability and its connection with action represent the essential aspect of structuration theory (Naidoo, 2009). Banks and Riley (1993) explained that “agency is the expression of agents' knowledgeability” (p. 260), and knowledgeability is “what agents know about what they do and why they do it”

(Giddens, 1984, p. xxiii). This knowledgeable explains that human agents understand what they are doing and can monitor their own and others' actions and activities (Canary, 2010; Day Ashley, 2010). This knowledgeable enables Arab Muslim students to determine what rules and resources they can apply in their social interaction. Giddens (1984) conceptualised the process of knowledgeable with reflexivity.

The second aspect is reflexivity, which is a significant feature of daily activities. Arab Muslim students have the ability to monitor their activities and behaviours in both social and physical contexts. The monitoring derives from their stock of knowledge or from their experiences both past and present (Banks & Riley, 1993). It should be noted that reflexivity continually occurs before, during, and after activities. Thus, reflexivity is not only influenced by structures; rather, human agency plays a spontaneous role in their behaviour (Healey, 2006). The reflexivity concept is based on another concept, namely the rationalisation of action (Day Ashley, 2010; Giddens, 1984). This is the third aspect that explains the connection between agents and action. Rationalisation is a notable feature of being human (Scott & Myers, 2010). Being human means that Arab Muslim students hold a theoretical understanding of their daily activities (Banks & Riley, 1993). Both concepts of reflexivity and rationalisation are related to the intentionality of human action (Day Ashley, 2010). Giddens (1984) explained that

To be a human being is to be a purposive agent, who both has reasons for his or her activities and is able, if asked, to elaborate discursively upon those reasons (including lying about them). (p. 3)

Structuration theory assumes that individuals are guided in their actions by internal and/or external directions. Poole, Seibold, and McPhee (1996) described internal directions as reflexive monitoring, which means that individuals act or behave according to their immediate and/or long-term experiences within a specific context and guided by specific institutions. However, when individuals face unpleasant incidents, desire to progress well or attempt to manage certain activities, their actions, significantly, are expressed intentionally. Individuals who rationalise their actions are knowledgeable and actually attempt to explain their

action logically and reveal their action as coherent among others (Poole et al., 1996).

Knowledgeability and reflexivity are related to three levels of consciousness that define human actors: practical consciousness, discursive consciousness, and unconsciousness (Giddens, 1984). Whereas individuals are able to express and explain orally and coherently the reasons and goals of their behaviour and action through discursive consciousness, they are incapable of using language to express what they know, their belief, or motivations through practical consciousness, as agents engage in actions or routine social practices without giving any analytic attention to them (Banks & Riley, 1993; Giddens, 1984; Olufowote, 2003; Poole et al., 1996). Practical consciousness cannot be expressed in words because it refers to knowledge and skill possessed by individuals or to routine nature, but these individuals clearly know the conditions of their actions (Poole & McPhee, 2005; Seyfarth, 2000). Healey (2006) argued that “practical consciousness acts at a more structural level than discursive consciousness” (p. 262).

However, this is not to argue that discursive consciousness is more important than practical consciousness. Giddens (1984) affirmed that both concepts are significant to structuration theory. He also mentioned that “between discursive and practical consciousness there is no bar; there are only the differences between what can be said and what is characteristically simply done” (p. 7). Scott and Myers (2010) explained the relationship between practical and discursive consciousness and the unconscious by saying that “the process sustains and works within a kind of security system, at the level of the unconscious, alleviating anxieties enough for action to take place” (p. 82). The importance of practical consciousness is that human knowledgeability of action is also linked with the unacknowledged conditions and unintended consequences of these actions (Naidoo, 2009). Healey (2006) interviewed 18 refugees from five different countries about their experiences in the UK and concluded that, although discursive consciousness can be easily analysed through reading the interviews, reading between the lines was the strategy that should be adopted to interpret practical consciousness.

Discursive and practical consciousness may also be understood in conjunction with another aspect: ontological security (Giddens, 1984). Ontological security refers to the condition in which individuals experience place and feel comfortable in it (Healey, 2006). Moving to another society means facing new experiences, as Arab Muslim students must, requiring them to adapt to the new place, and negotiate their own and other structures in order to secure a comfortable place. Negotiating cultural differences requires these students to learn cultural practices that allow them to mediate between their own values and those of the dominant culture (Valadez, 2008). This requirement means that these experiences are significantly different from those of people who originally live in the dominant culture. The concept of ontological security enables Arab Muslim students to alleviate anxiety arising from unpleasant situations in New Zealand society by producing routines for developing normal behaviours that ultimately lead to reconstructing identity (Giddens, 1984; Phipps, 2001). These routines “allow individuals to maintain a foundational sense of ontological security (comfort, tension management, anxiety reduction, order), which serves as the basis for their motivation” (Lu, 2006, p. 20).

Motivation is the fourth aspect that explains the connection between agents and action. It refers to needs or desires that encourage actors to conduct certain actions or behaviours (Phipps, 2001). Although actors can easily report their reflexive and rationalising actions, they tend to face difficulty in expressing their motivation to action (Giddens, 1984). The difficulty is due to complex or invisible factors or to the unconsciousness that characterises the conducting of activities (Day Ashley, 2010). Yuthas and Dillard (1999) argued that individuals have the ability to predict the results of their actions and to affect others as well as the organisation in which they exist. These influences may also affect the individuals themselves who participate in these activities. By explaining these features of agent and agency, the situation can be conceptualised, not as an intentional process, but rather, as referring to the ability and the understanding of agents to conduct such activities (Giddens, 1984).

The final aspect is the ability of individuals to control their actions. This ability is affected by three elements according to Poole et al. (1996), who state that “three

sets of factors that condition action in groups can be identified” (p. 119). The first one is the situation of a particular group which constrains or enables certain behaviour and interaction among members of this group (Poole et al., 1996). In other words, a member can act, behave, and interact actively or passively according to the status of other members of the group. Contexts are the second condition that affects action (Seyfarth, 2000). These contexts involve “situational factors, historical precedents, structures drawn from relevant institutions, and structures reproduced earlier by the group” (Poole, et al., 1996, p. 120). All these features significantly influence an individual’s action within a group. The final condition is power i.e., the privileged positions of particular individuals. These positions include such factors as having expertise in a field, access to resources, mastery of skills, and one individual possessing superior knowledge to that of others (Poole et al., 1996; Seyfarth, 2000). Although an individual’s ability in his/her action is influenced by micro factors, macro aspects certainly affect an individual’s actions also.

2.2.3 Duality of Structure (Duality of Identity)

It is necessary to understand how duality of structure (duality of identity) emerges, when discussing structure (identity), agent, and agency, and the influential characteristics that affect individuals’ action and behaviour. The duality of structure concept explains the relationship and connection between system and structure. Duality of structure has been explained with the statement that “the structural properties of social systems are both the medium and outcome of the practices they recursively organise” (Giddens, 1984, p. 25). Institutional influences on individuals’ actions need to be discussed in order to obtain a good understanding regarding the influences of social contexts in the duality of identity.

Structuration theory emphasises the macro level role in individuals’ actions. Nevertheless, it is not acceptable to separate the macro from the micro level: the two dimensions of human interaction (Naidoo, 2009). The theory attempts to realise how individuals’ characteristics, such as their membership and roles, are influenced by an organisation’s rules and power (Poole et al., 1996). Maintaining individuals’ boundaries, identities, and lived experiences are controlled by influential structures, such as organisational, religious, cultural, social, political,

economic, and other structures (Poole et al., 1996). These structures guide and direct individuals' communication practices with their organisations (Poole et al., 1996).

Institutional features may function in three structural dimensions: signification (or interpretive structures), domination (or power structures), and legitimation (or normative structures) (Giddens, 1984; Yuthas & Dillard, 1999). These structural dimensions are functionally parallel on the interaction scale of "communication, power and sanction" (Giddens, 1984, p. 29). The question is how these dimensional structures actually come into play through the interaction process (Poole et al., 1996). Giddens (1984) identified three general modalities. Structures can serve as interpretive scheme, as facility, or as norm. These modalities are located between agency and structures and attempt to reveal their interconnectedness through mutual interaction (Halperin & Backhouse, 2007). Busco (2009) pointed out that linking modalities with structural dimensions is a significant aspect of structuration that allows "the institutionalisation of a socially constructed order ... [to] be achieved" (p. 251), and through this mutual connection, certain features can be observed, such as communicating mutual meanings and understandings, practising power and authority, and recognising moral codes.

In these modalities, individuals expose their behaviours and action through interaction and communication with others and through the interpretive scheme modality, which ultimately reproduces the rules of signification. Then individuals employ facilities or resources that assist them to exercise power and transfer it into domination, and by experiencing sanctions, behaviours or activities, legitimacy comes into action (Halperin & Backhouse, 2007; Naidoo, 2009; Staber & Sydow, 2002). The following figure illustrates the process of structural dimensions.

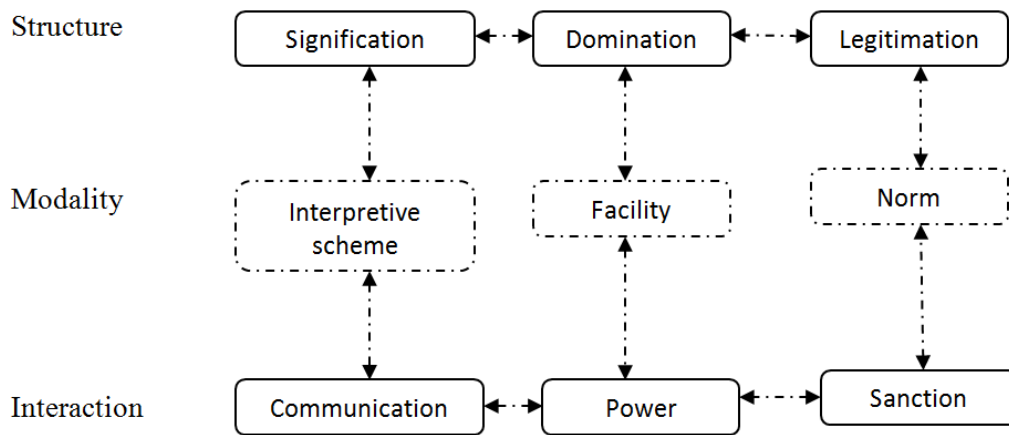


Figure 1: Structural dimensions adapted from Giddens (1984, p. 29).

Duality of identity consists of rules (signification), norms that guide behaviours (legitimation), and authoritative and allocative resources (domination) (Giddens, 1984). Signification structures refer to identity, beliefs, rules, principles, and values that guide and direct individuals in their behaviours and ascribe meaning to their actions, such as wearing certain clothes (e.g., wearing the *hijab* for Muslim women) (Jarzabkowski, 2008; Jones & Karsten, 2008). In the university context, signification rules can be found through strategies, missions, goals, and academic teaching courses that express the function of these universities (Yuthas & Dillard, 1999). These rules explain how an organisation or individuals use interpretive schemes in order to communicate functionally their own and others' actions and share mutual meanings and understandings via structural signification (Busco, 2009; Hussain & Cornelius, 2009). Stein and Vandebosch (1996) indicated that “interpretive schemes are vehicles for the communication of meaning” (p. 118).

The study of the signification dimension must be conducted alongside the other two dimensions: domination and legitimation. Giddens (1984) argued that domination is a fundamental aspect in that it explicitly affects the existence of signification codes. Domination structures focus on the location of an organisation and the exercise of power within this organisation or who is responsible within an organisation. These domination structures are based on authoritative and allocative resources (Giddens, 1984; Staber & Sydow, 2002; Yuthas & Dillard, 1999). Using the example of clothes, by wearing a long dress and headscarf, Muslim women not only make a statement about themselves but also convey a

message about Islamic power over them, which represents the domination aspect (Jones & Karsten, 2008). Domination structures also include privileges that institutions or individuals possess in relation to others (Poole et al., 1996).

From the modality of facility perspective, although individuals use resources, which become the foundation for power, an organisation attempts to exercise its power and achieve a domination structure by using authoritative and allocative facilities (Busco, 2009; Halperin & Backhouse, 2007; Stein & Vandenbosch, 1996). While authoritative resources deal with the ability to rule and empower individuals, allocative resources refer to the ability to dominate material objects and goods and the ability to access these goods (Giddens, 1984; Jarzabkowski, 2008). Both authoritative and allocative structures aim to promote an organisation's role and to achieve its objectives by dominating members and providing material resources (Yuthas & Dillard, 1999). Although these resources assist individuals to wield power, legitimation authorises these individuals to exercise it rightly (Hussain & Cornelius, 2009).

Legitimation is the third dimension reflecting structures of religion, ethics, customs, norms, and values that guide people's behaviour and make sense of their reality. The modality of norms allows both individuals and organisations to practise reciprocal rights and obligations in which ultimately legitimation exists (Busco, 2009). For example, universities exercise their legitimation through their regulations and policies, which explicitly indicate formal and informal norms that must be followed by students and teachers (Halperin & Backhouse, 2007). Returning to the example of clothes, although Arab Muslim women students are obligated to wear the headscarf with long clothes or to be veiled, they may encounter uncomfortable situations or may be discouraged from wearing Muslim dress in certain settings within universities (Jones & Karsten, 2008). In any organisation, there are formal norms, rules, principles, and ethics that determine which behaviours are accepted and legitimated (Halperin & Backhouse, 2007), but there are also informal norms and customs that are not accepted by an organisation (Yuthas & Dillard, 1999).

The modality of norms is associated with weak or strong sanctions, which bring structural legitimation into effect (Halperin & Backhouse, 2007). Halperin and

Backhouse (2007) indicated that strong or explicit sanctions are imposed when individuals apply norms that are not accepted but are clearly understood by their organisation, whereas weak or implicit sanctions occur when individuals practise behaviours where ambiguity prevails. Hussain and Cornelius (2009) explained that exercising normative sanctions crucially depends on domination. The process of structuration is constituted through the mutual interaction of the three modalities between the realm of human actions and the institutional realm in which the duality of identity occurs (Pozzebon & Pinsonneault, 2000; Stein & Vandebosch, 1996).

To conclude, structuration theory has been employed in a wide range of research studies and has been used as a theoretical approach for examining and understanding organisational communication. Employing structuration theory in an organisational communication study requires understanding the key concepts of this theory: structures (identities), agent-agency (system), and duality of structure (duality of identity). The duality of structure concept explains that structures guide and direct or constrain individuals' behaviours, and that at the same time these structures can be modified by individuals. The concept explains the dynamic relationship and interaction between human agency and structures, which affect both parties to start rethinking, questioning, replacing, and judging their own values, customs, norms, and values.

The analyst must pay considerable attention to individual-organisational interaction by focusing on rules and resources that functionally determine the process of structural dimensions—signification, domination, and legitimating—and by examining the properties of agent interactions, such as knowledgeability and discursive and practical consciousness. The concept of duality of identity can be applied to examine the way in which New Zealand universities influence the negotiation process of Arab Muslim students' identities through the structural dimensions of signification, domination, and legitimating.

Moving from a home culture to a dominant culture means encountering a mismatch of different values, norms, traditions, and customs. This study applies structuration theory to examine the experiences of Arab Muslim students in

interacting and communicating with others at New Zealand universities, to understand what structures influence these experiences and to discuss the negotiation process of these students' identities with regard to mutual influences between New Zealand university structures and the students. Using structuration theory to examine the negotiation process of Arab Muslim students' identities assists in revealing what internal and external factors affect students in their interaction and communication with others, describing how their identities are influenced by university structures, and on the other hand how students may influence university practices. Focusing on structuration makes it possible to examine how Arab Muslim students in a particular context draw upon rules and resources and how they produce and reproduce such rules and resources in their interaction. This study contributed to paying increased attention to the influences of actors and their behaviours and actions in the institutional realm.

2.3 Conclusion

This chapter has set out the theoretical framework for the study by drawing on cultural identity and structuration theory that provides understanding in examining the negotiation and renegotiation of Arab Muslim students' identities in the context of intercultural communication. The first part focused on the theory of cultural identity and explained its main foundations. Cultural identity is understood as a dynamic and negotiable matter in an intercultural communication context when individuals who come from different cultures interact with each other. From this interaction and communication, Arab Muslim students may start reconstructing and renegotiating their cultural and religious identities, which may further result in the development of a third culture. The second part paid significant attention to structuration theory in order to explain how the negotiation process of Arab Muslim students may occur as a result of interaction and communication between these students and New Zealand universities. This negotiation process can be understood through the structural dimensions of signification, domination, and legitimation.

The next chapter reviews literature concerning the intercultural communication experiences of Arab/Muslim students in the West. A number of previous studies examine the academic and social experiences of these students and their abilities

to negotiate their identities. Reviewing prior studies provides the historical, theoretical, and methodological contexts of the present study and highlights limitations that can be managed.

Chapter 3

Literature Review

There is an extensive body of literature that focuses on the experiences of Arab/Muslim students in the West. As the main focus is Arab Muslim students, this review includes studies that examine the experiences of either Arab students, Arab Muslim students or Muslim students. Reviewing earlier studies provides historical contextualisation and facilitates an understanding of the positioning of the present study, and also highlights the timelines and relative significance of studies that have focused on the same context, or aspects of it.

The first part focuses on religious identity of Arab Muslim students in order to understand how Islam plays a significant part in constructing and shaping the identity of these students. This part pays attention to Islamic identity, explains its main foundations, and discusses the issues of education, family, and women within the context of Islam and the Arabian Gulf culture. The second part highlights the initial impressions of Arab/Muslim students in both Western academic and social contexts. The third part focuses on how these students negotiate their presence in a new environment in the context of being a member of a minority religion and, in particular, being an Arab Muslim student. The fourth part addresses how Arab/Muslim students respond to their interaction and communication experiences in the West. Throughout these sections, close attention is paid to understanding how the construction of cultural and religious identity is negotiated and renegotiated. The final part focuses on conclusions and implications for further research and, finally, the research questions are outlined.

3.1 Religious Identity (The Islamic Identity)

There is a significant interconnection between Arab culture and Islam. Arab cultural norms and practices are influenced by Islamic religion as the association between Islam and culture is virtually inseparable (Bangura, 2004; Collet, 2007; Peek, 2005). For example, there is a consistence between Islamic and cultural views towards issues of educating women, advocating the family's solidarity and unity (Britto & Amer, 2007; Mostafa, 2006), assigning the responsibility of men

to fulfil women's needs (Schvaneveldt et al., 2005), protecting and valuing women (Hamdan, 2005), and highlighting gender-segregation by promoting modesty (Baki, 2004; Boulanouar, 2006). The intertwined connection rationalises a limited discussion of the main source, that is the religious identity, as the separation between Islam and culture makes no sense.

In the context of this research, religious identity as a form of social identity refers to the Islamic identity. The main source of Islamic identity is the Islamic faith, which can be conceptualised by understanding the crucial foundations of Islam through its primary and secondary sources. Islam is an Arabic word meaning peace and it stands for complete submission and obedience to *Allah* (Mawdudi, 1960). For Muslims, obedience means acting in accordance with Islamic teachings that are based on the primary sources consisting of the *Qur'an*, which is revealed by *Allah* (*Allah* is an Arabic word that is translated as "God" in English) to his messenger the Prophet Muhammad (SAAS)³ and is accepted as "the highest and final authority in learning about Islam and its stances on various issues and queries, and [the authentic *Hadeeth* (*Sunnah*) which refers] to the words, actions and approvals of Prophet Muhammad (SAAS) in matters relating to the teaching of the faith and its implementation" (Badawi, 2003, p. 25). Basically, Muslims are required to act according to the teachings of the primary sources because they contain "principles, doctrines, and directions for every sphere of human activity" (Islamic Information Service, 2001, p. 24).

The secondary sources include *Ijmaa*, which means analogical deduction, and *Qiyaas*, which refers to reasoned answers on a given issue (Badawi, 2003). By utilising secondary sources, Islamic identity has the ability to evolve depending on different exceptional surroundings, circumstances, and conditions that Muslims encounter in this life (Al-Kady, 2001). Secondary sources depend on the interpretations of Islamic scholars who are influenced by external factors in the surrounding world and "there is no single person or authority in Islam whose interpretation is seen or accepted as the only valid one" (Badawi, 2003, p. 26).

³ (SAAS) '*Salla Allah alayhi wa sallam*' Peace and blessings of God be upon him. Muslims recite this phrase when the name of the Prophet Muhammad is written or uttered. This phrase is abbreviated to the letters "SAAS".

From this viewpoint, Islamic identity is a dynamic entity appropriate for any era and location. This dynamic approach provides a framework to assist Arab Muslim students in renegotiating and reframing their cultural and religious identities when interacting and communicating with cross-cultural groups.

Islam contains five basic foundations, most of which are apparent in the daily lives of Muslims. These five foundations construct a foundational Islamic identity (Schwedler, 2001). The five foundations involve the declaration of faith by believing in the oneness of *Allah (tawhid)*, and Muhammad (SAAS) as the prophet and messenger of *Allah* (Ahmad & Szpara, 2003). *Allah* is not only a religious word; it also guides Muslims in conducting their daily lives in behaving, dressing, eating, and in all things according to His commands (Munawar, 1997). Also included is the performance of specific practices—praying five times a day, facing towards the holy city of Mecca in Saudi Arabia, giving alms from certain assets, fasting during the holy month of *Ramadan*, and performing a pilgrimage to Mecca if one has the physical and financial ability to do so (Pratt, 2005; Tabbarah, 2001). Arab Muslim students may face a number of difficulties in performing certain foundations while studying and living in New Zealand. These five foundations may play major roles for Arab Muslim students in understanding their intercultural communication experiences with non-Muslims.

Islam has its own view of the concept of identity. This study draws upon the conceptualisation of Islamic identity developed by Umara (1997). According to Umara (1997), identity refers to certainty and substance. While certainty refers to main principles such as there is only one God, the Prophet Mohammed who is the last messenger, and praying five times a day, substance means issues that involve establishing local and international laws to guide people in their relations with each other, and dealing with modern daily lives (Umara, 1997). These concepts of certainty and substance can be explained through the concepts of authenticity and the contemporary. Authenticity in Islam refers to those concepts that do not change over time but, rather, are dynamic through the acceptance of new understandings of this life and these new understanding are based on the concept of the contemporary (Umara, 1997). The contemporary refers to the interaction between Muslims, their lives, and other cultures as they accommodate new

conceptions within their Islamic authenticity, which explain that Islamic identity is a living identity and it is applicable to all times (Umara, 1997).

Unfolding events and changing circumstances wield significant influence on the reinterpretation, recomprehension and reconstruction of identity (Schwedler, 2001). These forms correspond to what is called the “revitalization in Islam” (Munawar, 1997, p. 109), leading to a new era that involves the reunderstanding of certain Islamic teachings in the non-Muslim context. From the Islamic perspective, Muslims are encouraged to obtain any benefit in this life without compromising the fixed elements of Islamic identity (Umara, 1997). In this situation, Arab Muslim students encounter a number of issues in New Zealand life when interacting and communicating with non-Muslims. Accordingly, these students may accommodate new conceptions within their cultural and religious identities.

In sum, Islamic identity is based on the Islamic faith. Both primary and secondary sources direct the Islamic identity. The latter sources enable Islamic identity to evolve depending on different exceptional circumstances that Muslims encounter in their daily lives. The Islamic identity’s evolution can also be manifested through two concepts: substance and contemporary. These concepts allow Muslims to interpret things differently depending on different conditions and contexts.

3.1.1 Education in Islam

Islamic identity pays considerable attention to education. Islam has always valued and urged its followers to gain knowledge and acquire an education (Bahiss, 2008; Mostafa, 2006). The first verses of the *Qur'an* highlight the importance of learning by emphasising reading as a tool for seeking knowledge. In the *Qur'an* (chapter 96, verses 1-5), *Allah* says

Proclaim! (or read!) in the name of thy Lord and Cherisher (1), Who Created man, out of a (mere) clot of congealed blood, (2) Proclaim! And thy Lord is Most Bountiful, (3) He Who taught (the use of) the pen, (4) Taught man that which he knew not (5) (Ali, 2008, p. 779).

The *Qur'an* also distinguishes between those with and without knowledge. *Allah* asks (chapter 39, verse 9): “Are those who have knowledge equal to those who do not have knowledge?!” (Ali, 2008, p. 565). These verses underline the importance of reading, seeking knowledge, and gaining an education. The significance of seeking knowledge is also appreciated by the Prophet of Islam Muhammad (SAAS) who indicated the substance of knowledge in different ways:

- “Whoever travels on a path in search of knowledge, *Allah* will enable him to travel on one of the paths to Paradise...” (Kandhlawi, 2008, p. 251).
- “He who seeks knowledge and attains it, *Allah* writes for him a double reward, and he who seeks knowledge but does not attain it, *Allah* writes for him a single reward” (Kandhlawi, 2008, p. 250).

In Islam, knowledge represents a priority in which both sexes are encouraged to gain it and obtain educational opportunities even from non-Muslims (Bahiss, 2008; Gunel, 2007; Hamdan, 2005). Islam does recognise that men and women are equal in terms of education and inspires them to seek education at any level (Hamdan, 2005; Schvaneveldt et al., 2005). Baki (2004) explained that “Islam strongly believes in mandatory education for both men and women” (p. 3). It emphasises that women have their own right to access knowledge and education (Hamdan, 2005). Schvaneveldt et al. (2005) pointed out that Islam does not assert the “priority of men over women in educational pursuits and both were equally encouraged to acquire education” (p. 80). In the history of Islam from the era of the Prophet Muhammad (SAAS) until today, there have been a number of great Muslim women scholars in religion, literature, medicine, and other fields, and among these women were wives and a daughter of the Prophet Muhammad (SAAS) (Bahiss, 2008; Hamdan, 2005).

Islam confirms that each individual has the right to acquire education and governments must facilitate it. Bahiss (2008) stated that learning is both a right and an obligation for which every Muslim is responsible. Mostafa (2006) explained that Islam determines that facilitating education is a government responsibility. Therefore, Arab Gulf countries understand this responsibility and have undertaken to educate their citizens by virtue of home and overseas educational programmes so that future generations will be experts in different

fields of knowledge (Schvaneveldt et al., 2005). Providing government scholarships is one programme that encourages both male and female undergraduate and graduate students to seek qualifications and to gain skills overseas (Gauntlett, 2005; Hamdan, 2005; Shabeeb, 1996). Western universities represent the main destination for Arabian Gulf students.

3.1.2 The Family

The Islamic view of education can be further explained by understanding how the Arab family emphasises a significant role in this issue. Arab family structure and solidarity seem to be fruitful terms for understanding issues that might confront Arab Muslim students when moving to study overseas. Family structure is moulded by Islamic identity and Arabian Gulf culture (Britto & Amer, 2007; Kamal & Maruyama, 1990). Both Islamic identity and the culture, which are closely interwoven, highlight the importance of the family, which represents the first and main unit in a society, and constrain individuals to maintain it (Britto & Amer, 2007; Mostafa, 2006). Mansouri and Percival-Wood (2008) explained that Arabs place “high value on ‘bonding social capital’, that is, the maintenance of family and kinship networks” (p. 66).

The importance of the extended family is promoted and generally insisted upon in Arabian Gulf countries (Kamal & Maruyama, 1990; Sarroub, 2010). The family represents an important aspect in Arab culture (Britto & Amer, 2007). The extended family reflects the importance of social networks that highlight integration and socialisation with one another in different ways, such as daily or weekly gatherings, visiting one another, and sharing moments of happiness and sadness (Alazzi & Chiodo, 2006; Meleis, 1982). The observance of such practices is also stressed by Islam, which urges its followers to show mercy and kindness towards close relatives and society more broadly (Mostafa, 2006). These distinctive characteristics provide insight into differences in values that Arab Muslim students may experience between their home countries and the new environment (Alazzi & Chiodo, 2006). Importantly, the relationship bond linking a family’s members can play a significant role in determining the educational decision of any member of the family.

Family solidarity is recognised as a significant, preeminent value among Arabs (Shaw, 2010). In Arab culture, the roles of both genders are based on mutual respect, rather, than equality (Aroian et al., 2006). Traditionally, Arab men work outside the home and are responsible for helping women to fulfil their wants and needs, whereas the role of women is to maintain the house (Aroian et al., 2006; Bahiss, 2008; McDermott-Levy, 2011; Schvaneveldt et al., 2005). Nevertheless, women are not obligated by Islam to devote themselves solely to keeping house. Ajrouch (2004) explained that Arab men view women as valuable and important, so they fulfil women's daily needs. Arab family structure explains how being alone can cause substantial challenges for an Arab woman who moves to a new country because of her inexperience in living independently. The way women are viewed in Islam and Arab culture is further detailed in the following section.

3.1.3 The View on Women

The status of women is one of the controversial issues to which Islam pays substantial attention. Islam values and recognises the status of women in human society by expressing great respect for them, acknowledging their personal rights, and emphasising that they have other rights equal to those of men (Hamdan, 2005; Mostafa, 2006). Islam frees women from living in subjugation and degradation (Baki, 2004). According to Islam, regardless of gender, individuals are spiritually equal in the sight of *Allah* (Mostafa, 2006; Roald, 2001). This equality is clear in terms of rights and responsibilities such as seeking education (Baki, 2004; Hamdan, 2005; Schvaneveldt et al., 2005).

In Arab culture, women are seen as valuable individuals representing high ideals and bringing honour to the family and society as a whole. By looking more closely into Arab culture, which includes "the family structure, cultural norms related to gender role differences, and cultural values related to sexual behaviour of males and females" (Kulwicki, 2002, p. 84), it can be seen that the culture articulates the way in which honour is associated with women and how men are obligated to maintain and protect the honour and reputation of the family (McDermott-Levy, 2011; Schvaneveldt et al., 2005). Arab men define their connection to women through the concept of the "protection of femininity"

(Archer, 2002, p. 366). Interaction between the sexes is the most restricted sphere in Arab culture (Carty et al., 2007).

Consequently, strict segregation of the sexes attempts to protect the pride and honour of the family and is directly related to the term *ird* (chastity) (Baki, 2004). Arabs are sensitive on the subject of *ird*, which is more structured around women than men (Baki, 2004). Hence, protection of the family's honour and protection of women from public view is maintained and the disclosure of women's identities and voices to strangers is not encouraged (Jamjoom, 2010). These restrictions may affect women's opportunities to study either at home or abroad in a context of mixed-gender education. For example, restrictions on women's education abroad may be linked with the character of the Arabian family, which views women's education abroad as a threat to traditional norms and affecting family honour (Hamdan, 2005; Schvaneveldt et al., 2005).

The high value and protection of women can be related to the Arabic word *awra*, which illustrates how Arab culture appreciates and values modesty. Jamjoom (2010) explained that *awra* is used to "designate something extremely private, including private body parts" (p. 548). Boulanouar (2006) linked the concept of *awra* with the general Islamic concept of modesty that lays down guidelines for both men and women in showing their private body parts, engaging in intimate relationships, and interacting with the opposite sex. El Guindi (1981) takes the term modesty further and understands it "in terms of cross-sex interaction and sexual identity" (p. 474). This concept of modesty relies on Islamic identity which pays great attention to the interaction and relationships between the sexes, mentors their socialisation, maintains gender role behaviours, and systematises interaction between the sexes, whether or not within the same family (Schvaneveldt et al., 2005).

For example, both men and women are obligated to maintain the rules of social interaction, such as wearing proper dress, avoiding handshakes and hugs, not being in a private location without a third party, keeping eyes away from the opposite sex, and avoiding free social intermingling between the sexes (Bahiss, 2008; Boulanouar, 2006; Dagkas & Benn, 2006). The emphatic warning against mixing the sexes is based on the desire to prevent "seduction and the evil

consequences that might follow” (Baki, 2004, p. 3). The strong Islamic cultural emphasis on gendered segregation may inhibit the interaction and communication of Arab Muslim students with others in the West.

The separation of genders must also be considered in the educational context. Islam and cultural principles define the whole process of education and learning in Gulf countries so as to determine “what is learnt by whom, when, where and how for every Muslim” (Kniffka, 1992, p. 77). Although mixed education has been introduced at all levels of education, including, elementary, secondary, high school, and university, it is not common in public education in Gulf countries, especially in Saudi Arabia (Bahiss, 2008; Baki, 2004). Introducing mixed education raises some disagreement among the public as they view it as contradicting Islamic teachings. Thus, in a lecture on contemporary challenges for university students, *Sheikh* Ahmed, the Grand Mufti of Oman, highlighted the importance of the segregation of males and females at all levels of education by presenting evidence from the *Hadeeth* (words of the Prophet) and supporting his discourse by mentioning that there is a tendency in the West to avoid mixed education (Al Khalili, 2011, October 4). He criticised the contradiction that exists between what Islam says and the way it is actually practised by Muslims, “which is exactly like the contradiction between the theory and practice” (Mostafa, 2006, p. 42).

Religious and cultural reasons can determine female Muslim students’ educational choices (Tyrer & Ahmad, 2006). Jamjoom (2010) illustrated how the education of Saudi women is affected by a number of factors

Women’s education in Saudi Arabia is strictly controlled by the *ulama* (Islamic scholars) and is impacted by a prominent gender ideology or ideal image of the Muslim Saudi Arabian woman that is sustained by the state, by society and by the *ulama* (p. 548).

Until 2002, female education in that country was overseen by The General Presidency for Girls’ Education, heavily influenced by Islamic scholars, and then was amalgamated with the Ministry of Education (Baki, 2004; Hamdan, 2005; Prokop, 2003). Saudi Islamic scholars play a significant role in determining

policies in women's education and the role of women in public life (Prokop, 2003). The exclusion of Saudi women from the public sphere in areas such as education and social participation, and the high level of restriction on any type of interaction among nonrelatives, is based on culture and idiosyncratic interpretations of Islamic teachings, which may contradict other Islamic views towards women (Baki, 2004; Hamdan, 2005; Schvaneveldt et al., 2005).

Interpreting *awra* in relation to women to mean that they are a source of evil and must, therefore, be covered and excluded from social life, as some Arabs unreasonably understand the word, contradicts the Islamic view of women that treats them with dignity and respect. According to the *Qur'an* and the *Hadith*, women are not excluded from public life (Baki, 2004). For example, the Islamic *hijab* is never an impediment that bars women from all educational opportunities (Hamdan, 2005). Although religious views might influence cultural norms (Ajrouch, 2004), it is important to differentiate between "the normative teachings of Islam and the diverse cultural practices among Muslims" (Hamdan, 2005, p. 53).

To conclude, Islamic identity is a significant factor that guides Muslims in their daily lives. It is based on primary sources: the *Qur'an* and *Sunnah* and secondary sources: *Ijmaa* and *Qiyaas*, and is influenced by Islamic foundations. The development of a Muslim Islamic identity is a dynamic process due to the interactions of Muslims in their social lives. Yet, Islam's main foundations and principles remain unchanging. In line with this view and in the context of this study, reconstructing and renegotiating Islamic identity does not mean constructing the Islamic identity itself but, rather, denotes the way Arab Muslim students understand their identity in the light of their interactions and communications in New Zealand academic and social contexts. This reconstruction and renegotiation of Islamic identity also affects Islamic views of Muslims studying and living in non-Muslim communities and, thus, what changes to their identities they may undergo as a result of their intercultural communication experiences. This process of reconstruction and renegotiation of identity can be further explained and elaborated through previous studies that

focus on Arab/Muslim students' experiences in Western social and academic contexts.

3.2 The Intercultural Communication Experiences of Arab/Muslim Students in Western Social and Academic Contexts

Understanding Arab Muslim students' experiences in their intercultural communication with non-Muslims in Western societies requires an examination of their initial impressions upon arrival in these countries. The focus here is to address the main social and academic issues which involve encountering homesickness and experiencing the new educational system that these students encounter in their new environment that are affected by cultural differences, and to understand how these students are able to manage these issues.

3.2.1 Culture Shock

Culture shock is an emotional reaction that is due to an inability to predict and anticipate the behaviours of others. The results of cross-cultural transitions can cause anxiety and stress (Fritz, Chin, & DeMarinis, 2008; Wadsworth, Hecht, & Jung, 2008), and refusal of certain, or even all, aspects of the host culture (Novera, 2004). One of the main causes of this anxiety and stress can be the existence of a very great mismatch and dissimilarity in values between the home culture and the host culture (Fritz et al., 2008; Mehdizadeh & Scott, 2005; Pedersen, Neighbors, Larimer, & Lee, 2011), as is the case between the Arab Islamic culture and the culture of the West (Bahiss, 2008; Mostafa, 2006).

Studies of international students, including Arab/Muslim students, found that culture shock is the first challenge that is experienced upon arrival in the host culture. It is more likely to occur when individuals come to live in a culture different to their own (Moore, 2008; Novera, 2004). Scholars have found that international students experience culture shock as a result of interacting with the host culture (Berry, 2005), losing their own cultural identity (Henry et al., 2009), missing familiar surroundings and signs of social intercourse (Duderija, 2007; McDermott-Levy, 2011; Oberg, 2006), and seeing new and different norms, modes of behaviour, values, and customs (Alazzi & Chiodo, 2006; Beaver, 2008; Henry et al., 2009).

Interpersonal relationships are affected by culture. Thus, when Arab Muslim students move from their home culture to the New Zealand culture, they will encounter different values and norms that challenge their adjustment to the country. Culture shock can be experienced either on or off university campuses (Bahiss, 2008). Previous studies have mentioned that Arab students might face the symptoms of culture shock, which consist of experiencing homesickness and value differences, and encountering learning and language difficulties (Midgley, 2009a; Moores, 2008; Novera, 2004; Oberg, 2006). The coming two subsections focus on these two issues in detail and explain how different values and educational systems are substantial elements that evoke homesickness and shock.

3.2.1.1 Homesickness and Value Differences

Homesickness is the first component of culture shock. It is an emotion that international students experience when they first arrive in the new culture (Hendrickson, Rosen, & Aune, 2011). Homesickness can be caused by missing family, friends, and familiar values in the new culture (Oberg, 2006). For American people in Egypt, missing the social relationships with family and friends caused a sense of irritation (Henry et al., 2009). Arab Jordanian male and Omani married female students felt homesickness and were upset because they were far away from their families (Alazzi & Chiodo, 2006; McDermott-Levy, 2008). Midgley (2009) argued that international students are likely to face homesickness in a host culture because of cultural distance. Cultural distance refers to significant differences in language, and religious and cultural values, norms and customs (Pedersen et al., 2011; Yang et al., 2006).

Cultural distance between the home and host values is a predictable factor that increases the difficulty of cultural adjustment for international students (Henry et al., 2009; Mostafa, 2006). Two studies found that Arab Muslim students encountered difficulty in incorporating American and Canadian values and behaviours into their cultural identity because of the huge cultural and value differences (Britto & Amer, 2007; Mostafa, 2006). The significant differences between Arab Muslim students' own, and the New Zealand, cultures will be an influential factor that affects the residency experiences of these students.

Value and cultural differences can make the practice and maintenance of Arab students' identities, and their ability to respect their Islamic moral codes in a Western context, very hard (Bigelow, 2008; Karim-Tessem, 2008; Mohammed-Arif, 2000). Arab/Muslim students were dissatisfied with their own practice of or adherence to Islam in the face of an environment that did not support these efforts (Kopp, 2002). For example, one study found that Omani female students who studied in America were disappointed with the way things were conducted, such as no proper call to prayer, no dispensation for prayer during *Ramadan*, and no acknowledgement of this very important month in the wider society (McDermott-Levy, 2011).

Missing mosques was a specific issue that male Arab/Muslim students mentioned in regard to living in the West. For Muslims living in the diaspora, continuity of cultural and religious practices is very important (Zine, 2001). Mosques, as Islamic institutions, are not only a place to perform prayers and to preserve Islamic heritage; they also function as an important locus for conducting social gatherings, socialising, and feeling connected with friends. The place and role of the mosque takes on a great emphasis for Muslims after living in a non-Muslim country (Kopp, 2002; Mostafa, 2006). Studies found that the roles of mosques in non-Muslim countries involve strengthening Muslims' solidarity, conducting Islamic lessons, holding social gathering ceremonies and activities, teaching Muslims Islamic knowledge, and supporting adults in dealing with certain controversial or difficult questions, such as integrating with others, wearing the headscarf, dealing with sexual issues, and understanding drug, alcohol, and single-parent family problems (Mohammed-Arif, 2000; Munawar, 1997; Witteborn, 2004). In this sense, "the mosque provides a safe, social environment where [Muslims] can be socialised free from the risks of assimilation into the dominant culture" (Salih, 2004, p. 1003). Most importantly, asserting religious teachings can be a significant method for Muslims to avoid "Americanization [or Westernization]" (Mohammed-Arif, 2000, p. 68). Thus, the difficulty in performing prayers, and meeting and socialising with friends due to lack of mosques, can be a disadvantage for Arab Muslim students.

Previous studies mention that Arab Muslim students view some Western behaviour as strange. It is common for newcomers to experience uncertainty, anxiety, and disorientation in the face of the host culture's behaviours, values, and norms (Fritz et al., 2008; Wadsworth et al., 2008). This confusion can be exaggerated by conflict and tension, and by the fact that no overlap exists between Islamic and Western values (Ahmad & Szpara, 2003; Liederman, 2000).

Differences in social values negatively affect Arab Muslim students' experiences in the social context (Abukhattala, 2004; Gauntlett, 2005; Mostafa, 2006; Suliman & McInerney, 2006). Studies reported that the drinking of alcohol, unavailability of *halal* food, and public displays of affection represented the most significant concerns for Arab/Muslim students within the mainstream culture (Fallon & Bycroft, 2009; McDermott-Levy, 2008; Midgley, 2009; Novera, 2004).

Moving to a dominant westernised culture that allows liberty of dressing, and the normalisation of public displays of affections, can be of great concern for Arab students. For example, the dress norms for women in New Zealand are totally different from those for women in the Gulf countries. Boulanouar (2006) discussed the Islamic view of modesty, which involves defining which body parts may be exposed publically or privately and outlining the rules of watching or performing intimate acts. According to both Islamic and Arab cultural points of view, the display of intimate relationships, hugging and kissing across sexes may not occur in public. Thus, seeing these behaviours in the West fundamentally clashes with Arab/Muslim students' values and norms, impacting on their experiences with the host culture and creating tensions in their identities (McDermott-Levy, 2008).

Missing familiar values and seeing the unfamiliar, dominant behavioural norms may negatively affect the intercultural communication experiences of Arab students. The priority of maintaining their own identity by Arab/Muslim students can be a significant factor that inhibits their intercultural communication experience with others. Cainkar (2002) found that their religious identity is understood by Muslims as a guideline for living their lives and a way of being in the West. The priority of the maintenance of one's own identity did not allow Saudi students to fit smoothly into the Australian culture, which impacted their

interactions with others (Midgley, 2009). Showing strong adherence to “heritage culture maintenance” (Ruggiero, Taylor, & Lambert, 1996, p. 47) means that Muslims reject the host identity by choice (Schmidt, 2004). Rejecting socialisation, refusing enjoyable activities, and preferring isolation are manifestations of homesickness and culture shock (Hendrickson et al., 2011; Pedersen et al., 2011).

3.2.1.2 Experiencing a New Educational System

Culture shock is not restricted to the social context. Rather, studies indicate that international students also encounter this issue in the academic context when they experience a different educational system. Scholars have found that the different educational style significantly affects Arab Muslim students’ experiences in the learning context (Abukhattala, 2004; Gauntlett, 2005; Mostafa, 2006; Suliman & McInerney, 2006). Significant differences in educational style and language cause Arab Muslim students to be less communicative and less interactive with others (Meleis, 1982). A lack of proficiency in English was found to be one significant factor that impacts the educational interaction experiences of Arab Muslim Australian students, particularly those from a Lebanese background (Mansouri & Percival-Wood, 2008). Inadequate proficiency in English conversation skills fundamentally affects international students in their communication with both host country and other international students (Mostafa, 2006), and impacts their adaptation and participation in social and academic contexts (Novera, 2004; Oikonomidoy, 2007). The students may lack awareness of “cultural cues [that are] necessary for communication, such as eye contact, body space, and body language” (Alazzi & Chiodo, 2006, p. 68).

For Arab learners of English, Rabab’ah (2005) argued that speaking in English is a common difficulty. In-depth interviews were conducted among eight Jordanian male graduate students, who were purposefully selected, at a well-known South-Western university in America to examine their educational and language problems and their coping strategies (Alazzi & Chiodo, 2006). The study found that language was a major obstacle that worked to limit these students’ interaction and communication with local students. This finding also emerged among 85 male Saudi Arabian university and college students in America who had less

contact and interaction with American people and students due to language difficulties and so, preferred to socialise and communicate with their own nationality, Arabic speaking Muslims, and any other Muslims (Alreshoud & Koeske, 1997).

A lack of proficiency in language plays a critical role in face-to-face communication. Mostafa (2006) pointed out that good oral communication skills are important for university students to achieve successful academic and social engagement. Thus, a lack of language is recognised by international university students as an obstacle that affects their intercultural experiences (Moores, 2008). Further, facing difficulty in understanding the host nation student accents minimises overseas students' interaction and communication and also alienates them (Alazzi & Chiodo, 2006). Ko (2008) noted that the language obstacle impedes and restricts international students' intercultural communication, especially with host students. Studies of international/Muslim/Arab students highlighted that the local accent and the use of slang were the two instances that drove these students into self-imposed social isolation (Gunel, 2007; Holmes, 2000; Midgley, 2010). Educational system differences and language difficulties are two issues that significantly impact Arab students' lived experiences, their social interactions, and their relationships with the host people and students.

A different structure of student-student relationship is another issue that Arab Muslim students encounter in the West. In the West, Arab/Muslim students experience particular academic challenges, such as learning in a mixed class (which is not encouraged in Islam), undertaking group work with a mixed gender group of students, interacting with the opposite sex, and having eye contact with others (Ahmad & Szpara, 2003; Asmar, 2000; Elnour & Bashir-Ali, 2003; Nasir & Al-Amin, 2006; Speck, 1997). Communicating with the opposite sex is a critical concern for Arabian Gulf students who are used to studying in a single-sex education environment.

In fact, coeducational schools in Islam are not allowed and Muslims are not encouraged to have eye contact with nonrelated members of the opposite sex. *Allah* (God) says (Chapter 33, verse 53), "or: when ye ask (his ladies) for anything ye want, ask them from before a screen: that makes for greater purity for

your hearts and for theirs” (Ali, 2008, p. 516). Islamic scholars have interpreted this verse to mean that mixing between the sexes is prohibited. Physical contact between males and females who are not *mahram* (the category of people one cannot marry) is against Islamic morality (Zine, 2001).

Cultural and religious identity can be an important aspect influencing the intercultural communication of Arab/Muslim students with others. For example, Dagkas and Benn (2006) interviewed 20 Asian university female Muslim students and found that culture and religion excluded or limited these students’ interactions with non-Muslims, and controlled their out-of-school educational and social activities. The influence of religious identity on determining interaction and communication with the opposite sex is also obvious in a New Zealand university study. Bahiss (2008) interviewed female Muslim students and found that participating, interacting, and having eye contact with male classmates and teachers were the most profound challenges that these females faced within academic contexts. Thus, a preference for the same gender might be a choice for these students. Two studies reported that Arab Muslim students in American and Canadian universities had less interaction and communication with the opposite sex and preferred to work with those of their own gender (Abukhattala, 2004; Shaw, 2010).

3.2.2 Recovery from Culture Shock

Experiencing value differences and encountering different educational systems cause culture shock. This shock requires mitigation and that mitigation takes many forms and differs from one person to another. Oberg (2006) explained that “individuals differ greatly in the degree in which culture shock affects them” (p. 143). These different influences impact on the ability of individuals to manage culture shock and to adjust to the new environment. The connection to their own families and the establishment of social networks with conational students are positive strategies that assist international students to manage cultural stresses. Oberg (2006) pointed out that facing many crises in the host culture leads students to prefer connecting with their own group of students. The connection with conational students is a good strategy that helps international students enjoy their own cultures and speak their own languages. However, the strategy does not

always work as Omani female students, who had to live with other Omani roommates, experienced difficult moments living with groups of students from their own culture too (McDermott-Levy, 2008).

There is a close link between keeping contact with one's own people and accommodating culture shock. A study found that international university students were able to manage cross-cultural transitions by staying connected to their roots, such as the family, and receiving support from peers, friends and conational students (Moore, 2008). Other studies found that international students relied on their families for social support to mitigate their stress by keeping in contact with them. For example, married female Omani students used phones and texting to seek permission from their families to conduct certain daily activities such as visiting places (McDermott-Levy, 2008). Maintaining contact with family by phoning them or writing letters was also a strategy to mitigate homesickness for male Jordanian students (Alazzi & Chiodo, 2006). Using new technology, the strategy of physical contact with families and friends was commonly employed by international/Arab/Muslim students to remind themselves of the home identity, to seek family advice, and to manage homesickness (Hendrickson et al., 2011; McDermott-Levy, 2008, 2011; Moore, 2008; Zhang & Zhou, 2010).

Cultural learning is also a constructive strategy towards coping with culture shock. Learning English is one form of cultural learning. By perceiving the new language as not threatening their own identities, the minority students are able to manage the discontinuity that exists in the dominant culture (Sarroub, 2010). Oberg (2006) suggested that knowing the language is the basic way to manage shock as it assists with intergroup communication. Ability with English skills was found to be a factor that determined Korean sojourners' relationships and interactions with North American people (Beaver, 2008). Allowing and encouraging international students to practise their English by hosting them in homestays minimised their stress and promoted their intercultural communication (McDermott-Levy, 2008).

For international students, living in a homestay situation can be a great opportunity to practise English and to connect with host nation people. Being accepted by the host people is a significant element in acquiring "the necessary

cultural capital” (Zine, 2001, p. 410). Active involvement with host people enhances students’ understanding of the cultural capital and assists them in the way of belonging (Oikonomidou, 2007). Scholars have suggested that living with host families promotes intergroup contact and enables intercultural communication opportunities (Brown, 2009; Pedersen et al., 2011; Spencer-Rodgers, 2002).

Increasing social interactions with local people and students through social activities certainly helps international students to use language and to cope with loneliness and homesickness (Alazzi & Chiodo, 2006). By living in homestays, international students are able to establish a connection with the host nation’s people, start knowing them, and establish social networks (Oberg, 2006). This connection allows the creation of constructive interaction and empathic relationships between international students and the host nation’s people, which facilitates a path of integration, a method of sharing interests, and encourages involvement in activities (Moore, 2008). It also promotes effective intercultural communication and eliminates uncertain contacts among intergroup peoples (Gudykunst & Nishida, 2001; Hubbert, Gudykunst, & Guerrero, 1999; Spencer-Rodgers, 2002). These activities enhance levels of engagement and enable “bridging social capital [which] refers to contacts between people of different backgrounds in terms of age, gender, ethnicity, education, socio-economic status and locality” (Mansouri & Percival-Wood, 2008, p. 67).

In summary, this review has indicated that culture shock is the first impression that some Arab Muslim students may experience upon arrival Western countries. The cultural distance and the mismatch of values contribute to the significant difficulties faced by newcomer students. The literature highlights that there are main symptoms of culture shock that Arab Muslim students such as my participants might face in both social and academic contexts. These symptoms involve experiencing homesickness, encountering different values, learning in a new educational system, and facing language difficulties. Studies suggest that missing the support of social networks, like families and friends, and losing the spiritual aspects of their Islamic identity are critical factors for Arab Muslim students confronting homesickness.

Given these significant differences, what motivating factors encourage Arab Muslim students to seek education abroad? Importantly, there is no clear acknowledgment, and even some uncertainty, about whether encountering homesickness influences Arab Muslim students' experiences in interacting and communicating with host people and affects their cultural and religious identities. This review has demonstrated that students' cultural and religious identity might restrict their interaction and communication with others, but it does not identify how Arab/Muslim students might start negotiating these identities in order to manage the new cultural issues.

The physical structure of Western classrooms which promote mixing can be a great disadvantage for Arab Muslim students, who are used to learning in a single-sex educational environment. Given the differences in the educational systems that were mentioned in this review, it is of interest to understand how Arab Muslim students manage their presence in a Western educational setting and enhance their intercultural communication with others. In particular, this review has not examined one important aspect, which is how educational institutions' practices may influence the negotiation process of students' identities.

The preceding studies have emphasised that significant contact with both conational students and local people is an important theme. Being proficient in the English language as a strategy of cultural learning was found to be a critical factor in promoting intercultural communication. However, this strategy is influenced by other elements, such as living with host people, showing an acceptance of the host norms and values, and minimising connections with same national students by trying to meet more locals. These issues need further investigation in order to understand how Arab Muslim students negotiate their identities to manage their interaction and communication with others. Thus, studying the experiences of Arab Muslim students in their cross-cultural transition and intercultural communication is fruitful.

3.3 Being Arab and Muslim in the West

This section reviews being Arab and Muslim in Western social and academic contexts. The first impressions of these students in the West can be one of stress

that is evoked by mismatch values. Over time, different values and norms extend the gap between the groups and make being in a minority group a challenge. In presenting studies that focus on both male and female Arab/Muslim students, this section demonstrates the general experiences of being Arab Muslim students in both the university and community arenas. The reviewed studies examine three main areas: cultural misunderstandings, negotiating two cultures, and the wearing of headscarves. The first area focuses on cultural and religious misunderstandings that Arab Muslim students face in the West. It reveals the main causes and consequences of these misconceptions. The second area examines how cultural and religious values guide Arab Muslim students in their interactions and communications with others, and how these students attempt to negotiate two cultures by retaining their own identities and accepting host norms in order to fit into the new culture. The final area concerns the experience of Arab Muslim female students in relation to the issue of dress code, and provides religious legitimation and clear definition around the issue.

3.3.1 Cultural and Religious Misunderstandings

Misunderstandings and misperceptions about Islam represent one of the most significant challenges that Arab/Muslim students confront in the West. Abu El-Haj (2006) highlighted the point that being misunderstood and misrecognised are the biggest problems for these students in the West. The general misunderstanding and ignorance of Islam result in viewing the culture as an opposite to “Judeo-Christian culture” (Croucher, 2011, p. 61), as a “clash of civilisation” (Pevey & McKenzie, 2009, p. 2), and seeing Islam as a threat to the “free world” (Mansouri & Percival-Wood, 2008, p. 25) and an opponent of “freedom and democracy” (Abu El-Haj, 2006, p. 17). Nevertheless, the root of the word Islam means peace in the Arabic language, and Islamic scholars understand Islam as a tolerant religion that recognises other civilisations and promotes both harmony and peace; however, the reality is that there are some Muslims whose “arrogance and ignorance were key elements in reflecting the false image of true Islam” (Bangura, 2004, p. 2).

Recent global events and crises have generated a climate of fear against Arabs and Muslims and have increased cultural misunderstandings of Islam (Faragallah et al.,

1997; Mansouri, 2004; Pevey & McKenzie, 2009; Rich & Troudi, 2006). Fahlman (1985) connected cultural misunderstandings with Middle Eastern political and social crises. As Cainkar (2002) emphasised, the September 11, 2001 event became a milestone in reporting incidents and misunderstandings that profoundly targeted Arabs and Muslims in America. Political and social incidents that surround Arab Muslims all over the world extend the gap exponentially between them and others and make it more difficult for them to be accepted (Croucher, 2011, 2013; Faragallah et al., 1997).

Since the 1980s, the media has frequently referred to “the alleged danger of Islam” and this approach has increased since the events of 9/11 (Shadid & Koningsveld, 2002, p. 174). The Islamophobia concept is used to spread fear amongst the Western public towards Muslims (Kabir, 2010; Mansouri & Percival-Wood, 2008; Mansouri & Trembath, 2005; Nesbitt-Larking, 2007; Yun, 2010). Rich and Troudi (2006) broadly defined the term as “an irrational fear of Muslims” (p. 617), which has increasingly been found in the media. The Western media both explicitly and implicitly occupies “a central role in the spreading and preserving of negative images of Islam and its followers” (Shadid & Koningsveld, 2002, p. 188).

The media links terrorism with the Islamic faith, and associates it with the Muslim community (Kabir & Bourk, 2012; Pevey & McKenzie, 2009). It portrays Islam as a religion that encourages criminalisation (Mansouri & Trembath, 2005), is “bloodthirsty”, and provides rationalisations for terrorist events (Mansouri & Percival-Wood, 2008, p. 26). Dagkas and Benn (2006) agreed that the media reports events that “link terrorism and fundamentalism to Islam and all Muslims” (p. 26). Cainkar (2002) explained that the group that is most commonly stereotyped and negatively portrayed is Arab Muslims. For example, studies found that both male and female Arab Muslim students perceived the media as an essential element that vilifies and misrepresents their cultural and religious identities, and increases instances of racism because of their Islamic dress such as the *hijab* (Mansouri, 2004; Mansouri & Trembath, 2005; Oikonomidou, 2007).

In Australia and New Zealand, the media also contributes to framing negative attitudes for the host people against Muslims. The Australian media tends to link

either the word Arab or Muslim with terrorist, and to ignore Muslims or disconnect their activities from the society, and to view them as a problematic group which is a source of threat to the society (Mansouri & Percival-Wood, 2008; Poynting & Noble, 2004). The New Zealand media reporting of Muslims and Islam has largely contributed to cultural misunderstandings and stereotypes of Muslims and significantly encouraged discriminatory behaviours against Muslim women (Kabir, 2010; Kabir & Bourk, 2012; Veelenturf, 2006).

For example, one study critically and discursively analyses the publications of the New Zealand mainstream press from October 28 to November 18, 2005 with regard to the French Muslim minority's issues of multiculturalism, assimilation, ethnicity, and Islamic fundamentalism and race relations (Kabir, 2010). The study reported that Islam and Muslims are associated with violence, fundamentalism, and radicalism, and reported an impression that Islam is an issue which ultimately stimulates the social discrimination against Muslims. Another study analysed three New Zealand mainstream newspapers from October 2005 and September 2006 covering the issues of the Indonesian Bali bombing incident, the Middle Eastern conflict, the Iranian nuclear power issue, and the London bomb scare at Heathrow airport (Kabir & Bourk, 2012). The study found that the New Zealand mainstream press framed the Islamic religion and the Muslim community as threatening and untrustworthy. It seems that Arabs/Muslims are victimised on account of their religious and cultural affiliations.

As a result, the image of Arabs/Muslims in Europe and other Western countries has been constructed through fear, misconception, and stereotypes connected to their cultural and religious identities (Bigelow, 2008; Cankar, 2002; Kabir, 2010; Mansouri, 2004; Mansouri & Kamp, 2007; Mansouri & Percival-Wood, 2008; Naber, 2000; Suliman & McInerney, 2006; Veelenturf, 2006). For example, Ahmad and Szpara (2003) reported that "misperceptions and negative stereotypes about Islam and Muslim values are pervasive in [some American schools] and ... [Muslim students] are affected by them" (p. 298). In America, a negative image surrounds Arab/Muslim men, who are seen as "barbaric terrorists" (p. 45), and Arab/Muslim women who are portrayed as "a supra-oppressed group of women

[and this oppression is] rooted in an oppressive Islamic culture which controls women” (Naber, 2000, pp. 44-45).

Thus, both Arab Muslim students are identified by non-Muslims “through visual markers of difference like all Arabs are terrorists and especially girls with scarves” (Mansouri & Trembath, 2005, p. 519). Croucher (2008) found that being different in practising religious rituals, wearing clothes and speaking the Arabic language evoked fear among British and French people. This negative image leads to the emergence of “the [Arab] Muslim Other” (Kabir & Bourk, 2012, p. 2; Poynting & Noble, 2004, p. 4), which in particular creates for Arab Muslim students an educational disengagement (Shah, 2009) and leads to intergroup anxiety (Croucher, 2013). So, the students act in a way of “identity resistance, maintenance and consolidation” (Duderija, 2007, p. 147) to counter religious discrimination and ultimately to minimise the social contact with non-Muslims (Larsson, 2006). It seems that fear and stereotypes are racially and religiously associated with minorities in the mainstream culture.

There is a link between cultural misunderstandings and less interaction. Research investigating the experiences of Muslim students in different learning contexts concluded that Muslim students were regularly affected by absent knowledge about and misunderstandings of Islam (Ahmad & Szpara, 2003; Asmar, 2000; Elnour & Bashir-Ali, 2003; Nasir & Al-Amin, 2006). The result is that Arab students felt alienated, disengaged, and misrecognised in their classrooms and schools (Abu El-Haj, 2006). For example, Speck (1997) interviewed four male and female university students who reported less interaction with teachers and peers due to misunderstandings about Islamic practices and discussion of materials which included misperceptions about Islam and Muslims. Recently, an unstructured interview study conducted among 20 male and female Muslim students in American schools, who were born either in America or in Pakistan, reported experience of misperceptions and negative stereotypes, which negatively affected their interactions (Ahmad & Szpara, 2003).

3.3.1.1 Religious Discrimination

Encountering and experiencing cultural and religious misunderstandings in the dominant culture can evoke discrimination against minorities. Oikonomidou (2007) asserted that discrimination is among the most difficult issues that newcomer students experience in the host culture. Muslims have increasingly encountered discrimination in the West because of their cultural and religious identity (Britto, 2008). Shah (2009) confirmed that “Muslim learners feel that they are specific targets of discrimination, and they explain it as hostility directed towards their faith” (p. 178). They encounter anti-Muslimism as Shadid and Koningsveld (2002) acknowledge and highlighted

Anti-Muslimism is based on the thesis that the hostility voiced against Muslims is directed mainly against Muslims as a group of people and not against Islam as such, and that the anti-propaganda does not consist of strictly religious elements, but is mixed with spurious rhetoric and other murky ideologies (p. 175).

Shadid and Koningsveld (2002) discussed two forms of anti-Muslimism: “a ‘strategic’ and a ‘populist’ variant” (p. 175). They explain that strategic anti-Muslimism is predominant in the U.S. with regard to terrorist issues, whereas populist anti-Muslimism is common in Western European countries and it is mainly concerned with issues associated with the increased presence of Muslims in these countries in areas such as assimilation, integration, and veiling. Studies found that Arab/Muslim/students in America, Australia, Canada, England, France, and Sweden experience both types of anti-Muslimism and they had a hard time in light of Islamophobia, experienced racial and other harsh discrimination, and encountered incidents of racial vilification, attack, and social exclusion because of their language, cultural, religious, and gendered identities (Asmar, 2000; Bigelow, 2008; Croucher, 2008, 2008; Kabir, 2010; Larsson, 2006; Mansouri & Percival-Wood, 2008; Novera, 2004; Poynting & Noble, 2004; Rich & Troudi, 2006; Tyrer & Ahmad, 2006; Zine, 2001).

Discrimination instances against Arab/Muslim students created “new racisms, which use different metaphors to marginalise and exclude certain social groups

based on more than just biological traits” (Rich & Troudi, 2006, p. 617). As new racism, Islamophobia emerged when discrimination based on religion, ethnicity, or race occurs (Bigelow, 2008; Croucher, 2008). Feelings of vulnerability and discrimination are associated with being visible and wearing a headdress (Britto, 2008; Novera, 2004; Tyrer & Ahmad, 2006; Zine, 2001). Oikonomidou (2007) conducted observation and focus groups among seven refugee Muslim Somali female students who studied in a U.S. urban school and found that these females suffered religious discrimination because of their *hijab* visibility. Verbal discrimination was experienced by Muslim women because of their dress in both Australian and New Zealand academic and social contexts (Bahiss, 2008; Mansouri, 2004; Veelenturf, 2006). These studies provide clear evidence that by adopting Islamic dress in the West, Muslim females suffer an increase in discrimination, exclusion, and limitation of contact (Dagkas & Benn, 2006).

Therefore, the cultural identity of Arabs/Muslims in the West becomes salient. Witteborn (2004) explained that “cultural identity is more salient when group identity is challenged” (p. 84). A study examined how five Arab women, of whom two were Muslims, negotiated their communal identities in America before and after September 11 and found that, whereas before the event, the women identified themselves as Arab along with their national country, after the event they ignored their affiliation with Arabic descent and emphasised only their national country identity (Witteborn, 2004). The women had to change their types of self-identification, even though they preferred being identified as an Arab, in order to mitigate the social exclusion, threats, and discrimination that have occurred since the events of September 11 (Cainkar, 2002). In America and Australia, Arabs/Muslims reported significantly increased incidents of racism, abuse, threats, violence, and suspicion against them since September 11, 2001 in both social and academic contexts (Cainkar, 2002; Poynting & Noble, 2004). Shadid and Koningsveld (2002) highlighted that presenting Islam in a negative way as a threat to Western societies will increase discrimination against Muslims and will instigate negative effects in intercultural relations and interactions between Muslims and non-Muslims.

In the educational context, the experience of discrimination can impact the interaction between Arab/Muslim students and others. Significant contact with host people can emerge in the educational context; however, this context can also evoke social incidents of discrimination, which imposes on the integration experience of minority students (Bigelow, 2008; Oikonomidou, 2007). Britto (2008) pointed out that cultural misunderstandings and discrimination contribute to Arab students' isolation and decreased interaction and communication with others. Facing discrimination and encountering fewer educational integration opportunities are external barriers to the promotion of bridging social capital (Mansouri & Percival-Wood, 2008). Studies have found that Arab/Muslim students have less opportunity to interact and become involved with academic activities and to work with others in group assignments because of religious discrimination (Asmar, 2000; Elnour & Bashir-Ali, 2003; Mansouri, 2004).

The visibility of Arab Muslim students plays a significant role in discouraging their interaction and communication with others. One survey conducted among 175 Muslim students (93 females and 82 males) to understand their academic experiences in Australian universities found that females had more negative experiences than males because of their visibility (Asmar et al., 2004). These socially negative experiences motivate Muslim students to react differently towards people in the dominant culture. This reaction involves questioning their Islamic and cultural identities by rethinking the concept of modesty, interacting with the opposite sex with certain limitations, and asserting their own identities in terms of values and principles (Cole & Ahmadi, 2003; Zine, 2001). The headscarf is discussed in more detail in section 3.3.3.

3.3.2 Negotiating Two Cultures

Negotiating between two cultures or spaces that often seem incompatible is a hard task for Arab Muslim students who live and study in Western institutions. Britto and Amer (2007) argued that navigating between home and mainstream cultures seems to be one of the critical tasks in cultural identity formation. Connections between home and school are determined by three types of cultural discontinuities: "universal, primary and secondary discontinuities" (Ogbu, 1982, p. 290). Universal discontinuity is experienced by all children regardless of their

backgrounds in any society (Ogbu, 1982). Whereas the primary discontinuity occurs among immigrants who are being introduced into a Western-type schooling but before any contact with the mainstream people, the secondary cultural discontinuity emerges “after members of two populations have been in contact or after members of a given population have begun to participate in an institution, such as the school system, controlled by another group” (Ogbu, 1982, p. 298). Arab Muslim students as a minority will experience secondary cultural discontinuity when moving to and studying in New Zealand because of the differences between their home and the New Zealand cultures. Sarroub (2010) explained that “these differences evolve as a response to a contact situation where stratified domination is the norm” (p. 79).

Living between two worlds can be difficult for Arab students who have to negotiate between their home cultural and religious identities, and the New Zealand identity. Two dimensions explain the process of negotiation: maintaining their own values, and having contact with the host culture. Where the cultural continuity dimension focuses on the process of maintaining one’s own cultural identity, the contact dimension highlights the degree of involvement with the host culture (Henry et al., 2009). Thus, negotiating two cultures might be possible for Arab Muslim students, but with extreme difficulties. Two studies found that negotiating the Arabic linguistic identity was a challenge for Arab children in New Zealand and Australia who are significantly influenced by the mainstream English language (Al-Sahafi, 2009; Mansouri & Percival-Wood, 2008).

Arab Muslim students understand their cultural and religious norms as guidance for their ways of life. Sarroub (2010) noted that one’s identity is determined by one’s religious affiliation. Islam is an important component in Arab Muslim students’ identities (Britto & Amer, 2007) in which Islam seems to be highly salient (Duderija, 2007). For Arab students, both religious and cultural affiliations define “expectations for behaviour and [are] a strong influence on the conceptualization of ethnic identity” (Britto, 2008, p. 856). An individual’s behaviour is influenced by ethnic identity (Croucher, Oommen, Borton, Anarbaeva, & Turner, 2010). Islam encourages its followers to attain good deeds

by retaining religious rituals and obligations, such as praying, fasting, observing good manners, and being a good Muslim, in order to be a success in this world and in the hereafter, as its main purpose (Jamjoom, 2010). These types of rules direct Arab Muslim students' behaviour and guide them to maintain their religious practices in the West (Sarroub, 2010).

By identifying themselves as Arab Muslim students, these students explicitly differentiate themselves from others who are not Arabs and Muslims. They use these words as a sign to mark their cultural identity from others that refers to "the identity of large-scale groups, such as nations, religions, or ethnic groups" (Mansouri & Kamp, 2007, p. 86). For these students, the new culture is a totally different environment that might challenge them to retain their own values and obligations. They may encounter "an inherent conflict between [their] Islamic values... and the liberal values promoted by Western societies" (Mansouri & Percival-Wood, 2008, p. 18). Studies reveal that Arab Muslim students experience conflict, tension, and contradiction between their own cultural and religious values and norms, and the host country's values (Fahlman, 1985; Sarroub, 2001).

Being a minority Arab Muslim in a dominant culture requires paying significant attention to one's own values and norms (Munawar, 1997). The situation is challenging for Arab students' identity formation in the West, as the interaction between their selves and the context exists (Britto, 2008). The issue is particularly salient for first and second generations of Arab/Muslim students who negotiate between their home and the mainstream, cultural values (Mansouri & Percival-Wood, 2008). Negotiating between ethnic and religious traditions for Arab/Muslim second and third generations can result in a "clash of cultures" (Duderija, 2007, p. 144). An empirical study was conducted among 150 second generation male and female Arab Muslim youth in the U.S. to assess their cultural identity and the role of their families in identity formation (Britto & Amer, 2007). The study found that these students were encouraged by their families to appreciate and maintain only their Arab Muslim identities rather than their American values, which resulted in a clash of values.

The clash of values can be severe for Arab/Muslim students as they "cannot be part-time Arabs/Muslims" (Ahmad & Szpara, 2003, p. 299). Negotiating the

conflicting cultural expectations of home and school can result in what has been called “the split personality syndrome” (Zine, 2001, p. 406). Elnour and Bashir-Ali (2003) reported that Muslim female school students experienced difficulty in interacting with others and were marginalised because of struggles between different norms in the host classroom and those of their families and ethnic communities. Emphasising the importance of cultural and religious values formalises Arab Muslims students’ daily action. Studies have examined the perceptions of Arab and Somali Muslim American students in public schools with regard to their physical appearance and behavioural conduct (Al-Khatab, 2000; De Voe, 2002). The two studies found that cultural and religious identities guided students’ appearance and behaviours in interacting with others, and females were more restricted in terms of dress code than males, which led to less integration. For Somali parents, the importance of the *hijab* relies on its ability to protect their daughters against the perceived loose morals in the host country (De Voe, 2002).

Studies have found that cultural and religious identity guide Arab Muslim students’ interaction with others. For example, Arab students in two Australian secondary schools encountered less comfortable interaction and engagement with other students and asked schools and teachers to facilitate an interactive environment (Mansouri, 2004). Despite their level of education, Arab Muslim university students consider their own values when interacting and socialising with non-Muslims. Older students tend to have a more secure/developed cultural identity than do adolescent students, who complain of a crisis of identity (Mansouri & Percival-Wood, 2008). Midgley (2010) conducted five small discussion groups with 10 male Saudi students to understand their experiences at an Australian university and found that students’ cultural and religious identities guide their behaviours in searching for *halal* food, greeting and interacting with others, and refusing host norms.

Limitation of interaction also involved conducting social gatherings and attending parties (Mohammed-Arif, 2000). For instance, Ahmad (2007) interviewed 35 South Asian female Muslim university students to examine their educational experiences and found that these students excluded themselves from drinking and clubbing activities. Rich and Troudi (2006) highlighted the role of Islamic identity

in guiding Arab Muslim students' interaction with others. Studies found that Islamic and cultural identities minimise Arab/Muslim students' contributions in drinking and clubbing activities, interacting and communicating with non-Muslims, and discussing certain topics, especially across genders (Ahmad, 2007; Mostafa, 2006; Tyrer & Ahmad, 2006). From this initial singular conceptualisation, cultural identity refers to "the juxtaposition of self and other in terms of self-identity and its relation to wider society" (Mansouri & Percival-Wood, 2008, p. 36). It seems that Arab/Muslim students highlight "the saliency of religious identification in diasporic settings as a means to mediate the dissonance and challenge of living in environments that were laced with conflicting cultural values and practices" (Zine, 2001, p. 402).

Being a female Arab Muslim in the West requires paying specific attention to cultural and religious values. Britto (2008) explained that "gender identity is also key to being an Arab Muslim, both influenced by and influencing how Arabs and Muslims are understood" (p. 856). For example, Ajrouch (2004) conducted three focus group discussions among 10 male and female Lebanese and Palestinian high school students to examine the role of gender relations and religious identity in negotiating their own values in America. The study found that although Islamic identity shaped and guided both genders' interaction and socialisation with others, girls were expected to pay more attention to maintaining Islamic and cultural values in behaving, interacting, socialising, and communicating in the dominant culture.

This result explains the significance of religion and culture in determining appropriate behaviour for girls. Girls are assigned behavioural expectations that are significantly different from those for boys (Britto, 2008). Studies have found that Arab Muslim parents were more proud of their daughters, who read the *Qur'an* and pray in America, than of their sons (Sarroub, 2010; Sarroub, 2001). Although both males and females are encouraged by their families to maintain their religious and cultural practices in the West, girls are more strongly urged to do so because girls reflect on the family's honour (Sarroub, 2010). A study which interviewed 20 Muslim male and female students in American schools found that girls felt more parental pressure to maintain dress and modesty (Ahmad & Szpara,

2003). Muslim parents tended to allow more freedom to and were more lenient with boys, who can take care of themselves, than with girls, who are viewed as vulnerable (Dagkas & Benn, 2006; Sarroub, 2001). Thus, girls are more likely to adhere more to cultural identity than boys (Mansouri & Percival-Wood, 2008).

There is a strong link between gender and the protection of the family's honour. Women are honoured and protected by Arab culture. Thus, men are encouraged by this culture to not disclose women's identities and to ensure that their physical dress covers their bodies (Jamjoom, 2010). Abukhattala (2004) illustrated that even though both Muslim women and men share equal duty and responsibility, in reality, it is often women who are expected by Arab culture to pay much more attention to Islamic and cultural rules. Ajrouch (2004) added that "maintain[ing] honour is central not only for the girl herself; it extends to other family members and to the community. Her actions are carefully scrutinised and, thus, she essentially becomes the measure of Arabness [or Muslimness]" (p. 383).

Thus, one responsibility of Arab/Muslim girls either in their homes or in the West is to uphold the family's honour (Aroian et al., 2006; Sarroub, 2010). For these girls, maintaining the family's honour and reputation means avoiding establishing a relationship with the opposite sex, avoiding sitting alone with a man who is not a relative, and keeping away from prohibited behaviours such as having a sexual relationship outside marriage or drinking alcohol (Ajrouch, 2004; Aroian et al., 2006). The enforcement of strictly observing and retaining Islamic practices and cultural norms by wearing the *hijab*, avoiding sexual interactions, and attending Islamic lectures where they can gain Islamic knowledge and discuss female issues, results in "a gendered notion of identity" (Sarroub, 2010, p. 85).

Ajrouch (2004) justified cultural and religious restrictions by indicating that "girls are defined as valuable and important, in need of protection" (p. 387). This view of females may lead to less assimilation into the dominant culture on their part. Munawar (1997) explained that there are certain aspects of Western societies which are contradictory to Arab culture and Islamic views. For example, Sarroub (2001) conducted a case study to examine the ability of six Yemeni girls to negotiate their values in an American school. Over 2 years of observation and interviews, the study reported that Yemeni girls had difficulty in negotiating their

traditional and cultural obligations, and American norms such as socialising with the opposite sex on and off campus, and getting involved with after-school activities. For these Yemeni girls, maintaining the family's reputation meant avoiding talking or laughing too loud, not speaking with boys, keeping a distance from males, and not participating in after-school activities.

Retaining conspicuous Islamic practices is a key concern for many Arab/Muslim students in Western institutions. Liederman (2000) stated that “[Islamic] religious symbols, praying, and absences for religious reasons” (p. 368) represent serious issues facing Arab/Muslim students in Western countries. Studies have concluded that Muslim students struggle to find a place to conduct their daily prayers and to attend the Friday prayer (Novera, 2004; Quddos, 2001). According to the *Qur'an*, Muslim men, starting at the age of puberty, are required to attend congregational prayers on Fridays (Ali, 2008). Encountering restrictions or not recognising identity requirements in the educational arena might impact students' religiousness. Zine (2001) mentioned that retaining religious values and practices in a Western country can be difficult based on contradictory norms.

Not allowing Muslim students to practise their Islamic functions in academic institutions may be affected by Western public opinions regarding Islamic practice. For example, the Swedish Integration Board in 2004 surveyed 4,000 people aged between 16 and 78 years old who were selected randomly (as cited in Larsson, 2006). The survey found that Muslims should not be allowed to practise their religion, and, in particular, that women should be restricted in the wearing of *hijab*, in public areas (Larsson, 2006). Although we cannot generalise these opinions to all Western people, they provide an indicator that Muslims may be struggling in non-Muslim societies.

Thus, female Muslim students are restricted in their religious practice in some European countries. In France, for example, Muslim schoolgirls who wear headscarves were not allowed to enter their schools (Croucher, 2008; Liederman, 2000). The visibility of Muslim girls through their physical appearance causes a difficult dilemma for these students and impacts on their interaction with others (De Voe, 2002; Mansouri & Trembath, 2005). These females experience more

difficult incidents in interacting and communicating with non-Muslims than males do due to the distinctiveness denominated through their use of the headscarf.

3.3.3 The Headscarf (the *Hijab*) in Western Societies

This section discusses the legitimacy of the headscarf (the *hijab*) in Islam, in particular, how the *hijab* impacts on interactions between Muslims and others. The conceptualisation of terms that are associated with the dress code, such as the headscarf (the *hijab*), is an issue that should be considered. Clear conceptualisation of the veil and headscarf in English, and *hijab* and *niqab* in Arabic languages, must be provided. Hamzeh and Oliver (2010) argued that “for scholars attempting to access the lives of Muslim girls, it is important to recognize the multiple embodiments of the *hijab* as a central discourse in the lives of Muslim girls” (p. 167). *Hijab* is an Arabic word “meaning a shield or to make invisible by using a shield” (Croucher, 2008, p. 200), and it is a common concept that has been identified and investigated in a number of studies, even though it is erroneously used to mean veil (Hamzeh & Oliver, 2010). El Guindi (1981) demonstrated that

The veil in English does not even correspond to any single term in Arabic. There are many Arabic words that could be translated as veil in English. Aside from semantics, this is because the institution of veiling is complexly differentiated. (p. 474)

Contributing to the debate is the fact that two main verses (Surah an-Nur: 31 and Surah al-Ahzab: 59) from the *Qur'an* and the speech of the Prophet Muhammad (SAAS) legitimise the *hijab* and provide evidence that (Croucher, 2009), although Muslim women must wear *hijab*, it involves a variety of interpretations among Islamic *madhahib* (schools of law) and other Muslims in deciding which parts of the body Muslim women must cover. Jamjoom (2010) explained that the interpretation of the *Qur'an* is affected by the interpreter’s understanding of the text and the context in which the interpretation is made. Two interpretations were given by Islamic scholars: covering the whole body from the head to the feet, or covering the entire body except for the face and the hands (Samovar et al., 2007). For some Muslim women, veiling is not mandatory; rather, it is encouraged

(Ajrouch, 2004). Regardless of different interpretations, many Muslims believe that guidance on women's dress is a commandment of *Allah* as it is prescribed in the *Qur'an* and in the speech of the Prophet Muhammad (SAAS) (De Voe, 2002). Their clothing must consider certain standards that include being loose, using opaque material, being in solid colours, and looking austere (El Guindi, 1981).

Nowadays, the three variations of style that Arab/Muslim women wear include covering the whole body with a loose dress that includes face and hands; covering the whole body without covering the face, or wearing normal dress which is not loose; and covering the head, but not the face, by wearing blouses or tops with long sleeves, and pants or long skirts (De Voe, 2002; El-Geledi & Bourhis, 2012; Mohammed-Arif, 2000). These styles can be described with three distinctive Arabic words: *niqab*, *jilbab* and *hijab* (El Guindi, 1981). In this study, I adopt the definition of veil or *niqab* as the style when women cover the whole body including hands and face; long dress or *jilbab* as a description when women cover the whole body, but not the face or hands; and, headscarf or *hijab* as the process when women cover only their heads but dress in a more Western style (Bullock, 2002; Ruitenbergh, 2008).

Wearing certain female styles of dress varies between Islamic countries as a result of differing cultural perspectives. Culture is one of the other determinants of women's style of dress (Veelenturf, 2006). Clothing is a cultural phenomenon and it communicates the membership of the self in a particular ethnicity (De Voe, 2002). Bigelow (2008) explained that "veiling, as a sociocultural construct, differs across Muslim cultures, and even across time in any given culture" (p. 31). For example, in some Islamic countries women are traditionally required to be veiled and to cover their whole body, even from their husbands (Olson, 1985). Munawar (1997) pointed out that "the mode of dress or the style of dresses used in different Muslim countries also depends on existing cultural practices dominant in those countries and are often dissimilar" (p. 49). Cultural heritage is a significant influence in determining which style of headscarf women might choose to wear. It is important to recognise the differences among various styles of women's dress, so we can understand why Muslim women vary in their ways of wearing their style of dress in the West. Whatever the style that Muslim women adopt in their

dress, it marks them from non-Muslims and they are easily noticeable (De Voe, 2002).

The relationship and interaction between Muslims and non-Muslims is significantly affected by their views towards Muslim women's dress. The purpose of wearing *niqab*, *jilbab* or *hijab* might be not fully understood by some Western people who may have a lack of Islamic information or very limited knowledge. Bahiss (2008) studied female Muslim students' adjustment to a New Zealand university and found that the greatest challenge for the students was that some host nation's people had no of knowledge about the importance of *hijab*. Another study interviewed 20 American Christian about their feelings towards Muslims and found that these people had little information about Islam in terms of veiling and other practices (Pevey & McKenzie, 2009). Studies of Western people's images of the *hijab* also indicate negative attitudes towards the *hijab* (Croucher, 2009; El-Geledi & Bourhis, 2012; Saroglou, Lamkaddem, Van Pachterbeke, & Buxant, 2009). *Hijab* is connected to negative attitudes towards immigrant Muslims, and it is seen as a barrier against the acceptance of the dominant cultural values (Croucher, 2009), a tool demonstrating the superiority of men (who force women to wear the *hijab*), the oppression of women, and the backwardness of Muslims (Ajrouch, 2004; Droogsma, 2007; Nasir & Al-Amin, 2006). Increasingly negative attitudes towards a minority group lead to increased prejudice and hostility and to fewer communication opportunities with the dominant people (Croucher, 2013).

Others view the *hijab* as "an aggressive sign that the person wearing it reflects religious fervour and violence associated with Islamic fundamentalism in the Middle East" (Abukhattala, 2004, p. 125). There is an irony around the common assumption that Muslim women are oppressed or forced to wear the *hijab* by their family, husband, or the superiority of men (Poynting & Noble, 2004). Veelenturf (2006) interviewed 13 Muslim women in New Zealand about their veiled experiences and she found that the veil is understood by non-Muslims as a coercive order by families, and one which acts to restrict freedom and participation for Muslim women in the New Zealand community. The study concluded that limited knowledge about Islamic beliefs, values, and customs

caused non-Muslims to accept assumptions and stereotypes of Islam and Muslims without questioning these.

In fact, a variety of reasons motivate female Muslim students to wear the *hijab* in Western societies. Female Muslim students perceive Islam as not only a personal way of life, but rather, as a common and active way of being (Cainkar, 2002).

Studies have found that the main motivations involve:

- Obeying religious obligations (Oikonomidoy, 2007);
- Being a part of their Islamic identity (Croucher, 2008);
- Protecting modesty and representing a main religious value (Croucher, 2009);
- Recognising their Muslim identity (Bahiss, 2008; Munawar, 1997);
- Transmitting a strong message that Muslim women want to be recognised as Muslims who are carrying faith and religious identity in personal ways (Abukhattala, 2004; Schmidt, 2004);
- Showing their own sense of cultural, communal, and social connection (Croucher, 2009; Veelenturf, 2006);
- Enhancing their inner satisfaction, showing their superiority and distinction compared to non-Muslim women and avoiding assimilation into secular communities (Cole & Ahmadi, 2003; Croucher, 2008; Mohammad-Arif, 2000);
- Minimising the challenges they face as Muslims in non-Muslim communities by presenting their Islamic identity instead of national or ethnic identities (Dwyer, 1999); and,
- Ignoring what Muslim students describe as un-Islamic identity, ethnic, national, and cultural identities (Peek, 2005).

The distinctive visual signs that mark a woman out as a Muslim female have an impact of the interaction between Arab/Muslim female students and others. The Islamic dress is seen as the flash point of intergroup tensions between immigrants Muslims and Western host communities (El-Geledi & Bourhis, 2012). Studies have found that the visibility of female Muslim students was a challenge which limited their interactions with others who have different backgrounds, impacting

these students' interactions and minimising Muslim students' opportunities in conducting learning activities and group assignments with non-Muslims (Asmar, 2000; De Voe, 2002; Elnour & Bashir-Ali, 2003; Mansouri & Percival-Wood, 2008; Nasir & Al-Amin, 2006; Zine, 2000). One survey was conducted among 175 Muslim students (93 females and 82 males) in order to understand their academic experiences in Australian universities (Asmar et al., 2004). The study found that female Muslim students who veiled had more negative experiences than those who did not. The study concluded that adhering to Islamic faith by female Muslim students resulted in less interaction and integration with non-Muslims.

However, male Muslim students reported positive experiences and there was no problem in interacting and communicating with others, as they were less religiously identifiable (Asmar et al., 2004; De Voe, 2002). The link between gender and interaction was also supported by a qualitative research study. Using observation and focus groups among seven Somali female Muslim students, it examined their experiences in a U.S. urban school and found that these students maintained fewer relationships and interactions with teachers and American peers because of their visibility.

Accordingly, female Muslim students started questioning their religious practices and finding ways to enhance their interactions with non-Muslims. Cole and Ahmadi (2003) conducted in-depth interviews with seven females, whose national origins were in Pakistan, Turkey, Egypt, and the USA, in order to examine their experiences regarding wearing a veil on a large college campus in the Midwest of America. They experienced difficulties in veiling, and their relationships and interactions with non-Muslim students, academic, and administrative staff were negatively affected. As a result, Muslim students questioned and reinvestigated their religious practices and asked if modesty could be understood without wearing headscarves. Another study found that female Muslim students created a balance between their interactions and others. Zine (2001) observed and interviewed eight female students, who were born in Canada, to examine their experiences in maintaining their Islamic identity despite the dominant pressures in Canada. The study found that female Muslim students faced negative social

pressure regarding their *hijab*; however, these students attempted to fully interact with the opposite sex, but with no physical touching. The *hijab* represents the most significant challenge in that it minimises interactions between female Muslim students and non-Muslims.

To conclude, the preceding studies examined the challenges that face Arab/Muslim students when studying in non-Muslim communities. Most previous studies narrowed their investigations to the experiences of Arab/Muslim students in learning contexts and excluded their experiences in social interactions. Therefore, further investigation is needed to examine how Arab Muslim students are able to negotiate their Islamic values in both university and community contexts when interacting and communicating with non-Muslims, and to understand how they respond to the challenges that they face regarding differences in religious and cultural values.

The literature stresses that there are hostile negative attitudes towards Arabs/Muslims in the West. Global and political issues, along with media events, have significantly increased cultural and religious misunderstanding, stereotypes, and fear against Muslims and Arabs, which result in religious discrimination and social exclusion. Discrimination and stereotypes against the visible identity appear to be the main reason leading to less interaction between Arab Muslim students and non-Muslims. This situation needs further examination among Arab Muslim students who are living and studying in New Zealand, as most preceding studies limited their investigations to Muslim students who came from Middle Eastern and South Asian countries and had lived in other Western societies either for a short or a long time.

Both cultural and religious values guide Arab/Muslim students in their lives in the West and determine their behavioural expectations. The negotiation process of identity becomes salient and a challenge. The students experience a sense of struggling as they attempt to retain their own values and accept Western values and norms. The studies concluded that Arab Muslim students who hold on to and assert their Islamic values and show their identity visibly experience fewer social interactions and communication with others. Both male and female students encounter difficulty in conducting their cultural and religious practices. The

students feel disadvantaged in retaining their identities, in particular in the academic context. An important question then emerges—what religious and cultural needs do Arab Muslim students expect New Zealand universities to accommodate?

Being an Arab Muslim female can be a challenge in the West. These students experience exclusion from learning activities, group assignments, external programmes, and communication with the opposite sex. Cultural, religious, and gendered identities design the path that these females must follow in the new environment. They have more restrictions than males and must pay a significant amount of attention to their own and their family's honour. Accordingly, their interaction and communication with others, and in particular with males, must be appropriate and their modesty must be maintained all the time.

The *hijab* is a sign of modesty and it communicates different meanings among Muslims and non-Muslims. Cultural heritage significantly influences Muslim women towards wearing certain styles of dress, and accepting the restyling of their dress or not. A clear distinction between *hijab* and veil is provided and different styles are adopted based on cultural and religious interpretations. By wearing the *hijab*, female Arab Muslim students attempt to show their Islamic identity in a visible way. Thus, some female Muslim students start questioning their cultural requirements and have a desire to remove their *hijab* in order to enhance their interactions with non-Muslims. Considering issues, such as how Arab female Muslim students experience their presence in university and the wider community contexts with regard to their religious and cultural identities, requires further investigation. Additionally, one study concluded that male Muslim students experienced positive interactions with non-Muslims and their dress code was not an issue in achieving good communication with others (Asmar et al., 2004). This finding suggests further investigation in order to reveal if Arab Muslim male students also experience this situation or not when these markers of identity are visible.

3.4 Muslim Students Responding to their Interaction and Communication Experiences in the West

The previous two sections focus on religious identity, the first impression of Arab Muslim students upon arrival in a Western country, and their own experiences as Arab Muslim students. This section examines the relationship between these students as a cocultural group and the dominant group. As discussed in the definition of culture in the first chapter, cultures and individuals are changed as a result of the interaction processes between them. Acculturation is one form of cultural change that exists in intercultural interaction and communication between people who have different cultures (Berry et al., 2002). The theoretical framework chapter mentioned Berry's (1984) and Berry et al.'s (2002) model of acculturation, and Kim's (2007) understanding of five different perspectives in conceptualising cultural identity through the relationship between minority-majority individuals in a dominant society. This minority-majority relationship and conceptualisation of cultural identity can be understood through four interconnected ideologies or positions: separation, assimilation, integration, and marginalisation.

These positions are used to review research with regard to the intercultural relationships and connections that occur between Arab/Muslim students' cultures and Western plural cultures. Navigating and negotiating between homeland cultural and religious identities and the host culture is the major task of Arab Muslim students (Britto & Amer, 2007). Arab/Muslim students vary in their methods of coping with confrontations with their Western peers, academic and administrative staff, and local people in showing their Islamic identity and enhancing their interactions with others.

Reviewing literature in the area of Arab/Muslim students dealing with their interaction and communication experiences in the West reveals three main positions only: separation, assimilation, and integration. It is important to note that not all Arab/Muslim students chose one form of acculturation over the others; rather, these students had different experiences and varied in choosing one form and refusing others. Their choices were also made for different reasons and in differing circumstances. While the first position explains internal and external reasons that encourage some Arab/Muslim students to segregate themselves from

non-Muslims in the West, the second position focuses on how other Arab/Muslim students adopt strategies that reveal their assimilation into Western societies. The final position addresses Arab/Muslim students' integration in the West and how they negotiate their identities. Prior studies have not paid much attention to the position of marginalisation, one form of acculturation, which means that this review focuses on only the other three forms of acculturation only. Minority groups are freely able to select any form of the acculturation model to describe their relationships and connections with the dominant group (Berry, 1984; Berry et al., 2002).

3.4.1 Separation-Segregation

This section focuses on some Arab/Muslim students who chose to separate or segregate themselves from the dominant culture. There are internal and external motivations that encourage some Arab/Muslim students to separate in non-Muslim societies. The main internal reasons that drive some students into separation involve desiring to retain and maintain their own culture, asserting their Islamic identity, rather than other identities, refusing to disobey Islamic teachings, and showing their Islamic identity through the wearing of specific clothes. Taking the view that participating in educational activities and socialisation means a rejection of, or a conflict with, their own identity, some Arab/Muslim students choose separation (Ahmad, 2007; Ipgrave, 2010; Sarroub, 2010). Thus, Arab students use the strategy of "resistance identity" to manage any difficulties that emerge in the new culture (Mansouri, 2004, p. 1020).

Resisting the influences of the dominant culture can be achieved by asserting their Islamic identity and refusing other identities (Cole & Ahmadi, 2003; Salih, 2004; Schmidt, 2004). The resistance strategy allows students to avoid increasing Westernisation and minimises the fear of moral laxity that undermines their identity positions in the community and impacts the true spirit of Islam (Mansouri & Percival-Wood, 2008). Asserting "moral superiority" represents a strategy of resistance that a minority uses against the dominant culture (Ajrouch, 2004, p. 373). Mohammed-Arif (2000) interviewed a number of South Asian Muslim young women who lived in the U.S. The researcher found that these women refused to adjust to the Western life because they believe that "Islam does not

accept any compromise or adaptation” (Mohammed-Arif, 2000, p. 81).

Consequently, this type of women chose to refuse to disobey their religious obligations and preferred to continue to be veiled (Cole & Ahmadi, 2003).

By wearing a headscarf or being veiled, Muslim women expose their Islamic identity. Droogsma (2007) explained that clothing represents a fundamental aspect of exposing one's identity to others. In this case, studies found that one of the main functions of the *hijab* is to show a Muslim's identity (Bahiss, 2008; Cole & Ahmadi, 2003; Croucher, 2008). For other Muslim women, it was found that being veiled means establishing a good Muslim identity, and an identity which is distinct from that of non-Muslims (Cole & Ahmadi, 2003; Croucher, 2008). By distinguishing their own identity, these Muslim women refuse a hybrid identity or integration into the local society because, as Husain and O'Brien (2000) mentioned, “this hybridity can lead to complete deconstruction and a chaotic array of selves”(p. 4).

Another study found that cultural and Islamic identities impact Arab Muslim girls encouraging them to maintain these identities and refuse to be closely identified as American (Ajrouch, 2004). Some Arab/Muslims who choose to separate into cocultural groups implement what Ruggiero et al. (1996) called “heritage culture maintenance” (p. 47), in order to avoid assimilating into the dominant culture. The students view “traditionalism as a badge of honour” (Sarroub, 2010, p. 87). The disengagement with the wider community makes Arabs/Muslims place a “high value on traditionally bonding social capital, that is, the maintenance of [one’s] own family and kinship networks” (Mansouri & Percival-Wood, 2008, p. 66).

In contrast, there are external reasons that require some Muslim students to segregate themselves from the host culture. Fearing the impact of their Islamic identity, suffering racialisation, a lack of respect of Islamic orders or/and prohibitions are the main motivations. These reasons imposed force some Arabs/Muslims to become segregated and to adhere to the solidarity within their own group when they perceive that Western political and social demands impact their religion, disrespect them, and misrecognise or fail to recognise their social activities and identities (Abu El-Haj, 2006; Croucher et al., 2008; Schmidt, 2004; Suliman & McInerney, 2006). For example, Sarroub (2010) highlighted that the

development of identity in the dominant culture can be a challenge and an Arab minority attempts to maintain its identity by cleaving to each other. She stated that

Arabs fear that the fabric of U.S. society and its moral and ethical underpinnings are undermining and eroding their cultural values, and in differing ways they rely on their own communities to provide the structures in which to relate socially as individuals and as families, and in which they can feel comfortable raising their children. (pp. 82-83)

Mansouri and Trembath (2005) conducted a study to examine the experiences of 36 Arab-Australian school students, 89 % of whom were Muslims, in constructing and understanding their presence in the dominant culture. The study found that these students experienced segregation from the community due to recent sociopolitical situations affecting Muslims and forcing students to live closely within their own community or with those with similar cultural backgrounds. In other words, some Muslims may choose segregation because the dominant culture promotes a “universal identity” and discourages or misrecognises a religious or ethnic identity (Zubaida, 2003, p. 93). Croucher (2009) found that banning of *hijab* is an attempt by the dominant French culture to eliminate the Muslim identity in the country.

As a result, some Arab/Muslim students attempt to avoid Western impacts by building walls around themselves and seeking relative isolation from the dominant culture (Zine, 2001). Most importantly, they are restricted in their public involvement in some Western countries, such as France, through the banning of Muslim students from adhering to their Islamic principles in schools (Limage, 2000). Retaining and maintaining an Islamic identity is the significant aim among Arab/Muslims who segregate from the host culture. By assigning a high priority to its own identity, a cultural group attempts to insulate itself from the surrounding dominant culture to prevent assimilation (Zine, 2001).

3.4.2 Assimilation

The most significant concern among most/many Arab/Muslim students is assimilation or “the melting pot” within Western cultures. Studies have concluded that there are strong pressures imposed on most Arab Muslim people/students to

assimilate into the Western culture, which include facing discrimination, experiencing exclusion from the dominant culture, being under pressure from peer groups and learning environments, living within a diversity of groups, a lack of Islamic knowledge, and desiring to fit into the mainstream society by avoiding identity symbols (Cainkar, 2002; Croucher, 2009; Croucher et al., 2008; Mansouri & Percival-Wood, 2008; Mohammed-Arif, 2000; Peek, 2005). For example, Australian Prime Minister, Howard singled out Muslims when he suggested that migrants must fully integrate into the society and embrace its values (Mansouri & Percival-Wood, 2008). Banning *hijab* was found to be a step towards enforcing assimilation of women Muslims into the French community (Croucher, 2009).

As a result, some Muslim students display a number of signs to illustrate their assimilation into Western societies. They melt totally into Western secular perspectives through wearing the same clothing styles or fashion, behaving and reacting like the dominant culture's students, using the same accent, hiding their original heritage, changing their names to Western names, avoiding speaking their own language outside the home, establishing friendships with the opposite sex, and listening to Western music (Cainkar, 2002; Mohammed-Arif, 2000; Salih, 2004; Savage, 2004). However, the desire towards assimilation into the dominant culture cannot exist without some resistance, especially if individuals of a dominant culture feel that they are under Muslim threaten (Croucher, 2013).

On the other hand, the literature indicates that some Muslim students prefer to assimilate into the dominant culture in order to achieve a high level of social integration. Salih (2004) analysed the story of a young Muslim university student in order to understand the experiences and the meanings for young second generation Muslims in Europe. The study found that young Muslims attempt to fully integrate into European societies through participating very actively in the Western culture and adopting "full secularisation" (p. 1004) by separating religion and state. Muslim students reframe their Islamic identities and adopt new communication practices that facilitate their integration and help them to achieve better interactions and communications with others.

3.4.3 Integration

Although first and second generations of Muslims tended towards assimilation, newcomer students might have a different experience, as they tend to stay a short time and then return home. The term “sojourners” is the best description of Arab/Muslim students who show a strong commitment to their ethnic group while staying a part of the dominant culture, and who prefer to return home once their goals are achieved (Sarroub, 2001). Thus, integrating into a dominant culture could be the preferred practice by most Arab Muslim students as they tend to stay in the dominant culture for a short period of time only. Integration can be easily developed and adopted within a society that encourages multicultural groups and promotes cultural diversity. It is an important element impinging on the inclusion of newcomer students in both social and educational contexts (De Voe, 2002).

The maintenance of a religious identity within a new community represents the most significant challenge for cocultural groups. Peek (2005) argued that establishing an Islamic identity in the West involves significant difficulties when Muslims come from societies in which Islam represents the majority. Fukuyama (2006) explained this idea further by indicating that Muslims face a problematic identity when they leave their societies (which support their identity) and can encounter “a gap between one's inner identity as a Muslim cultural community and one's behaviour vis-à-vis the surrounding society” (p. 10). Accordingly, maintaining an Islamic identity by Muslims in non-Muslim communities is achieved through a number of strategies, such as establishing Muslim associations and building Islamic institutions and mosques (Bartels, 2000; Mazuri, 2003; Mohammed-Arif, 2000).

As discussed earlier, mosques represent an important aspect of Muslim identity for Muslims. However, the function of the mosque may be a concern for non-Muslims and they may think that it promotes segregation between them and Muslims (Bartels, 2000). In this context, it should be noted that Islam forbids segregation and advocates integration with others. One purpose of the differences between people is what *Allah* (God) says in the *Qur'an*: (Chapter 49, verse 13) “O mankind! We created you from a single (pair) of a male and a female, and made you into nations and tribes, that ye may know each other (not that ye may

despise (each other)” (Ali, 2008, p. 641). Although Islam encourages unity among people, it does recognise individuality and diversity. Bangura (2004) explained that “Islam has a respect for cultural pluralism that is inextricably linked to a recognition of the connectedness of all human beings” (p. 12).

The main aspect of cultural pluralism is recognising and respecting cultural differences (Ahmad & Szpara, 2003). This aspect is encouraged by Arab Gulf countries, which respond to anti-non-Muslim rhetoric by advocating tolerance and acceptance. For example, the Saudi Ministry of Education retrained teachers and developed new school curricula and materials to promote tolerance and fair-mindedness among students towards non-Muslims (Jamjoom, 2010). This action was taken after the events of September 11 when some in the U.S. blamed and criticised the Saudi Arabian educational system for contributing to anti-Western sentiments. It was asked to discourage students from engaging in violent actions, even though the Saudi Ministry of Education refused to link its system with promoting extremism (Bangura, 2004; Prokop, 2003).

3.4.3.1 Creating a Bicultural Identity

In order to explore Islamic encouragement towards cultural diversity further, this section focuses on the creation of a double identity by most Arab Muslim students in non-Muslim communities. Creating an intrinsic Islamic identity is encouraged and required by Islam; however, that does not mean ignoring or refusing Western values and cultures (Salih, 2004). Abd-Allah (2003) asserted that Islam “entertain[s] an honest, accommodating, and generally positive view of the broad social endowments of other people and places” (p. 95). The meaning of the authentic Islamic identity and being Muslim in the West is to practise Islamic principles without traditional and cultural influences (Mohammed-Arif, 2000), and to adapt to and fulfil, in particular, Western democratic ideals (Schmidt, 2004).

One major element of the Western educational system is to encourage the challenging of knowledge. However, many Arab Muslim students cannot apply this approach and question their own religious values, even though they can examine their traditional practices (Britto, 2008). The students distinguish

between culture and religion by arguing that they could question cultural practices, but not religious ones, as the latter are based on the Holy Book (Sarroub, 2010). The idea of questioning their own practices is illustrated further by Husain and O'Brien (2000) who pointed out that Muslims are required to recreate themselves in Western communities, and the functional strategies for that involve “the shedding of traditional cultural values, adoption of some contemporary Western ideals, without compromising religious principles and ensuring that socioreligious boundaries of appropriate conduct are maintained” (p. 11).

The new environment is understood by Arab students as a challenge that needs to be overcome rather than as an enemy that impacts one’s own traditional values and norms (Sarroub, 2010). Thus, the students evolve a new identity that contains Westernised aspects and their original cultural identity (Dagkas & Benn, 2006; Dwyer, 1999). Different labels are given to describe the new double identity: “a new culture” (Abukhattala, 2004, p. 141); “cultural hybridity” (Martin & Nakayama, 2007, p. 300); “double culture” (Mohammed-Arif, 2000, p. 74); “multiple or compromising identities” (Salvatore, 2004, p. 1024); “third culture identity” (Sabry & Bruna, 2007, p. 45), and developing “the third space” (Koehne, 2005, p. 114). Koehne (2005) argued that “the creation of a third space and the construction of hybrid subjectivity is more often realised when people move into another culture and speak another language for a long period of time, as international students do” (p. 114).

Scholars have found that Muslim students are both required and encouraged to create a double identity when living in Western communities (Bahiss, 2008; Cole & Ahmadi, 2003; Nasir & Al-Amin, 2006; Zine, 2000, 2001). The main motivations for many Muslim students to establish a double identity involve adapting to the new culture without assimilation, minimising political demands which may impact their Islamic identity, bridging the gap between their own Islamic and the dominant culture’s requirements, showing that they are not de-Westernised, being accommodated in non-Muslim communities, avoiding pressures from peer groups or administrative staff, and being able to practise their religion within secularised societies (Abukhattala, 2004; Cole & Ahmadi, 2003; Mohammed-Arif, 2000; Salih, 2004; Schmidt, 2004). For example, Munawar

(1997) interviewed and observed 10 female Pakistani Muslim students to understand how these girls negotiate their cultural and religious identities within Australian society. These students enjoyed Australian life's freedom and adopted multiple identities in order to allow them to maintain their own cultural and Islamic aspects as well as being able to integrate into Australian society.

Muslim students implement a number of tactics to show the evolution of a double identity. This strategy involves holding both an Islamic identity and the national identity of the country that the Muslim students live in, employing flexible reactions in order to be integrated within Western communities, reconstructing their clothes, questioning whether modesty can be achieved without wearing a veil and choosing to uncover their head, and accepting participation in social activities (Abd-Allah, 2003; Abukhattala, 2004; Bahiss, 2008; Cole & Ahmadi, 2003; Mohammed-Arif, 2000; Nasir & Al-Amin, 2006; Schmidt, 2004). For instance, the privileging of the national identity by the second generation Arab/Muslim students offers clear evidence through an empirical study of cross-cultural groups conducted in Belgium. The study investigated 72 Muslim immigrant students, whose parents originally came from Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, and Turkey, to understand their perceptions of identities, values, and religion (Saroglou & Galand, 2004). The study found that these Muslim students understood Islam as an important aspect in their lives, although they were more willing to seek integration with the host culture and identified themselves as Belgians more than other immigrants.

Reframing Islamic rules is another strategy that was adopted by Muslim students to fit into Western cultures. One study found that four Muslim students, who were required to attend social events in an American university where alcohol is served, managed this issue through attending these events but leaving before the alcohol was served (Speck, 1997). By questioning their own values and changing their own views, international students are able to make a smooth cross-cultural transition (Moores, 2008). The issue of questioning their own identities might fit with the general tendency in the Muslim world that is known as the "objectification of religion" (Jamjoom, 2010, p. 548). It seems that the students start questioning the authenticity and sanctity of their cultural and religious

practices. Bahiss (2008) found female Muslim students reconstructed their clothes by avoiding wearing long loose dresses, and instead wearing jeans, a sweatshirt and a white scarf; they reframed their *hijab* in order to be normal, to be acceptable, and to integrate in general within the New Zealand culture. The adjustment to Western societies by behaving or dressing like the dominant people has led Muslim students, in some instances, to “re-Islamisation” (Mohammed-Arif, 2000, p. 81), which includes rereading Islamic texts, reinterpreting Islamic requirements, and questioning religious values and cultural heritages in order to satisfy the Muslim students’ needs. Reinterpreting religious teachings demonstrates that “conservative ideologies may be reinterpreted among groups whose identity is informed by religion” (Ajrouch, 2004, p. 385).

In addition, the most significant concern among Muslim students is to achieve successful interaction with others. One way of working towards this goal is to attempt to reconstruct their identity, and in some cases, create a double identity. The students adopt specific strategies in order to integrate with the West and achieve good interactions with non-Muslims. These strategies cover establishing boundaries when interacting with students, negotiating non-Muslims’ perceptions about Islam, informing others about Islamic practices, not paying attention to students who ridicule them, discussing Islamic issues with teachers and classmates, presenting Islamic topics in classrooms, and using jokes in uncomfortable situations (Asmar, 2000; Nasir & Al-Amin, 2006; Oikonomidou, 2007; Zine, 2000, 2001). Thus, these studies indicate that Muslim students, in order to accommodate and integrate with people in the new culture, transmit a message about how to be Muslim in non-Muslim societies through holding more than one identity, accommodating Western social events and activities, questioning their own values, reframing clothing styles, and informing and negotiating with others about Islam.

In summary, the literature thus far indicates that there are internal and external reasons that require some Muslim students to adopt separation by choice, accept segregation when they were forced to, or follow an assimilation path in responding to the dominant culture. Studies have revealed that desiring to hold on to the Islamic identity and avoiding Western political and social demands are the

main reasons for some Muslim students to segregate themselves from the host culture. The latter is also the major motivation encouraging these students to assimilate into Western societies. The studies to date demonstrate the difficulties in practising Islam easily in the West. However, Muslims do establish particular institutions, such as mosques, which assist them in achieving their desire to practise their faith in comfort.

Further, maintaining an Islamic identity in the West is a significant challenge that faces Muslim students who come from societies in which Islam represents the majority (e.g., Middle Eastern countries). One response is to create a hybrid identity in order to achieve the benefits of both their Islamic and the new cultural identities. Most significantly, establishing a double identity so as not to exist in a vacuum is often a felt requirement of Muslim students. Muslim students reveal the new aspects of their double identity through employing flexible responses, restyling their clothes, reviewing Islamic requirements, accepting certain Western perspectives, and attempting to interact with others through a variety of means.

Although previous studies reached the conclusion that Muslim students varied in preferring segregation, assimilation, or integration as a strategy to fit into the dominant culture, these studies paid less attention to Muslim international student sojourners, such as Arab Muslim students, who come to study and return home when they finish their study. The term “sojourner” is an appropriate description for these students as they come to New Zealand for the purpose of study, but not with the intention of remaining. Cultural and religious backgrounds of Arab Muslim students play a significant role in determining their intercultural communication with non-Muslims. Further, these students may experience different situations in the New Zealand learning and social context, which may require them to react differently in these situations. Two questions may concern Arab Muslim students: Must cultural and religious identities be retained? and, What types of relations with New Zealanders and others should be sought? A study into how Arab Muslim students understand their experiences in communicating and interacting with non-Muslims in the New Zealand culture, and how they respond to these experiences, is warranted.

3.5 Conclusions and Implications for Further Research

This literature review does not claim to be an exhaustive discussion of studies concerning Arab/Muslim students in the West. However, it has shed some light and furthered knowledge on the intercultural experiences of these students and on the negotiating process of identities. The review highlights that internal and external factors alike are key variables that might enable, or inhibit, Arab students' intercultural communication opportunities and the formation of their identities in a Western society. The studies indicate that these students face certain issues because of their unique backgrounds, aspirations and identities, which function as internal factors. Cultural and religious values and norms represent a significant foundation for these internal factors, which include restricted cross-gender interaction, maintaining modesty, valuing bonding social capital, and others. These patterns are based on Arab Muslim students' cultural identities and need to be investigated in order to discover what it means to be an Arab Muslim in the context of New Zealand.

On the other hand, these studies identified external factors that minimise the intercultural communication of Arab Muslim students. The students experienced less interaction with non-Muslim because they faced a lack of respect from their peers and academic staff. Misunderstandings and stereotypes about Islam were the main reasons that led to a situation of less integration, increased exclusion, and fewer relationships between Muslim students and non-Muslims. The perception among Arab/Muslim students of host discrimination could have uncharted consequences for their learning engagement, social interaction, and communication with others. Social isolation is a main concern for these students in Western social and academic contexts.

These relationships were also negatively influenced when disallowing Arab/Muslim students, in certain contexts, from performing their Islamic practices in schools and universities. The religious and cultural needs of Arab/Muslim students are still not being fully accommodated within educational contexts in the West, in particular, in the New Zealand context. Cultural and religious requirements of Arab Muslim students were also significant reasons for difficulties for Muslim students in learning with mixed groups, working with the

opposite sex, and conducting mixed gender activities. These difficulties led to fewer opportunities for interacting and communicating between Muslim students and non-Muslims. As a result, the students seem to struggle with the question “Who are we?” and the negotiation of identities is clearly required in order to live in two worlds that have two different cultures (Sarroub, 2001).

Further, research has found that there are a number of factors which encouraged female Muslim students to wear the headscarf in Western institutions. Studies concluded that these students experienced less communication with non-Muslims because of their dress code. A lack of Islamic knowledge among non-Muslims, the spread of misconceptions, and the revelation of a negative image towards both Muslim men and women, are significant factors that affect the relationship between Muslim students and others. Arab/Muslim students are concerned about the commonly perceived image of men as terrorists, criminal and violent; and, of women as oppressed and backward. These issues impact social integration and evoke social exclusion. The students attempted to provide a more accurate picture of their cultural and religious identities and show the struggle involved in what it means to be an Arab Muslim student in a Western culture. Their cultural identities have a shaping influence on these students’ experiences in the West.

Studies also found that Muslim students varied in adopting segregation, assimilation, and integration. Whereas desiring to retain and maintain their Islamic identity encouraged these students to be separated from the dominant culture, assimilation was imposed in order to minimise social pressure and discrimination. Specific strategies were implemented by Arab/Muslim students, such as accepting and normalising certain host values, in order to achieve good interactions. By creating a double identity, Muslim students were able to achieve good interactions with non-Muslims and to show their integration with Western societies. This experience of interaction and communication with others seems to influence the construction of Arab/Muslim students’ identities. Cultural and religious identities are the dominant sources of ethnic identification for these students. A difficulty of being an Arab Muslim student in the West results in reconstructing their cultural and religious identities by questioning their own values and traditions, and adopting two cultures in order to allow them to live

more easily in the dominant society. The identity construction of Arab Muslim students is influenced by their culture and religious identities, which are not a fully explored phenomenon (Shah, 2009).

Reflecting on methodological issues, there are several points which can be highlighted. The review of studies addressing Arab Muslim students suggests a variety of theoretical and methodological approaches that have been used. Both qualitative and quantitative traditions have been applied. Studies that paid attention to the lived experience were based on a qualitative approach. In this approach, the methods of interview, observation, and focus groups have been widely used. In particular, in-depth interview method was used when in-depth investigation was required to understand the phenomena and to provide a sense of the lived experience of participants.

Although Arab/Muslim students, who were the subjects of these studies, were examined, other studies extend their scope to target other individuals who are explicitly close to participants, such as parents, and academic and administrative staff. The sample number of previous participants tends to be smaller in the studies that use an in-depth interview method. In this study, qualitative face-to-face interviews are used in order to investigate how Arab Muslim students' experience their interaction and communication with others. Applying the interview method helps the researcher understand the lived experience of Arab students and allows presentation of their experiences in their own voices. In order to understand the point of view of New Zealand universities with regard to the presence of Arab Muslim students, interviewing administrative staff and analysing university documents were also employed.

The contexts represented in the literature were quite different to the present study. There are five major limitations. The first limitation is that most of the preceding studies highlighted Arab/Muslim students' experiences in Western institutions that were dominated by issues related to second-generation Arab/Muslim students who originally came from South Asia or other Middle Eastern countries rather than from Arabian Gulf countries. Although there were some studies that focused on Saudi and Omani students, their main purpose was examining their educational expectations and achievements. The previous studies, in disparate areas, lack the

cohesive understandings that would fully explicate Arab Muslim students' experiences in interacting and communicating with others, and ways in which these experiences reflect on their cultural and religious identities. The experiences of newcomer students with immediate immigration and a desire to return home, and the main concern of issues about identities, belonging, inclusion, and educational engagement become of primary importance and need to be investigated more thoroughly.

The current study focuses on university students who are in their late teens and in their 20s and 30s. They start socialising and interacting with others in various social and academic contexts in a new culture and a different environment that lacks parental and societal supervision. For Arab Muslim students, being in a free environment means either to escape from strict cultural traditions and moral directives, and to be less concerned about safeguarding the familial honour (Ahmad, 2007), or continuing to consider these issues when interacting and communicating with others. These experiences of interaction and communication with others allow the students to reflect on their identity negotiation process. This reflection may result in accepting, rejecting, or struggling to achieve a balance to live in two spaces.

A common denominator in the literature is that religion and culture perform a dominant function in the identity negotiation of Arab/Muslim students in both social and academic contexts. The idea of negotiation between home and host values results in a complexity of issues as Arab students have to engage in "complicated negotiations of identity, culture, gender, and values" (Sarroub, 2010, p. 89), which affect their educational and social experiences and lead to questions on whether they will benefit from both worlds or embrace one culture over the other (Ajrouch, 2004). A study is needed to focus on the experiences of Arab Muslim students in interacting and communicating with others in both social and academic contexts and, in particular, to examine how their university experiences influence the negotiation process of their cultural and religious identities (Ahmad, 2007). The process of identity negotiation appears to suggest that Arab Muslim students are not passive individuals; rather, they are active agents who engage in the construction of their lived experiences.

The second limitation is that most previous studies sampled participants in European countries, Australia, and the USA. Research on the Arab Muslim students' experiences in interacting and communicating with others has relied significantly on studies in countries other than New Zealand. There is a dearth of research considering the experiences of Arab/Muslim students in New Zealand, except the one study of Bahiss (2008), which focused on Muslim women's adjustment to a New Zealand university. Given the different history and nature of intercultural communication of each country, New Zealand needs more studies that focus on a specific region, such as those who belong to Arabian Gulf countries and share cultural and religious identities, and to understand their intercultural communication experiences in both the New Zealand educational and community contexts. To date, there are no published studies that exclusively examine the intercultural communication experiences of male and female Arab Muslim university students in New Zealand, and investigate how these experiences influence, and are influenced by, their cultural and religious identities.

The third limitation of previous studies is that although the literature investigated Arab/Muslim students' experiences in the West, most of these studies investigated the Arab/Muslim students' experiences in their educational contexts after the events of September 11, 2001, the issue of the *hijab*, the ability to maintain an Islamic identity, and how these issues evoked difficulties for Muslim students in academic contexts. Scholars need to focus more on issues such as religion and culture, and how they impact students' interaction and communication experiences in both academic and social contexts (Sarroub, 2010). There is a significant lack of research that theorises Arab Muslim students' experiences in their intercultural communication in general. There is also very little research on how an Islamic identity can impact these students' interactions with others. Britto and Amer (2007) explained that gender differences play a significant role in Arab and Islamic culture, so researchers should consider both males and females when conducting a study. Thus, in this research female and male Arab Muslim students were allowed to present their voices regarding their lived experiences in this world.

The fourth limitation is that most research has examined only the experiences of Arab/Muslim students in interacting with students from the home culture. Thus, investigating Muslim students' experiences in interacting and communicating with others, both host and international students, within and across academic and social contexts needs further research. University socialisation in New Zealand is regulated and differentiated on the basis on host norms and values. The study tried to provide a comprehensive understanding of the processes and issues that Arab students experience in negotiating the continuity of their cultural and religious identities across different contexts within New Zealand society in order to maintain their own values and simultaneously fit into the new places. Importantly, how does this process of negotiation guide their interaction and communication with others?

The fifth and final limitation in the literature is the lack of longitudinal studies of Muslim students' perceptions and experiences. Conducting a longitudinal study is recommended to understand changes in Muslims students' experiences and the extent of identity reconstruction over time. The current research attempted to understand how Arab Muslim students' perceptions of their intercultural communication with non-Muslims were developed over time, and how negotiations of cultural and religious identities affected students' experiences in interacting and communicating with others in both social and learning contexts. An absence of research on the intercultural communication experience of Arab Muslim students in foreign countries supported the need for this research, in order to fill the gaps outlined above. Thus, this is a rich avenue for research that intends to examine the following questions:

1. How do New Zealand universities' communication practices influence the negotiation process of Arab Muslim students' identities?
2. What communication practices do Arab Muslim students adopt in managing acceptance or exclusion, and how successful are they?

In order to answer these questions, this study used an interpretative approach. The coming chapter reviews the research methodology and design of this study.

Chapter 4

Methodology and Methods

The main objective of this study is to investigate the intercultural communication experiences of Arab Muslims studying in New Zealand. This chapter demonstrates the main guidelines in conducting the research. First, I outline the paradigm of the study and its methodology. This section is followed by a presentation of ethical considerations and outlines the method of identification, and recruitment, and selection of participants. I then outline the research design and explain the interview procedure. Next, I explain the principles of thematic, structuration, and content analysis adopted to analyse the interviews and university documents. Finally, I present the issue of quality and discuss reflexivity.

4.1 Philosophical Foundations of the Research

This section provides a rationale for the choice of the interpretive approach that I adopt in this study. In this paradigm, questions of reality, knowledge, methodology, and cultural identity are addressed. Next, phenomenological methodology as an example of interpretivism is selected to examine the life experience of participants.

4.1.1 Interpretivism

The concept of the paradigm has been used “to capture the idea that definitions of science (whether natural or social) are the products of shared understandings of reality—that is, worldviews” (Rossman & Rallis, 2003, p. 37). According to Denzin and Lincoln (2000), a paradigm contains the researcher’s premises of epistemology, ontology, and methodology. These form a link between the way of thinking and the way of knowing (Glaser, 2004). Lindlof (1995) pointed out that the paradigm is a framework that contains an explicit theory, method, and a particular way of defining, gathering, and analysing data. In selecting a particular paradigm, an understanding of social science and social world assumptions must be accepted.

In different ways, paradigms interpret and understand the three interconnected questions of ontology (reality), epistemology (knowledge), and methodology (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000; Martin & Nakayama, 1999). They also vary in their views of the conceptualisation of culture and communication, and the relationship between these two concepts in a different way (Ajjawi & Higgs, 2007; Burrell & Morgan, 1979; Guba & Lincoln, 2004; Martin & Nakayama, 1999). The researcher is also required to articulate a communication theory based on a specific paradigm and to agree to engage in certain steps and procedures to investigate and produce knowledge (Yoshitake, 2004).

Historically, the investigation of intercultural communication studies can be divided into three periods: the periods of “cultural relativism (’60s-’70s), scientism (’80s-early ’90s), and methodological pluralism (later 90s to present)” (Yoshitake, 2004, p. 26). The most recent argument for methodological pluralism suggests employing social, interpretive, and critical approaches to study intercultural communication (Martin & Nakayama, 1999). These three approaches are significantly driven by their own understandings and assumptions of reality, the nature of knowledge, and human nature and behaviour (Burrell & Morgan, 1979). Each of these approaches has its own unique way of understanding cultural identity and relationship between culture and communication but is also restricted by its own limitations (Collier, 1998). Understanding cultural identity, as it is constructed and negotiated contextually and the two concepts of communication and culture in their mutual relationship, determine which approach or paradigm is explicitly taken (Collier, 1998; Martin & Nakayama, 1999).

The goal of the present study is to examine how participants experience their intercultural communication, to investigate how these students build up an understanding of their cultural and religious identities, and to comprehend the meaning of their lived experienced. As discussed in the theoretical framework and literature review, the study argues that there is a reciprocal relationship and connection between culture (cultural and religious identities) and communication. It mainly considers culture as dynamic in communicative nature. This mode of inquiry is consistent with the interpretive paradigm and its philosophy, strategies, and objectives (Ajjawi & Higgs, 2007). The interpretive approach views cultural

identity as it is negotiated and enacted in the context of intercultural communication (Moriizumi, 2011). Collier (1998) affirmed that “the thrust of interpretive approaches has been the negotiation and enactment of cultural identities in particular interactional contexts” (p. 130).

Since the late 1980s, the interpretive approach has been widely recognised and adopted by communication scholars (Martin & Nakayama, 1999). According to Burrell and Morgan (1979), the interpretive paradigm attempts to understand the world as it is and to examine the nature of the social world at the level of subjectivity. It acknowledges the significance of investigating a phenomenon in its natural setting, recognises individuals’ points of view and understanding as they engage in their lived experience, and generates new understandings that can be used in the future (Lindlof, 1995; Rossman & Rallis, 2003). In this paradigm, the relationship between culture and communication “is seen as more reciprocal than causal, where culture may influence communication but is also constructed and enacted through communication” (Martin & Nakayama, 1999, p. 6). The interpretive approach is consistent with the goals of this study and the ontological and epistemological assumptions of cultural identity. Thus, I argue that the interpretive approach is a useful paradigm for understanding the experience of Arab Muslim students at New Zealand universities.

The roots of interpretive traditions are many (Glesne, 2006; Sandberg, 2005). Ajjawi and Higgs (2007) explained that the interpretive paradigm is grounded on the epistemology of idealism, which understands knowledge as a social construct. The interpretive-constructivist paradigm is guided by a number of assumptions for understanding our world and gaining knowledge. It is based on the assumption of ontology (there are multiple realities), the subjectivity of epistemology (researcher and participants cocreate understanding), and the naturalistic way of methodological procedures (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000). In terms of ontological assumptions, reality is not only naturally and externally shaped; rather, it is influenced by the individual (Allen, 2005; Glesne, 2006). It is also socially constructed and is contextually experienced and negotiated (Collier, 1998; Sandberg, 2005). This common understanding of reality as a construction reveals that both interpretive and constructive paradigms are similar (Sciarra, 1999).

According to the interpretive-constructivist approach, reality is understood as multiple, questionable, socially constructed, interpreted, and experienced by different individuals and groups (Burrell & Morgan, 1979; Glesne, 2006; Guba & Lincoln, 2004; Rossman & Rallis, 2003). Krauss (2005) explained that multiple realities exist because each individual experiences his own reality from his own understanding and points of view. Consequently, different understandings of the world lead individuals to be suspicious of themselves and their world (Allen, 2005; Guba & Lincoln, 2004). This approach highlights the conviction that individuals' experiences and communication are subjective (Martin & Nakayama, 1999).

The interpretive approach understands cultural identity to be multiple, constructed, experienced, and negotiated (Collier, 1998; Martin & Nakayama, 1999). Although Arab Muslim students share similar religious and cultural identities, each student has his/her own understandings and views of these identities and realities. These understandings are constructed by their own personal views, backgrounds, and other contextual factors. This reality can be interpreted and negotiated differently depending on those factors which create the subjectivity of reality. Moving from their own culture to the dominant one and interacting and communicating with others who hold different backgrounds and views also play a subjective part that affected the negotiation and construction of Arab Muslim students' identity. Midgley (2009) found that although two Saudi students ostensibly shared the same religious and cultural identities, these two students had very different views regarding living in the host culture that were "based on their unique and highly complex internal networks of attitudes, values, experiences, abilities, beliefs and convictions" (p. 93).

Relying on the interpretive-constructivist paradigm allows the researcher to understand how participants negotiate and maintain their own identities (Allen, 2005). The interpretive approach is consistent with communication theory, emphasizing that communication is a social and contextual construction and that identities affect individuals' interaction with others and are affected by them (Collier, 1998; Thompson & Collier, 2006). The reality and identity of participants are never static; rather, they are dynamic and on-going as a result of

their relationships, interaction, communication with others, and their own reflections.

In terms of epistemological assumptions, the approach attempts to understand how individuals create and understand knowledge. Different paradigms in understanding epistemology (knowledge) are based on different arguments about the existence of one reality or multiple realities (Krauss, 2005). In the interpretive approach, knowledge is socially and humanly constituted, constructed, and practised (Allen, 2005; Glesne, 2006). The approach emphasises the “process of knowledge development (“constructionism”), while stressing the significance of human interaction (“social”)” (Allen, 2005, p. 37). Knowledge is viewed as intentionally subjective rather than objective because it is influenced and constructed by our active minds and by our (new) understandings (Schwandt, 2000). It is subjective because it is constructed, produced, and maintained through social interactions (Allen, 2005; Glesne, 2006; Guba & Lincoln, 2004).

Social interaction plays a critical role that significantly affects knowledge, which means that knowledge is a dynamic process (Allen, 2005). Schwandt (2000) argued that knowledge is perspectival and contextual, and each interpretation can be accepted. In other words, interpretivism rejects the position that a social phenomenon is universal and asserts that it can only be understood in its social and cultural context (Allen, 2005; Collier, 1998) because realities cannot be understood without their contexts (Glaser, 2004). This approach explains that the lived experiences of participants are religiously and culturally contextual and are also shaped and framed by social interaction with others.

This methodological assumption is significantly influenced by ontological and epistemological assumptions. Research is directly affected by philosophical assumptions concerning ontology (reality), epistemology (knowledge) and human nature (Burrell & Morgan, 1979; Krauss, 2005). According to the methodological assumptions of the interpretive tradition, the best way to understand reality is through immersion in the context of the phenomena (Krauss, 2005), and by employing subjective and dynamic investigations with participants regarding their experiences (Collier, 1998; Glesne, 2006; Racher & Robinson, 2002). The interpretive approach acknowledges the ability of individuals to present

themselves, emphasising their active role in research, and allowing them to tell their stories (Collier, 1998).

This approach allows me as an investigator to understand how Arab Muslim students view and experience their reality in interacting and communicating with others in New Zealand institutional and community contexts. This paradigm examines and describes the world as it is by using “qualitative research methods” (Martin & Nakayama, 1999, p. 5). The paradigm assisted me to investigate the intercultural communication experiences of Arab Muslim students in New Zealand and to interview these students and then present their own accounts. How social interaction—the social reality of our everyday lives—is constituted in conversation and interaction (Schwandt, 2000) can be understood by adopting phenomenological methodology, a topic which is explored in the next section.

4.1.2 Understanding Lived Experience: A Phenomenological Approach

Phenomenology is a specific example of the interpretive approach. Scholarship in the field of intercultural communication identifies phenomenology as a qualitative and interpretive methodology that has a substantial history in the study of communication and culture (Martinez, 2008). It represents a foundation for the interpretive paradigm and unifies many of its approaches (Sandberg, 2005). Phenomenology is “a qualitative research technique that seeks to make explicit the implicit structure and meaning of human experience” (Sanders, 1982, p. 353) and is “an inductive, descriptive approach that gives subjectivity a privileged position” (Racher & Robinson, 2002, p. 464). Interpretive phenomenological methodology is a naturalistic approach that explicitly highlights the importance of contexts (place and time) in creating realities (Glaser, 2004; Willig, 2008) and focuses on the meaning that participants construct and attribute to their lived experiences (Sandberg, 2005; Sanders, 1982).

Communication as “the experience of otherness” is the main focus of phenomenology (Martinez, 2008, p. 139) and helps interpreters to understand how participants view their daily lived experiences (Schembri & Sandberg, 2011). Phenomenology is not intended to explain the causes of a given social phenomenon. Rather, it aims to offer a description and gain information and

understanding of how this phenomenon is experienced, viewed, and interpreted in the subject's own words (Denscombe, 2007; Williams & Paterson, 2009). This approach enables the researcher to present these experiences in a faithful way that is close to the original and within the context of the lived experience (Denscombe, 2007; Giorgi & Giorgi, 2008).

Phenomenology is both a philosophy and a research method. As a research method, phenomenology is rooted in the interpretive paradigm (Williams & Paterson, 2009). Phenomenologists have two options from which to select the one most appropriate to their research: traditional European descriptive phenomenology, and the new interpretive phenomenology of North American origin (Denscombe, 2007; Willig, 2008). Descriptive phenomenology is used in this study, which focuses on describing the lived experience of participants.

The approach is parallel to the interpretive-constructivist paradigm as it focuses on aspects of subjectivity, description, interpretation, and agency, and deals with individuals' meanings and experiences (Denscombe, 2007). It views reality and knowledge as they are experienced, as intersubjective and interpretively constructed, created, and shared (Sandberg, 2005; Schutz, 1971, 1973). The notion of life-world is introduced in phenomenological inquiry (Valle, King, & Halling, 1989). By saying that the life-world is experienced, we recognise an individual as someone rather than something, who understands an experience and interacts to it, and is interacted with in that experience (Natanson, 1970). The construction of social life means that multiple groups of people view and understand things differently (Denscombe, 2007).

Thus, phenomenology understands reality as multiple and ongoing because there are reciprocal influences between individuals and the world (Schutz, 1973). Individuals share their life-world and reality through their experiences with each other, and this reality is constructed and negotiated by their own interactions and experiences (Sandberg, 2005). Although individuals may have dealings in common with others through interaction, each person has his/her own views, perspectives, experiences, and knowledge (Natanson, 1970), which is consistent with the ontological assumption of cultural identity that each individual has a unique identity (Collier, 1998). The phenomenological approach emphasises that

culture is dynamic in nature and the interpreter must adhere to phenomenological philosophy in order to examine the cultural dynamic (Yoshitake, 2004).

Intentionality is another concept of the lived experience. Intentionality is the “essence of consciousness... that is directed towards some world or other (real world, an imaginary world, the dream world)” (Giorgi & Giorgi, 2008, p. 32). An experienced world means that individuals live and act within the contextual time, place, and culture that direct their own lives, determine their own thoughts, emotions and feelings, and enable them to understand their own and others’ senses, and to encounter daily life (Martinez, 2008; Schembri & Sandberg, 2011). This idea demonstrates that meaning is intentionality constructed by both the self and the world, which are inseparable factors (Willig, 2008).

This intentionality allows “objects to appear as phenomena” (p. 52), which indicates that meaning and experience are intentionality constructed and constituted (Willig, 2008). Phenomenologically, intentionality allows individuals to share the same reality, but they experience and perceive it differently, and explicitly or implicitly refer to it (Valle et al., 1989; Willig, 2008). For example, an individual may know the *hijab* (a piece of cloth covering the head worn by Muslim women) and consciously understand its essential characteristics. These features are essential to recognise and conceptualise the *hijab* (Polkinghorne, 1989).

The aim of descriptive phenomenology is to understand the shared meanings of several individuals, to be interested in understanding rather than explaining lived experience in a close and natural way, to describe how individuals experience and interpret their realities, to allow participants to talk about their own experiences in their own words, and to consider central meanings or essences of the experience (Denscombe, 2007; McCaslin & Scott, 2003; Polkinghorne, 1989). By assuming that there are universal perspectives among all people who share a common experience, the inquiry aims to identify those universal elements and perspectives that constitute general experience (Polkinghorne, 1989). It is individuals’ responses and behaviours alone rather than their beliefs and feelings that determine the essence of a particular phenomenon (McDermott-Levy, 2008).

The researcher who adopts the descriptive phenomenology approach should be aware of his own assumptions and preconceptions (Willig, 2008). Sharing the same experience in the participants' social world and relying on common assumptions require phenomenologists "to be aware of the fact that they rely on such everyday common sense, and make an effort to minimise the impact of these assumptions" (Denscombe, 2007, p. 81). The concept of "bracketing" can be used to describe this endeavour to disconnect from one's own beliefs, which may not be readily feasible at all (Giorgi & Giorgi, 2008). Partial bracketing requires suspending the influences of one's own past and current knowledge and experiences, suppositions and assumptions, and not espousing a well-delineated conceptualisation and theorisation of the phenomenon (Denscombe, 2007; Krauss, 2005; Willig, 2008).

Partial bracketing is used to eliminate researcher bias and set aside one's own assumptions, perceptions, and theories in order to significantly minimise their effect in understanding a particular phenomenon (Rennie, 1999; Willig, 2008). Temporarily, the interpretive researcher should suspend his or her own assumptions drawn from other sources relevant to the subject under investigation, in order to give participants an opportunity to express and describe the phenomenon from their points of view (Giorgi & Giorgi, 2008; Sandberg, 2005). The main objective is to achieve a sense of the objectivity of reality (Rennie, 1999), to develop advanced understandings of the lived experience that is not affected by the researcher's assumptions, and to uncover the essence of the lived experience (Willig, 2008).

Phenomenologists can use a number of strategies to apply bracketing. Adopting "the stance of the stranger" (Denscombe, 2007, p. 81) is one way of bracketing off presuppositions. The strategy motivates the researcher to act and interact with participants' experiences as if a stranger to the research. It impels the researcher to see and value all aspects of the participants' lived experience that might be hidden from the researcher (Denscombe, 2007). Sandberg (2005) encouraged interpreters to be aware of their own roles and subjectivity in the research process, in order to eliminate their own influence and interpretations (see "reflexivity" in section 4.2.8).

Good phenomenological research requires researchers to adhere to its main features, such as engaging with the phenomenon's participants, providing descriptive detail of the phenomenon, building a good relationship with participants, and revealing any experiences (Chamberlain, Camic, & Yardley, 2004; Creswell, 2007; Denscombe, 2007; Gibbs, 2007; Yoshitake, 2004). For example, to achieve the description needed, the researcher asks "what" and "how", but not "why" as the latter question tends to encourage participants to explain why they experience their lives the way they do (Sandberg, 2005). By answering the question "what", participants are able to provide descriptive and experiential data (Polkinghorne, 1989). While phenomenological reduction is concerned with the question "what is experienced", imaginative variation asks the question of how something is experienced in order to understand the phenomenon from different angles (Martinez, 2008, p. 146; Rennie, 1999; Willig, 2008, p. 53). In this study, I used these two types of questions to motivate participants to talk about and describe their interaction and communication experiences.

To conclude, this study is located within the interpretive approach, which views cultural and religious identity as consisting of multiple identities and knowledge as subjective. This approach enabled me to investigate the ways in which Arab Muslim students make sense of their intercultural communication experiences with non-Muslims in New Zealand. McCaslin and Scott (2003) pointed out that the design of the study is determined by the selection of a paradigm, which specifies the method of data collection and analysis.

4.2 The Methods

This section outlines the procedure for securing ethical approval and the methods used to gain access to participants. This study employed two methods: in-depth interviews, and document analyses. In-depth interviews served as the main data collection methods with Arab Muslim students and administrators. Documents were used to find out how universities' communication practices and rules might enable or constrain students in their learning process and social activities. It also focuses on the process of data collection and the strategy of analysing the data.

4.2.1 Ethical Considerations

Intercultural communication studies focus on human subjects and so requires obtaining approval from relevant authoritative organisations. The main ethical concerns include avoiding causing harm to vulnerable participants and protecting them, offering full information about the aims of the research, protecting and maintaining their privacy and confidentiality, and preventing deception (Denscombe, 2007; Fontana & Frey, 2000; Lincoln & Guba, 2000). Before beginning data collection, ethical issues relating to permission to carry out interviews were addressed. Ethical approval (Appendix 1) was received from the Ethics Committee at the Waikato Management School to conduct interviews among Arab Muslim students who were from Arabian Gulf countries and studying at New Zealand universities. As the study aimed to interview female participants, and since there is a cultural issue with interviewing the opposite sex, the Committee asked for detailed information for dealing with this issue, which I provided. Thus, in order to obtain approval, the ethical application had to go through a constructive review, which took about three months. It was concluded that participants were unlikely to experience harm or risk by answering the interview questions.

I provided an information sheet (Appendix 2) and consent form (Appendix 3) in both Arabic and English versions. Participants were given freedom to select which version of the consent form they wanted to sign. The main participants of this study were Arab Muslim students. However, to gain the university's perspective on participants' experiences, I decided to conduct short interviews with administrative staff as well. I contacted the International Student Centre at universities and invited administrators to take part in the study. The information sheet was emailed to those who showed an interest in participating. A follow-up email requested an appointment at a time convenient for administrative participants in order to carry out the interview.

I fully informed the study participants about the research context and process through an information sheet, which contained the context of the study, its main purpose, participants' roles in the study, their rights, reiteration that their participation in this study was voluntary, and that they had the right to withdraw if

they so desired (up to 1 month after the interview) without any negative consequences (Smith, Larkin, & Flowers, 2009). None of the participants requested withdrawal from the study. My contact details and those of my supervisors were included in case participants had any questions or concerns about the study. At the beginning of the interview, I orally went through the project information sheet and the consent form with participants, answered any questions that participants had about the study, informed them that the interview would be recorded, and then asked them to sign the consent form. The interview started only after each participant had signed the consent form. By signing the consent form, permission to conduct and to record the interview was given. None of the participants had any concerns about speaking and none refused to talk while the tape recorder was on.

The right to privacy ensured the participants' identities, along with the knowledge and information they produced, remained confidential (Bryman, 2008). I highlighted the confidentiality of any information that participants would provide to me. As participants shared their own personal thoughts and experiences, confidentiality was an important aspect. Thus, in all circumstances, participants' personal identities, names, universities, cities, or similar information were not identified in the thesis or other publications. All tapes were kept securely and labelled with participants' pseudonyms. All interviews were transcribed verbatim by me, with the assistance of a third party. Whereas student interviews were transcribed by me, administrators' interviews were professionally transcribed by the third party. A Confidentiality Agreement (Appendix 4) was signed by the transcriber to ensure privacy and to observe ethical standards. I sent records to the transcriber without revealing the names of the participants and who they were. Participants were given a chance to review their interview transcripts and no modifications were requested. Interview tapes, notes, transcripts, and other confidential material were also kept in a secure place in order to protect data and to ensure privacy.

The Ethics Committee informed me that some interview questions might touch on sensitive issues since they probed the daily experiences of participants and needed to be handled carefully. Consequently, I made it clear to participants that they had

the right to refuse to discuss or answer any sensitive questions. I respected their right to opt out of answering such questions and I did not force participants to give any particular responses; nor did I probe further in any way. Only one female student refused to answer a question. I respected her refusal and asked her a different question, which was not relevant to the topic that she had refused to answer. After each interview, each participant was given a thank you card for taking part in my study. Interviewees might have experienced tension or anxiety as they were open and provided full personal information about their experiences (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). To manage this issue, I had to remind participants that their information would be kept confidential and would only be used for the purposes of the study and without any personal identification. Some participants expressed their interest in knowing the findings of the study. I decided to translate the main findings into Arabic and gave each interviewee a copy. I also provided an English copy for New Zealand universities, as the administrative staff had requested.

4.2.2 Recruiting and Accessing Participants

The context of this study was four New Zealand universities. New Zealand has eight public universities, which are located in different cities in the country. These institutions provide education to local as well as international students from all around the world (Anderson, 2006). Over the last 5 years, the number of Arab Gulf students has significantly increased in these universities. Most of these students are sponsored by their governments.

Phenomenological research aims to develop a deep, rich description of the participants' lived experience. It attempts to focus on a homogeneous group of participants and prefers purposeful sampling (Smith & Osborn, 2008). A purposeful sampling method is consistent with the interpretive paradigm that the study is based on. The phenomenological type of research recommends selecting participants who are able to offer insightful experiences (Ajjawi & Higgs, 2007; Liamputtong & Ezzy, 2005; Maxwell, 2005; Miller & Crabtree, 2004; Smith et al., 2009). The sampling aims to provide in-depth understandings and detailed information to assist in "learn[ing] a great deal about issues of central importance to the purpose of the research" (Patton, 2002, p. 46), and it also allows dealing

with multiple realities (Glaser, 2004). This sampling requires careful selection of participants who meet a set of criteria and are able to answer the research questions and provide rich and detailed description and information regarding the phenomenon under study (Liamputtong & Ezzy, 2005; Patton, 2002; Polkinghorne, 1989; Smith & Osborn, 2008). Denscombe (2007) noted that participants are chosen purposefully due to their special contribution or unique insight or because they hold a certain position.

Participants in this study were identified through a number of criteria. First, Arabian Gulf students studying at New Zealand universities from 2010 to 2012 were invited to participate in this study. Second, participants also had to be Muslim students as some Arabian Gulf countries are home to non-Muslims. Although general topics are experienced by all kinds of people, there are specific topics that are limited to certain groups who can provide rich data concerning the topic under investigation (Polkinghorne, 1989; Smith et al., 2009). The group of Arab Muslim students was able to provide their own thoughts and reflections about their interaction and communication experiences with others and how their identities affected, and were affected by, these experiences.

Third, in order to obtain a variety of experiences and views, I considered other features in determining participants, such as students who had just arrived or had been in New Zealand for a length of time, including those studying the English language, who might have undergraduate, graduate, and post-graduate status, from different schools and disciplines, and who might be married or single. It was important that participants met the criteria in order to provide a rich description and a wide range of experiences (Polkinghorne, 1989). Participants from diverse countries, backgrounds, and ages were also considered in the quest to uncover the essence of the phenomenon under investigation (McDermott-Levy, 2008).

Accessing participants is another issue that should be considered and is a crucial dimension in qualitative research (Glesne, 2006). Other researchers who conducted studies in a similar area of research chose to access Muslim participants at Friday prayers and/or to request cooperation from mosques' leaders or from the Muslim student associations (Asmar et al., 2004; Croucher, 2008; Peek, 2003; Speck, 1997). Denscombe (2007) advised researchers to contact

participants who will be able to contribute, in advance. For this study, the most viable ways to access my participants and recruit them was through formal and informal contact with Gulf Arab Muslim students' associations and clubs at New Zealand universities. Three months prior to the interviews, I emailed the invitation email, which explained the main aim of the study, to the presidents of these associations in the cities where the research was to take place.

I also called and requested the president of these associations to email this invitation to all their members, male and female. The Gulf Arab students' clubs and associations had their members' email addresses, including contact details for both sexes. Potential participants who were interested in this study were invited to contact me either via my email address or the phone number included in the invitation. Although I knew some of these participants, they had to be identified through email and according to the criteria. The email to the president and the invitation email are attached (Appendix 5). Most participants were unknown to me. Knowing some participants and not others raised a concern for me as to whether my study findings might be different had I known all my participants or, conversely, if I were a stranger to them all.

Sharing the same cultural and religious backgrounds might be an aspect that affects the interviewing process and influences participants to provide specific responses or not (Shah, 2004). As an Arab Muslim student, this factor might facilitate my interviewing Arab Muslim students, obtaining their cooperation in accessing data and building a rapport with them. However, accessing the opposite sex must be "negotiated within cultural conventions and constraints" (Shah, 2004, p. 556). According to Islamic law, sitting with a member of the opposite sex who is not a close relative in a private place is prohibited, and for a man to discuss certain topics with a woman is also not acceptable (Roald, 2001). Most significantly, as female students are affected by Islamic law as well as cultural and traditional values, these influences were carefully considered. It might, I knew however, be possible to obtain cooperation from female participants if interviews were conducted in the presence of a woman known to them who could support them (such as my wife or one of their female friends) (Liamputtong & Ezzy, 2005; Shah, 2004; Tuncalp, 1988).

Female participants had the option to be interviewed by a woman if they requested it. If they were married, they were also allowed to bring their husbands, a friend, or a support person along with them to the interview if they so wished. I also informed them that my wife could attend interviews in the event that female participants were unable to bring a support person or friend and wanted a woman to attend. All the female participants were willing to be interviewed by me and did not request a support person or my wife to attend or conduct the interview. Only potential participants who matched the research criteria, showed interest in the topic, and agreed to take part and be interviewed were included in this study. Polkinghorne (1989) pointed out that by showing interest in taking part in a study and describing their experiences, subjects are more likely to be able to provide full information about the topic under investigation.

Regardless of these options to encourage female participation in the study, only 13 women agreed to take part in the study. Recruiting female participants was the main challenge that I encountered. Difficulty in accessing participants of the opposite sex was also observed by Zine (1997). There were a number of potential explanations for this issue. Arab female Muslim students might not be interested in participating because they did not want to discuss sensitive matters with others, or they felt uncomfortable sitting with someone of the opposite sex. Thus, the sample of women took longer to recruit than that for the men. I had expected that the majority of the female participants would be from Oman as I am also from Oman. However, only three newly-arrived Omani women and one who had been here longer agreed to take part in the study.

Following the identification of participants, I contacted male Arab Muslim students by telephone to introduce myself, explain the objectives of the study, and inform them that I would email the information sheet. For female participants, my wife called and introduced me to them. This is an appropriate way to contact the opposite sex according to Islamic and cultural values. I also orally explained the goals of the study to the women and emailed the information sheet to them. A follow-up meeting was necessary with some participants to clarify details and enable participants to feel comfortable about participating. I then requested an appointment to conduct the first interview.

The sample size depended on the number of students who responded to the request to participate. The number of interviewees in preceding phenomenological studies ranged from 1 to 30 participants (Polkinghorne, 1989; Smith & Osborn, 2008). It has been suggested that it should be between three and six participants (Smith et al., 2009). The main concern of phenomenological studies is to focus on particular phenomena in certain contexts and to examine them in detail, which means that the sample sizes of phenomenological studies tend to be very small (Smith & Osborn, 2008; Smith et al., 2009). In this study, I conducted in-depth interviews with 45 male and female students who showed interest in the topic and agreed to take part in the study, which was a large number in phenomenological research.

To gain the university's perspective on participants' experiences, I decided to conduct short interviews with administrative staff as well. I contacted the International Student Centre at universities and invited administrators to take part in the study. The information sheet was emailed to those who showed an interest in participating. A follow-up email requested an appointment at a time convenient for administrative participants in order to carry out the interview. The total number of administrative participants was eight.

4.2.3 Description of Participants

In this study, the participants were 32 males and 13 females who ranged in age from 17 to 38 years. All participants were sponsored by their governments except for two Saudi male students who told me in the second round of interviews that they had been granted scholarships. Seven participants were Bahraini, 21 were Omani, 12 were Saudi, and 5 were Emirati. There were 34 single and 11 married participants. At the time of the interview, 20 participants had been in the country from 2-4 years, 10 from 4-6 years and 15 from 1 month to 2 years. The latter included 10 newly arrived participants who were interviewed twice. Eighteen were predegree programme students (12 studied in the English programme and 3 studied in the Foundation programme), 10 were postgraduate students and 17 were undergraduate students. At both postgraduate and undergraduate levels, 19 participants were enrolled in the humanities and 11 were pursuing studies in science.

The administrative participants were four males and four females who worked in different New Zealand universities. At the time of the interview, their length of work experience ranged from 4 months to 5 years. Their backgrounds varied as they came from New Zealand, Asia and Arab countries.

The following tables provide detail information of students and administrative participants.

Table 1: Description of student participants

Name (Pseudonyms)	Country	Gender	Age	Personal statue	Level of education	Specialisation	Year in NZ
Moosa	Bahrain	Male	20-24	Not Married	Postgraduate	Education	4
Bassam	Bahrain	Male	20-24	Not Married	Undergraduate	Education	3
Baddar	Bahrain	Male	20-24	Not Married	Undergraduate	Education and Economy	4
Mohanad	Bahrain	Male	20-24	Not Married	Undergraduate	Business and Management	3
Badra	Bahrain	Female	20-24	Not Married	Undergraduate	Education	4
Jana	Bahrain	Female	20-24	Not Married	Undergraduate	Education	4
Albatool	Bahrain	Female	20-24	Not Married	Undergraduate	Management	3
Lugman	Oman	Male	35-40	Married	Postgraduate	Management	6
Almunther	Oman	Male	35-40	Married	Postgraduate	Management	5
Mohammed	Oman	Male	30-34	Married	Postgraduate	Management	5
Fuaid	Oman	Male	30-34	Married	Postgraduate	Statistic	5
Abdulazes	Oman	Male	20-24	Married	Undergraduate	Network and Communication	4
Yahia	Oman	Male	30-34	Married	Postgraduate	Management	4
Khaleel	Oman	Male	20-24	Not Married	Undergraduate	Social Policy	6
Ali	Oman	Male	20-24	Not Married	Undergraduate	Medicine	2
Yousif	Oman	Male	20-24	Not Married	Undergraduate	Medicine	2
Hood	Oman	Male	20-24	Not Married	Undergraduate	Engineering	4
Bilal	Oman	Male	20-24	Not Married	Undergraduate	Engineering	4
Jannat	Oman	Female	-20	Not Married	Undergraduate	Medicine	2
Suad	Oman	Female	-20	Not Married	Undergraduate	Engineering	8 months
Ibrahim	Oman	Male	18	Not Married	Pre-degree programme	English	One year
Marwan	Oman	Male	18	Not Married	Pre-degree programme	English	One year

Continue description of student participants

Name (Pseudonyms)	Country	Gender	Age	Personal statue	Level of education	Specialisation	Year in NZ
Abdulhakim	Oman	Male	18	Not Married	Pre-degree programme	English	One year
Hilal	Oman	Male	18	Not Married	Pre-degree programme	English	One year
Sultan	Oman	Male	18	Not Married	Pre-degree programme	English	One year
Khadija	Oman	Male	18	Not Married	Pre-degree programme	English	One year
Faten	Oman	Male	18	Not Married	Pre-degree programme	English	One year
Sarah	Oman	Male	18	Not Married	Pre-degree programme	English	One year
Haitham	UAE	Male	20-24	Not Married	Undergraduate	Medicine	2
Abdurrahman	UAE	Male	20-24	Not Married	Undergraduate	Medicine	3
Omar	UAE	Male	20-24	Not Married	Undergraduate	Engineering	4
Jauher	UAE	Female	-20	Not Married	Pre-degree programme	Foundation	1
Safia	UAE	Female	-20	Not Married	Pre-degree programme	Foundation	14 months
Hatem	Saudi Arabia	Male	20-24	Not Married	Pre-degree programme	English	One month
Jaber	Saudi Arabia	Male	25-29	Not Married	Pre-degree programme	English	One month
Tariq	Saudi Arabia	Male	20-24	Not Married	Pre-degree programme	English	1
Said	Saudi Arabia	Male	20-24	Married	Undergraduate	Engineering	3
Jamal	Saudi Arabia	Male	25-29	Not Married	Undergraduate	Management	3
Noor	Saudi Arabia	Male	30-34	Married	Undergraduate	Management	2
Mansoor	Saudi Arabia	Male	25-29	Not Married	Postgraduate	Education	2 and 6 months
Rashid	Saudi Arabia	Male	25-29	Married	Postgraduate	Management	3
Alhusan	Saudi Arabia	Male	25-29	Married	Postgraduate	Law	2
Amal	Saudi Arabia	Female	25-29	Not Married	Pre-degree programme	English	1
Shrooq	Saudi Arabia	Female	25-29	Not Married	Undergraduate	Management	2 and 6 months
Zahra	Saudi Arabia	Female	25-29	Not Married	Undergraduate	Management	3

Table 2: Description of administrative participants

Name (Pseudonyms)	Gender	University (Pseudonyms)	Length of time in job
Michele	Female	A university	4 months
Mary	Female	A university	4 years
Katherine	Female	B university	One year and a half
Rose	Female	C university	5 years
Tom	Male	C university	2 months
Hussam	Male	D university	One year and a half
Ismail	Male	A university	One year and a half
Mustafa	Male	C university	5 years

4.2.4 The Interview Method

This section provides a rationalisation for using in-depth interview, and details its advantages. Then, the section details the pilot study process in building interview questions. This part is followed by an explanation of person who created the interview schedule along with illustration of its structure, creator, and protocol.

4.2.4.1 Using In-Depth Interviews

The interpretive researcher is recommended to focus on a dialogic engagement with participants to examine their lived experiences. This engagement can be achieved by focusing on face-to-face and long-term interactions, and open-ended interviews in which researchers can obtain closeness to participants and explore purposefully and contextually with participants the meanings of their life-world through their own narratives (Glesne, 2006; Heyl, 2001; Maso, 2001; Rossman & Rallis, 2003). Since the study focuses on participants' daily lived experiences of interaction and communication with others, the phenomenological in-depth interview methodology is an appropriate method as it attempts to "get close to its subjects in order to capitalize upon their familiarity with the topic of study" (Gubrium & Holstein, 1997, p. 42).

Phenomenologists value the interview method for a number of reasons. First, the method tends to be lengthy, which allows for in-depth investigation and understanding of aspects surrounding the phenomenon (Denscombe, 2007; Smith & Osborn, 2008). In-depth interviews are seen as the strongest and most appropriate method in qualitative research when the researcher is looking to obtain rich informational data based on a small number of participants (Jensen, 2002; Patton, 2002) and is seeking for depth of explanation through probing questions (Glesne, 2006). Second, interviewees are allowed to raise and express any issues that they think significant (Denscombe, 2007; Smith & Osborn, 2008). This degree of freedom can be achieved only by conducting semistructured interviews (Denscombe, 2007). Semistructured interviews involve less control over the format of questions and allow the researcher a flexibility to follow up questions that are based on participants' answers; the result provides significant in-depth data (Denscombe, 2007; Fontana & Frey, 2000; Thomas, 2003).

Adopting semistructured interviews is consistent with phenomenological principles and practices (Willig, 2008). The preferred means for data collection tends to be one-to-one interviews as they are easily managed (Smith et al., 2009). By using semistructured interviews, I had the option of asking broad, open questions. This strategy allowed participants to express their experiences of the world, tell their own stories in their own voices, identify the most important issues they face, and use their own perspectives (Collier, 1998; Dagkas & Benn, 2006; Smith & Osborn, 2008). In terms of my role, asking these broad questions, followed by supplementary questions, gave me an opportunity to enter the life-world of participants (Willig, 2008) and learn about their lived experience (Sciarra, 1999). The interpretive-constructivist approach promotes the position that the researcher and participants seek "co-created and co-constructed knowledge during the inquiry" (Krauss, 2005, p. 761).

Third, using interviews facilitates an interaction method between the investigator and participants in understanding the reality of those participants (Collier, 1998; Guba & Lincoln, 2004). This verbal engagement allows the researcher to check his/her own assumptions by asking general questions with an open-ended format in order to allow a better understanding of phenomena, and it gives participants

the opportunity to tell their stories, express their understandings, and reject any assumptions (Denscombe, 2007; Liamputtong & Ezzy, 2005). Fourth, utilising interviews helps researchers to experience the phenomenon directly from the participants' point of view (Bouma & Ling, 2004; Patton, 2002; Willig, 2001). The interview process involves cooperation between interviewer and interviewees (Heyl, 2001; Miller & Crabtree, 2004), respecting participants, and building rapport and an on-going relationship (Heyl, 2001; Smith & Osborn, 2008).

The phenomenological approach is a useful one in investigating participants' change over time with regard to their cultural and religious identities (Chambers, 2000; Tedlock, 2000). As Holmes and Poole (1991) noted, "all social phenomena unfold and change over time" (p. 286), and the best method to understand them is by investigating them over a long period of time. The main reason for considering time in intercultural communication research is that social interaction between people involves developmental issues, such as people's changing behaviours over time (Warner, 1991). Thus, longitudinal studies aim to investigate individuals' attitudes, opinions, and feelings that are affected by time (Warner, 1991). The study used in-depth interviews in two stages to investigate newly-arrived Arab Muslim students' experiences of their interaction and communication with non-Muslims, and to gather data on how these experiences, with regard to their cultural and religious identities, change over time.

4.2.4.2 The Pilot Study

Conducting a pilot study is essential to address any issues regarding the interview guide, structure, and questions. Kvale and Brinkmann (2009) asserted that one way of mastering the craft of interviewing and its skills is by practising interviewing. The main objectives for conducting this pilot study included developing my personal interviewing strategies, revising the interview guide, evaluating the interview questions, covering important questions, dealing with sensitive questions, and ensuring that the interview questions would generate themes that addressed the research questions (Kvale, 2007; Polkinghorne, 1989; Smith et al., 2009; Welsh, 2002).

Developing interview questions involved three phases. The first phase was developing the interview questions—an interview guide—by reviewing literature and theories regarding the topic, and becoming familiar with the participants’ culture and language (Glesne, 2006; Miller & Crabtree, 2004). Kvale and Brinkmann (2009) pointed out that going over literature reviews and theoretical studies is not the only way to obtain familiarity with the topic of an investigation. Rather, the interview researcher must understand the actual environment of the subjects. I was able to deal with this issue since I am myself an Arab Muslim student living in the New Zealand community and studying at one of this country’s universities.

The interview questions were developed in the English language (Appendix 6). However, the option of “cross-linguistic comparability of the English and Arabic versions that can be checked by a third person who is bilingual in English and Arabic” (Tuncalp, 1988, p. 18). I followed this advice, as a bilingual speaker was utilised to achieve a reliable translation. The three main processes involved in this method are: translating the English version into Arabic myself: giving both the English and Arabic versions to another person to check the Arabic translation: and, comparing the two versions in order to assess the effectiveness of the translation process (Tuncalp, 1988). In this study, two master’s students, competent in both the English and Arabic languages, were given versions in both languages in order to check my translation. I then compared my own translation with those of these two students and revised my translation in light of their comments and recommendations.

I conducted a prepilot testing by giving research questions to four men and one woman—all Arab Muslim students studying in New Zealand universities—to check that my questions were in simple language, easily understood, and relevant to the research topic (Glesne, 2006; Smith & Osborn, 2008). I then carried out the pilot study with three Arab Muslim students—two men and one woman—who were studying at one of New Zealand’s universities. These students had spent different lengths of time in the country and they studied different specialisations. I asked all participants to nominate a time and location that was most appropriate for conducting the interview. Two interviews were carried out on campus in my

office; the other took place outside the university in the participant's house. I discussed the consent form with participants, had them sign it, and recorded the interviews. All three interviews took a combined 265 minutes, with an average interview time of about 88 minutes. I transcribed the three interviews.

Participants were asked to provide feedback about the interview questions, their clarity, comprehensibility, and sensitivity. All three students found that the interview questions were clear, interesting, and relevant to all areas of their academic and life experiences. The female brought to my attention questions that dealt with women's clothing and establishing a friendship with the opposite sex. Liamputtong and Ezzy (2005) argued that in-depth interview questions may need to be reinterpreted differently for participants. I had dealt with these sensitive questions by asking general questions. Most importantly, the female interviewee pointed out to me that if there had been another person (or a relative at the interview with her), she would have been restricted in her ability to speak freely and comfortably. This information encouraged me to think the matter over. I discussed the issue with my supervisors and managed it by suggesting that women would be interviewed by a woman, rather than by me.

Further, a number of other issues which needed to be considered in the main study data collection emerged. They involved not asking questions that had been answered by participants through other questions, ensuring participants continued talking while I was looking at the interview guide, removing repetitions, and asking clear and specific questions. Over time, I became confident in asking questions, presenting them clearly, and not repeating them, thus supporting Kvale and Brinkmann (2009) view that "flexible, content- and context-related skills of interviewing are acquired by doing interviews" (p. 89). The final interview protocol can be found in the Appendix 7.

4.2.4.3 Structure of the Interviews

The interview questions matched and addressed the study's research questions. The first research question focuses on the influence of universities' communication practices in the negotiation process of students' identities. A number of interview questions examine students' experiences in the classroom,

and when interacting, communicating, working, socialising with teachers and other students on campuses. These questions also reveal how universities manage the presence of these students, and the effect on sojourners of being an Arab Muslim in these contexts. The second research question addresses communication practices that Arab Muslim students adopt to achieve successful acceptance. Examples of interview questions include asking about their experiences in finding accommodation, living, interacting, socialising with New Zealanders, and being Arab Muslim. Details about matching research questions with interview questions are presented in Appendix 8.

There was also a need to ask administrative staff who worked in international student offices at universities about cultural and religious identities. Thus, I decided to conduct short interviews with administrative staff in order to understand university perspectives towards the presence of Arab Muslim students, and to obtain a better understanding of the context. Valadez (2008) argued that examining the role of institutional agents, such as academic and administrative staff as they interact with students daily, would provide much needed information about how students understand their experiences in such academic contexts. The interview questions focused on how universities view the presence of Arab Muslim students, and whether they use specific policies to target these students, deal with them, and accommodate them and their expectations. The protocol of the administrative interview questions is in Appendix 9.

After finalising the interview questions, I moved to the next step, which was conducting the interviews. Interviewing is affected by a number of factors. These include finding suitable locations, opening the interview, considering cultural and religious issues, obtaining cooperation from participants, understanding the language and culture of participants, paying attention to sensitive issues, and other issues (Fontana & Frey, 2000; Glesne, 2006; Shah, 2004). Setting up the interview is the first issue that interview researchers must consider. Creating a productive atmosphere requires setting the stage for where the interview will take place (Myers, 2009). According to Glesne (2006), convenient, appropriate and comfortable locations for both researcher and respondent should be considered when conducting an interview. Conducting in-depth interviews requires a place

that is comfortable and safe for both the researcher and the participant and which considers participants' cultural practices (Bouma & Ling, 2004; Smith & Osborn, 2008). In this study, one-on-one interviews were conducted with participants, who were given the opportunity to determine a convenient time and location to carry out the interview.

Two rounds of interviews were conducted to allow for an examination of the experiences of newly-arrived students over time. Glesne (2006) explained that the purpose of the study determines how multisessions will be used. These two rounds of interviews were carried out over a period of one year. The main reason for conducting the second round of interviews was to find out how newly-arrived Arab Muslim students' perceptions of their intercultural communication with non-Muslims developed over time, and how these experiences affected, and were affected by, their Islamic and cultural identities. Questions about maintaining and changing identities were asked of this group of students in the second round of interviews only. The reason for not asking these questions in the first round of interviews was that these students had no experience in this area as they had just arrived in the country.

Additionally, in-depth interviews take a long time and may introduce new concerns and issues. Thus, questions that emerged from these interviews that were important for understanding the lived experience of participants were asked again in the second round of interviews (Bouma & Ling, 2004; Collier, 1998; Glesne, 2006). Capturing the newly-arrived students' experiences at two different points in time allowed me to understand the experience of the Arab students being researched. For example, students were asked to describe and reflect on the differences in their impressions formed at the time of their first arrival in the country and then again after 10 months there.

The first round of interviews took place in September and October 2010. Forty-five male and female Arab Muslim students, who studied at New Zealand universities, participated in this first round. The second round of interviews was conducted again in September and October 2011, but this time with only 10 newly-arrived students (see Appendix 10). I also conducted a total of eight

interviews among university administrators and support workers. Administrative interviews took place between May and July 2011.

4.2.4.4 The Interview Protocol and Cultural Considerations

After setting up the interview and determining the rounds of interviews, I was ready to carry out interviews with the participants. I was also guided by an interview protocol and considered other cultural considerations when conducting interviews. Most male participants were interviewed at my office or in their homes, as they preferred. Female participants preferred to be interviewed in the library study rooms at universities, although one woman chose to be interviewed in a meeting room at her place of residence. I intended also to leave enough space in order to sit opposite the woman. Considering these issues would fulfil Islamic requirements relating to sitting with the opposite sex. For administrative staff, all interviews took place in their offices, in line with their preference. At all interview locations, a number of factors were considered, such as avoiding disturbing anyone, offering privacy, ensuring physical convenience, and allowing comfortable interaction and eye contact between the researcher and participants (Denscombe, 2007; Glesne, 2006).

The quality of data collection is also crucially affected by the setting up of the introduction to the interview as well as its conclusion. The initial stage of the interview is considered decisive (Kvale, 2007; Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). The researcher has to connect with participants by establishing a rapport to facilitate a good understanding of the interview process and to provide information. Janesick (2000) pointed out that accessing participants is the most sensitive factor, so researchers must build trust and rapport with participants. I attempted to build trust and confidence with participants by providing a brief introduction about myself, explaining the research purposes, the interview process. I also gave the reasons behind their selection and emphasised my desire to hear their interesting stories (Kvale, 2007; Liamputtong & Ezzy, 2005; Lincoln & Guba, 2003; Lindlof, 1995). By building trust, I could easily access participants' points of view, ensure their willingness to share their experiences, gain information from them, obtain their informed consent, and ensure more comfortable conditions for them to answer personal and sensitive questions (Fine, Weis, Weseen, & Wong, 2000;

Fontana & Frey, 2000; Glesne, 2006; Janesick, 2000). For female participants, reiterating confidentiality requirements throughout the interview process proved to be an appropriate way to obtain and maintain a rapport with them.

Myers (2009) emphasised that “first impressions can dramatically affect the rest of the interview (either positively or negatively)” (p. 131). A positive impression leads to “a relaxed atmosphere in which interviewee[s feel] free to open up on the topic under consideration” (Denscombe, 2007, pp. 192-193). The way in which an interviewer introduces himself/herself can have a profound influence on the participants and the success of the interview (Fontana & Frey, 2000). In this study, I presented myself to my participants as a researcher who wanted to learn and comprehend fellow Arab Muslim students’ experiences in communicating and interacting with others in New Zealand culture. In this sense, I shared with the study’s participants the experience of being an international Arab Muslim university student.

The participants and I share the same religion and culture, so I considered the religious and cultural requirements in meeting people of a different gender, interacting and communicating with them, respecting them, and dressing appropriately when meeting them. For example, I had no issue with having eye contact when communicating with participants of my own sex; in fact, the culture encouraged me to do so. However, having eye contact was not appropriate with the opposite sex. I tried to avoid eye contact with female participants and created a space between me, as a male, and the female participants, a rule that is not required for members of the same sex. I respected the values and rules for behaviour with my participants at all times.

As is usual in Islamic and Arabic cultures, I began by greeting the interviewees, asking them about their study and their families, which is an acceptable norm in Arab culture. This approach allowed for the creating a relaxed climate. When I greeted participants, I shook hands only with the men but not with the women, as to do so is against Islamic teaching. I introduced myself, explained my interests in the study, and thanked them for agreeing to take part in it. I ensured that the process of the interview was like a daily conversation between two equals, not as an interviewer and interviewee. At the end of the interview, I thanked participants,

invited them to eat or have something to drink, then walked with them to the door. With the women I did not make any of these offers since such practices across genders are not permissible. For administrative participants, I started the interview by greeting and thanking them for taking part in the study.

Speaking the same language and sharing the same culture with participants allow researchers to gain fuller access to information (Glesne, 2006; Liamputtong & Ezzy, 2005; Shah, 2004). Liamputtong and Ezzy (2005) argued that sharing the same race and speaking the same language facilitate rapport. I am an Arab Muslim student, and I used the Arabic language in interviewing participants in order to facilitate rapport with them, to ask questions more effectively, and to probe further. Kvale and Brinkmann (2009) asserted that a good interviewer masters a number of skills, and proficiency in language is one of them. By speaking the same language, my participants and I had an advantage in capturing and expressing ideas and opinions in deep, clear, and comfortable ways (Ajjawi & Higgs, 2007; Mostafa, 2006), and in minimising misunderstandings and misinterpretations that may arise from the use of a second language (Ujitani, 2006). Researchers who use a non-native language in interviewing participants may encounter reluctance from participants as they may encounter difficulty in expressing their experiences in a comfortable way (Bailey, 2009; Gunel, 2007).

Keeping interviews dynamic and not allowing long silences in conversation are an issue that the interviewer must consider while conducting the interview. I considered this issue for the interviews. Although interview questions were based on literature and previous studies, the substance of these questions was expressed in everyday language, as explained in the pilot study (Kvale, 2007). As the pilot study found, the language needed to be understood by the interviewees and to be simple, concise, and clear. This strategy motivated both participants and me to establish positive interaction, maintained the participants' enthusiasm, and encouraged them to speak freely and comfortably about their life-experience (Glesne, 2006; Kvale, 2007).

Interrupting silences to encourage participants to talk does not mean that the interviewer should provide answers when participants struggled to express themselves, because doing so shifts "the focus from the participant's contexts of

meaning and interpretations to the interviewer's contexts of meaning” (Liamputtong & Ezzy, 2005, p. 58). Participants were encouraged to speak freely and comfortably. I stimulated participants' thinking by reframing questions, avoiding interrupting, avoiding judging their experiences, maintaining good contact with the interviewees through listening carefully, and showing respect and interest (Kvale, 2007; Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009; Liamputtong & Ezzy, 2005). I made a point of not interrupting participants unless I needed some clarification regarding the topic. By asking for clarification, I was considering the analysis stage in order to ensure I understood the full meanings of participants' statements (Kvale, 2007; Polkinghorne, 1989). I was also concerned about ambiguity and contradictions that some participants expressed, and made sure that these ambiguities or contradictory answers were not a result of miscommunication or misunderstanding between the interviewer and the interviewee, but rather, were based on the contradictions felt by participants as they had been in New Zealand for more than 3 years, and so had had a range of different experiences (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009).

The main feature of in-depth interviews is to encourage participants to describe their experience in as much detail as possible (Glesne, 2006; Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). In order to achieve this outcome, the interview questions started with a general question and went on to further interpretive questions (Smith & Osborn, 2008). Probing questions followed me to generate in-depth understanding of the phenomenon, and to encourage participants to provide examples of their experiences. One example of these types of questions follows:

Tell me of your experience in working with different nationalities and genders.

I would probe as needed by asking:

- What circumstances led to the interaction?
- What things did you like?
- What challenges did you face?
- How did you cope with these challenges?

- What were your feelings in these situations?

The choice of probing questions varied from one interviewee to another depending on people's particular experiences and the issues that had been raised in the interview (Smith & Osborn, 2008). These types of questions motivate participants to give a variety of answers in various styles and to talk descriptively about their experiences (Kvale, 2007). I made sure that all the interview questions were addressed, but I was not concerned to ask questions in any set order. If participants covered issues in one segment of the interview, I would move on to the corresponding area of questions in the interview schedule (Smith & Osborn, 2008). This method was also recommended by the pilot study. I rarely referred to the interview schedule as I had learnt it very well and memorised it; consequently there was little disruption to the interview's progress (Smith et al., 2009). At the end of each interview, I asked participants if there was any important topic they had not been able to cover, and invited them to add it. I also ran through the interview questions to make sure that all had been asked (Kvale, 2007; Liamputtong & Ezzy, 2005; Myers, 2009).

Interviewing newly-arrived participants was a great experience for me. These students were eager for more informal conversations than longer-term participants were. Although both newly-arrived and longer-term participants tried to assist me in my research by sharing their own stories without hesitation, newly-arrived students viewed me as a reliable resource they could trust. They started asking me questions and requesting advice in dealing with study and life issues. For example, male participants requested advice on how to balance their ties with fellow Muslim students and integration with non-Muslims. Female participants relied on me to help them to understand Islamic and cultural guidelines in interacting and communicating with the opposite sex. Both male and female participants asked for suggestions about managing daily encounters, such as dealing with questions about wearing the *hijab*, style of dress, interaction between the sexes, watching movies in the cinema, and other issues. I had not expected such questions and they gave me additional understanding and a basis for reflection on issues that newly-arrived Arab Muslim students encounter in the new environment and their need for direction in managing them.

The commonality of our cultural and Islamic identities was obvious throughout the interviews with student participants. Participants emphasised this by their use of the pronoun “we” when relating their stories, including me as an Arab and a Muslim. For example, a Bahraini man said, “We cannot go to parties because alcohol is served”. In this short quote, the student emphasises the “we” that means all Muslims, including me. Some male students attempted to present a positive image of themselves by avoiding discussion of any issues that clashed with their own values, and did not want to be judged by me, an Arab Muslim.

In general, interviewing male participants was easier than female participants. The latter tended not to discuss personal issues as openly as men would. For example, 5 months after being interviewed, two women reported to my wife that they had slightly modified their stories of their experiences. They told her that earlier they were hesitant to talk freely about their own personal experiences with me (as a member of the opposite sex). This reluctance was due to the concern that discussing personal matters with the opposite sex seems inappropriate for Muslims (Zine, 1997). The issue of interaction between the sexes has led other researchers to hire an assistant who was from the same gender as the participants (Abukhattala, 2004), or to focus on and interview only people of the same gender (Imtoul, 2006; Jamjoom, 2010). The avoidance of discussing personal experiences is a limitation that might constrain our [the reader and the writer’s] ability to understand the whole story of female students’ experiences.

4.2.4.5 Recording and Transcribing

Recording and transcribing are significant aspects in conducting in-depth interviews. The advantages of recording the interviews include enabling me as a researcher to take part in the conversation in a smooth, natural way, and allowing me to keep eye contact with participants and establish rapport with them (Smith & Osborn, 2008). Interviews lasted from half an hour to 2 hours and were recorded. I used a digital-recorder that allowed me to transfer the interviews to my laptop for transcription. The total time for the first round of interviews was 48 hours. The second round took less than 12 hours as only 10 students participated. For administrative staff, the total time was 4 hours.

Whereas interviews with students were in Arabic, interviews with administrative staff were in English. Although I transcribed all student interviews into Arabic, administrative interviews were transcribed by a third party. Interviews of the second round were also transcribed into Arabic by another person. Although it is recommended that the researcher transcribe the interviews himself/herself, administrative interviews were conducted in my second language, which means that accurate transcription of them would take a great amount of time. An added difficulty in achieving accurate transcriptions was the administrators' accents. For this reason, a professional New Zealander was hired to transcribe the interviews.

I decided also to ask my wife to transcribe the second interviews. The main reason was that I had started analysing the first interviews and did not want to be interrupted by other concerns, focusing instead on the process of analysis. The interviewer's questions were also transcribed, since this is the convention when recording is used (Smith & Osborn, 2008). The transcription process took a great deal of time; it took approximately 5 hours for a 1-hour interview, due to my lack of typing proficiency (Smith & Osborn, 2008), and participants' answering in two languages. To keep the flow of conversation intact, interruptions of speech, such as 'ums' and 'ahs' were edited and removed at the time of transcription, unless they were deemed necessary. All transcriptions were verified for accuracy against the original audio recording by listening to the tapes again and checking the transcripts (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The total number of all transcribed pages for the interviews amounted to 994 double-spaced pages.

In consideration to the sensitive nature of this study, participants were invited to review their interview transcripts in Arabic and my interpretations of their words to ensure accurate reporting of their intended meanings (Maxwell, 2005). Looking over their transcript does not mean that participants are invited to change any of the content; rather, it means having a conversation, negotiation, and an agreement to discuss, raise, and interpret any matters or concerns with them. However, I was able to make changes if participants indicated that I had misrepresented their meaning in interview transcripts. Of these participants, three reported only typing errors, which did not affect the meanings they intended.

4.2.5 The Document Method

Review of relevant university documents was used also as a strategy for secondary data collection. Most of the documents reviewed and analysed focused on university regulations. I also reviewed and analysed documents targeting international/Arab/Muslim students in order to understand how universities attempted to attract and retain students, what messages and promises they send to students, and how these universities provided for these students' needs. The documents were accessed through university websites. Examples of these documents include:

1. A university's official record of rules and regulations, staff, papers, dates etc.
2. International student handbooks
3. Predeparture guides for international students
4. The code of practice for pastoral care
5. University calendars.

I used content analysis to analyse these documents. The process of analysis is detailed below in section 4.2.6.3.

4.2.6 Data Analysis

The data analysis was completed in a manner consistent with the methodology adopted in this study. Willig (2008) pointed out that the interpretive phenomenological researcher focuses on texts produced by participants. This section describes the process used to analyse the data. A description of the software NVivo is given. The process of thematic analysis, the constant comparative method, and the content analysis are outlined, followed by the structural analysis.

4.2.6.1 The Software: NVivo 9.2

NVivo is a qualitative software programme designed by QSR International for qualitative data analysis (QSRInternational, 2012). In this study, the decision to use NVivo for analysing the main data was based on the pilot study. I realised how much data would be generated from interviewing 55 participants, and that in

analysing them manually would create difficulties. Interviewing a large sample size generates a vast amount of data which can significantly impact the analysis process, especially when being handled by an inexperienced qualitative researcher (Smith et al., 2009). The NVivo software allows for storing, managing, and analysing the data in an efficient manner. Qualitative researchers are encouraged to employ software for analysis, as it is a lengthy process and requires a high level of commitment (Willig, 2008).

Learning NVivo techniques took a great deal of time. My strategy for learning and understanding NVivo comprised three steps. Reading a qualitative book that was developed for using NVivo was the first step (Bazeley, 2007). The book explained what strategies I needed to consider in the course of my analysis and advice to be aware of the qualitative perspective during analysis. The second step focused on learning NVivo techniques by attending a training workshop that focused on discussion of qualitative analysis and technical skills, watching video clips and online tutorials (Johnston, 2006; QSRInternational, 2012), and taking face-to-face training from an official NVivo trainer⁴. The third step was to conduct a test of NVivo by using the example of environmental change (sample project) that can be downloaded into NVivo from QSR International.

All transcripts, interview recordings, and electronic university documents were imported into NVivo. Folders were created to manage and store the data. NVivo allowed me to organise student participants within case nodes, which means that the data for each participant was stored as an individual case. I created 55 case nodes that represented student participants in the first and second round of interviews. All the data collected for each participant were kept in her/his own case node (Siccama & Penna, 2008).

Transcripts of student interviews in Arabic were not translated into English. Rather, analysis was conducted in the Arabic language. English labels were given to notes, codes, categories, themes, memos, and analytical writing but using Arabic transcriptions. Only quotations considered significant and necessary for

⁴ I wish to thank Dr. David Williams who helped me greatly to understand and use the software.

supporting the study findings were translated into English. By using Arabic in the interviews, I became both a translator and an interpreter. I requested two bilingual translators who were studying for their Ph.D. in the area of management and whose primary language was Arabic and secondary language English to check my translation. This additional checking ensured the accuracy of the translations and interpretations, and confirmed to participants that they were not misquoted by me.

4.2.6.2 Thematic Analysis

To analyse both the interview transcripts and university documents, thematic analysis was employed in this study and was used as the main analysis method for the data. Thematic analysis can be used with any epistemological and theoretical framework, such as the social constructionism paradigm which guides this study (Malik & Coulson, 2008). Thematic analysis helped me to identify and organise patterns across the data set and then to manage these patterns into themes (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Rizk, Marx, Schrepfer, Zimmermann, & Günther, 2009). These themes must be commonly recognised by participants who describe the meaning of their lived experiences (Zorn & Gregory, 2005; Zorn & Ruccio, 1998).

As mentioned, NVivo was used as a software tool to analyse the data. My focus of analysis was guided by the research questions reproduced below:

1. How do New Zealand universities' communication practices influence the negotiation process of Arab Muslim students' identities?
2. What communication practices do Arab Muslim students adopt in managing acceptance or exclusion and how successful are they?

Although the thematic analysis method is widely used, it is important to demonstrate its processes and practices clearly. In this study, six steps directed the analysis procedure. The first step was to create codes. A code is a word or a short phrase that can descriptively and interpretively grasp an idea that evokes meanings in data (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Saldana, 2009). Since I was doing the coding, I used two criteria for identifying codes. These involved identifying recurring meanings even when different words are used, and focusing on repeated and consistent patterns of actions through words, phrases, or sentences (Bazeley, 2007; Owen, 1984; Saldana, 2009).

The *hijab* theme is used to illustrate the process of developing a theme. I familiarised myself by reading the full transcripts of the study's 13 female participants one by one, and rereading each transcription carefully many times, line-by-line, in order to get a sense of the whole, and to take wide-ranging notes on the initial ideas (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Denscombe, 2007; Willig, 2001). Taking initial notes of interest was a significant step in order to produce comprehensive and detailed comments and notes (Smith et al., 2009). This step allowed me to move to the second step which involved establishing generated codes from initial ideas and tagging them as free nodes or open nodes (Chamberlain et al., 2004).

To code using NVivo, nodes were created to code, store, and group conceptually relevant with similar data from different sources (Siccama & Penna, 2008; Wong, 2008). In other words, I extracted relevant passages or texts (a sentence or paragraph) and coded them into nodes. This approach allowed me to move my analysis from a superficial to a close engagement with the text and to understand participants' concern regarding their experiences (Smith et al., 2009). At the beginning of the analysis, dress emerged as a broad initial code, and other free codes emerged under this broad code. NVivo enabled me to create open/free nodes and tree nodes (QSRInternational, 2012). Operationally, "free codes or open codes" were created and recreated as I carefully read and reread transcripts; as a result, these nodes constantly changed (Giorgi & Giorgi, 2008). In NVivo, emergent codes were stored as free nodes but I called them free codes (see Figure 2 below for a screenshot of free codes).

Name	Sources	References
Dress code	3	4
advocating about it	1	1
Being Muslim	6	11
Considering dress's standerds	5	7
Covering mind	1	1
Dress styles	5	7
feamle dress	3	3
Headscarf	10	30
Hijab challenges	11	29
Hijab importances	3	5
Hijab motivation	4	7
Hijab styles	0	0
Hijab's meanings	4	4
Imposing factors	12	36
Informing others	7	15
My identity	6	10
My life	5	5
New modesty	2	4
Not changing style	5	6
Obying Allah	4	5
protecting honor	5	9
Proud	5	7
Questioning modesty	9	18
Recognising identity	7	10
Removing hijab	0	0
respecting western's dress	1	2
Restyling dress	9	16
Restyling hijab	4	11
Strong faith	3	3
Struggling	6	10
Stupid	1	1
Understanding hijab	5	12
Visibility hijab	7	9

Figure 2: Free codes

The ability to create, refine, add, or remove nodes during the analysis process revealed my understanding and reflections during the course of the analysis, made me feel confident in dealing with the data, and made the analysis process transparent (Welsh, 2002). I understood that coding is a formal foundation of thematic analysis, which ultimately represents an evidential linking of a category and a theme (Rossman & Rallis, 2003). Thus, in order to confirm that codes contained appropriate texts, I considered two methods. The first was to give a detailed description of a code, which NVivo allowed me to do (see Figure 3 below for an illustration). Then, each time I coded, I made sure that the description fitted a new text. This strategy allowed me to use inductive analysis in order to ensure that codes were strongly linked to the data set (Joffe & Yardley, 2004, p. 57).

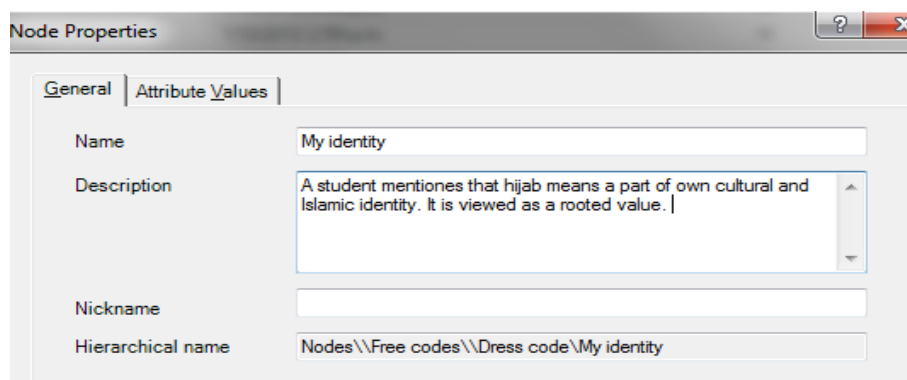


Figure 3: A code description

Throughout the process of analysis, I made sure that extracting and coding sentences from transcriptions were directly relevant to the phenomenon under investigation and answered the research questions (Zorn & Ruccio, 1998). I found that a passage could be coded under different nodes. After I analysed the first participant's transcript, I considered the same strategies in analysing the following interviews until I finished all 13 student participants (Smith & Osborn, 2008). For example, I created a free node called "my identity". This node was coded from six sources (case nodes/female participants). The node was referenced 10 times throughout the six sources (As Figure 2 above shows).

The third step of thematic analysis involved organising and combining codes into categories (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Bryman, 2001). At this stage, clear categories appeared from the codes. A category combines codes that are very much alike and share the similar or common features of an idea (Saldana, 2009). In NVivo, categorised codes were named as tree nodes in a hierarchical structure that contains parent and child nodes (Siccama & Penna, 2008). A tree node was a flexible means that allowed me to probe each category for subcategories until no more new categories were created. As a phenomenological researcher, I was concerned to identify commonalities expressed by participants and to explore possible connections across substantial nodes to describe the universal structures of the participants' lived experience (Polkinghorne, 1989). This step allowed me to develop rich accounts of nodes, working with nodes, rather, than with transcriptions, and preparing to derive themes (Smith et al., 2009). Thus, when creating a child node or a parent node, I kept asking myself if the nodes were conceptually and mutually related and connected to each other or not (Johnston,

2006). For example, to narrow the dress node, specific categories emerged. A number of nodes were found that were related to and affected the dress node: *dress style, challenges, importance, meanings*, and other nodes. These child nodes were then analysed, narrowed, and coded into child node categories. For example, the child node of *hijab motivation* was coded into *being Muslim, my identity, obeying Allah*, and others. It was an on-going process and required naming and renaming nodes (see Figure 4 below for a screenshot of tree codes).

Name	Sources	References
Displaying identities	7	11
Dress code	3	4
Dress styles	5	7
female dress	3	3
Hijab challenges	11	29
Hijab importances	3	5
Hijab motivation	4	7
advocating about it	1	1
Being Muslim	6	11
My identity	6	10
My life	5	5
Obying Allah	4	5
protecting honor	5	9
Proud	5	7
Recognising identity	7	10
Strong faith	3	3
Hijab styles	0	0
Hijab's meanings	4	4
By others	1	1
Covering mind	1	1
Stupid	1	1
By the females	3	3
Headscarf	10	30
Imposing factors	8	14
External	12	36
Internal	1	1
Informing others	7	15
Not changing style	5	6
Questioning modesty	9	18

Figure 4: Tree codes

For the fourth step, I organised the categories and combined them into themes that shared similar ideas and fitted together and could be used in the study (Smith et al., 2009). Themes were an outcome of analytic reflection from generating codes and categories (Saldana, 2009). Rossman and Rallis (2003) explained the differences between a category and a theme by stating that one should “think of a category as a word or phrase describing some segment of your data that is explicit, whereas a theme is a phrase or sentence describing more subtle and tacit processes” (p. 282). The fourth step required generating themes that were driven by prominent patterns, frequency, and closely associated meanings, and developing a thematic map of the analysis that showed the relationships of themes (Sanders, 1982; Willig, 2001; Zorn & Gregory, 2005). As I continued reading the interviews, I began to realise that certain ideas, notions, patterns, and clusters of meaning were recurring over again and themes and new themes were emerging

(Smith & Osborn, 2008). Generating themes across participants was the main objective of using the thematic analysis method (Hardaker & Singh, 2011).

For this fourth step, constant comparative analysis was also undertaken alongside inductive thematic analysis (Boeije, 2002; Gibbs, 2007). The constant comparative method is a core type of qualitative analysis that is based on comparing and contrasting similarities and differences across data in order to explore relationships and to achieve syntheses of analysis (Gibbs, 2007; Ryan & Bernard, 2000; Thomas, 2003). The central advantage of this technique was that it enabled me to refine, shape, frame, and classify codes into categories and, subsequently, categories into themes (Boeije, 2002; Bryman, 2001; Chamberlain et al., 2004; Ryan & Bernard, 2000). The process of comparison took a considerable amount of time (Smith et al., 2009). The main foundation of this method is the requirement to constantly compare answers in a single interview with the same participant, compare interviews with the same characteristics by group, and interviews with different groups (Boeije, 2002).

First, I used comparison within a single interview in order to test for consistency and make manifest any contradictions, indicate the changes in participants' experiences of the *hijab* at the time, and develop the most appropriate code from the available codes (Chamberlain et al., 2004; Gibbs, 2007). As my research involved two rounds of interviews with Arab Muslim students, I also used comparison to examine similarities and differences between the first and second round of interviews with the same participant (Gibbs, 2007). I compared and contrasted the experiences of three newly arrived female students who participated in the first and second round of interviews with regard to the *hijab*, and viewed how their perceptions and experiences of the issue were affected over time. I found that these women offered a different meaning for the *hijab* over time and shifted its meaning from being a mark of identity to a protection from harm and a limitation of interaction in the new culture. Boeije (2002) argued that "variation or range exists by the grace of comparison and [by] looking for commonalities and differences in behaviour, reasons, attitudes, perspective and so on" (p. 393).

Secondly, during my analysis I also compared and contrasted interviewees who shared the same experiences. I undertook this analysis within the same gender (men or women) or across genders (men and women), and by level of education (undergraduate and postgraduate) (Gibbs, 2007). For instance, I compared the experiences of the newly-arrived female students with those of 10 other women who had been in New Zealand for some time and found that there were similarities in their formulations of the meaning of the *hijab*. Importantly, I found that over time the women showed less observance of Islamic dress guidelines. This form of analysis enabled me to draw out both similarities and differences in student experiences and then to combine or recombine codes, categories, and themes that share certain criteria (Boeije, 2002; Thomas, 2003). Focusing on the similarities and differences within interviewees from the same group was an exercise that helped me to manage this type of analysis (Chamberlain et al., 2004; Gibbs, 2007).

Finally, comparison between interviewees from the different groups was required in order to enrich the information and secure the complete story (Boeije, 2002). In this process, I compared and contrasted female students' views of the *hijab* and how administrators who worked at New Zealand universities and university documents understood and viewed the same issue. The analysis process was not limited strictly within each stage. Rather, these stages have fuzzy boundaries and contain constant movement backwards and forwards between the six phases (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Denscombe, 2007). The analysis process is illustrated in Figure 5 below.

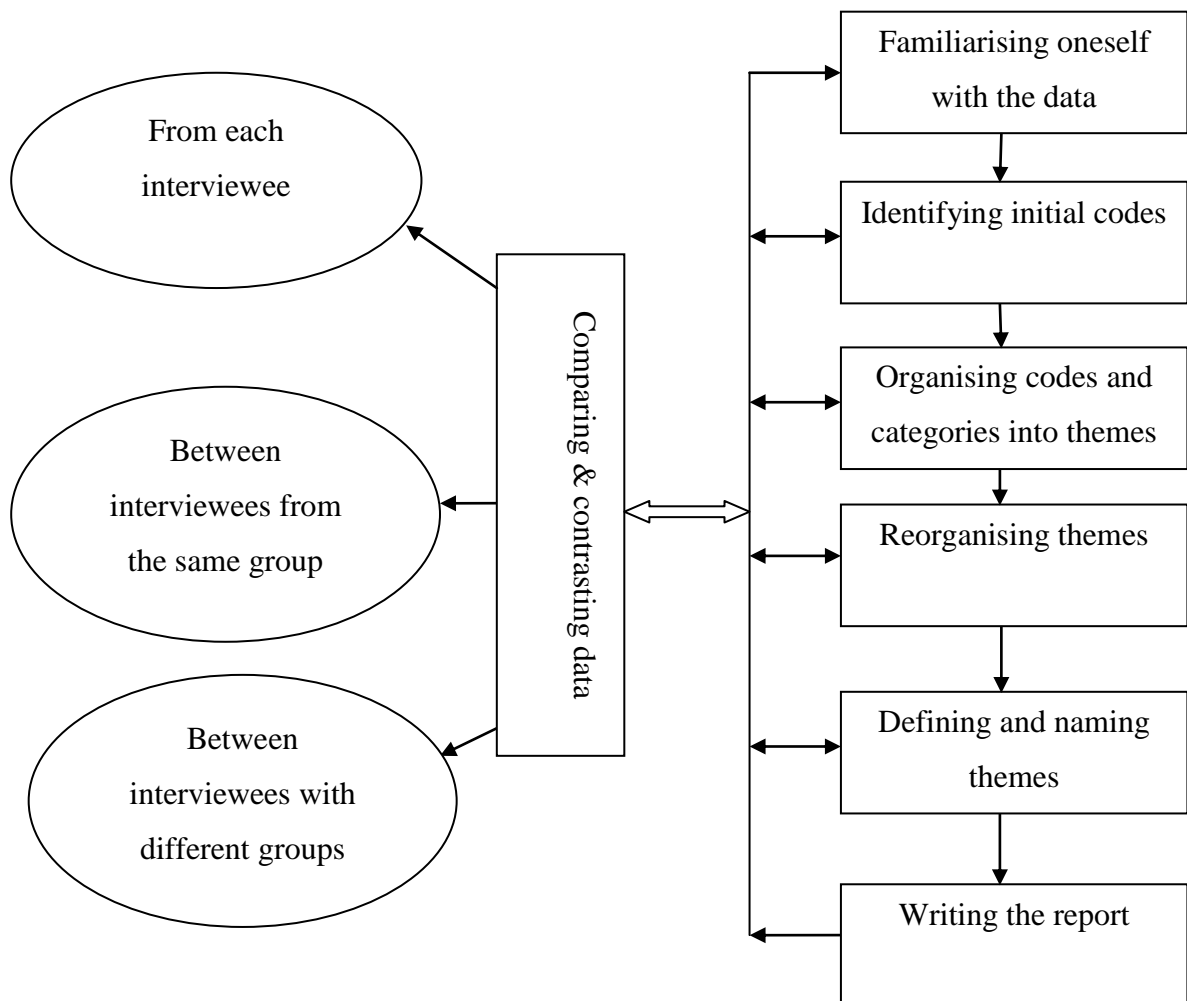


Figure 5: The process of analysis adapted from Boeije (2002), and Braun and Clarke (2006).

The constant comparative method was easily applied using NVivo. Attribution is one significant feature of the software. I had the ability to create a number of attributes and their values, and was also able to add or remove any attributes. In this study, attributes were used to detail demographic information about student participants that allowed for tracking characteristics of these participants, such as their gender, country, level of education, and other attributes (Siccama & Penna, 2008). See Figure 6 below for attributes used in the study.

Node Classifications	
Name	Created On
Person	12/06/2011 5:07 a.m.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Name Age Country Length of time in NZ Gender Level of education Personal status Specialisation Newly arrival student First interview Second interview 	

Figure 6: Attributes of students participants

The main advantage of attribution is that it allows the researcher to compare and contrast themes across participants based on the attributes and values assigned to them (Johnston, 2006; Siccama & Penna, 2008). By creating attributes and assigning values, the query tool in NVivo is accessible (QSRInternational, 2012). This tool allows the researcher to conduct matrix queries across participants for further examination of the data and their coding and categorising, and for analysing themes (Siccama & Penna, 2008). The query tool provided me with opportunities to refine nodes and categories and helped me understand how themes were affected by the different characteristics of participants. The comparison enabled me also to look at previous, as well as current, data I was analysing, to examine patterns, similarities, and differences in nodes. The process allowed me to keep refining and revisiting previous coding interpretations in order to achieve general themes and to create a broad picture of the issue. For example, the code of Islamic dress style was of great importance to newly-arrived participants but over time they showed less concern with it and began to adopt a combination of styles that accommodated both Islamic and Western views.

The fifth step of thematic analysis was to arrive at a satisfactory thematic map of the data and to start defining themes, subthemes, and their meanings (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Ryan & Bernard, 2000; Smith, 1995). NVivo allowed me to continue the process of coding and refining them until I was able to determine

important selected themes related to the study. A number of themes were created as a result of reading all transcripts, analysing, and coding. I grouped and structured these themes under three main fields and each field contained several themes. These themes were selected and identified because of their richness and because they demonstrated shared patterns of participant views (Smith & Osborn, 2008). Focusing on shared and connected themes was important, as the study investigated a large number of participants (Smith et al., 2009). The criteria of thematic recurrence across participants was considered (Smith et al., 2009). A theme was included if it was represented by over half of the participants (Smith et al., 2009). For example, the field of influences on student identity includes three themes: *gender relations*, *socialisation*, and *hijab*. The final result of the study themes emerged. (See Figure 7 below for a screenshot of some of the study themes.)

Tree codes		
Name	Sources	References
The study themes	0	0
Tree codes	0	0
1- Motivations & expectations	5	7
2- Influences on students' identity	40	171
Gender relations	17	75
Hijab	17	45
Socialisation	20	35
3- Impression & interaction with New Zealand	1	1
4- Communication practices	16	46
University nodes	0	0

Figure 7: The study themes

The sixth and final step was writing up the report by giving a definition of each theme, indicating its subthemes, providing clear evidence or a quotation from the data set, and relating the theme to the existing literature (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2004; Ryan & Bernard, 2000; Zorn & Ruccio, 1998). Reflecting the core view of participants, being rich in significance, and developing a linkage to other issues were factors considered in selecting quotations in writing up the analysis (Smith et al., 2009). The following model illustrates the process that combined codes into categories, and then generated themes from categories (see Figure 8 below for the process of creating themes).

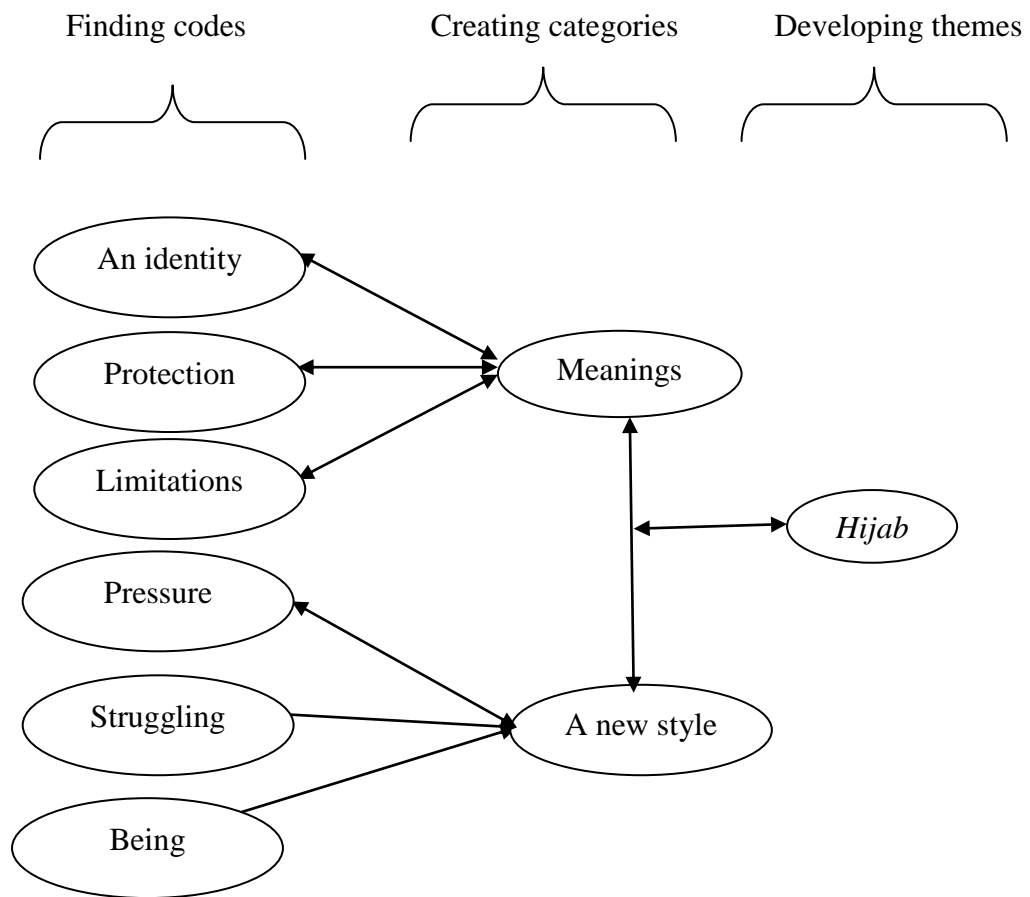


Figure 8: The theme process adapted from Saldana (2009).

4.2.6.3 Content Analysis

Content analysis was applied as a second analysis method along with thematic analysis to analyse university documents and to specifically understand the data set from the organisational perspective. The method is a popular and an appropriate one in communication studies (Lombard, Snyder-Duch, & Bracken, 2002; Reinard, 2001), and it can be applied to both qualitative and quantitative studies (Elo & Kyngäs, 2008; Kondracki, Wellman, & Amundson, 2002). Content analysis refers to “a systematic method to analyse the content and treatment of communication, which usually results in the development of objective and quantitative information” (Reinard, 2001, p. 169). In other words, it is a process to analyse textual material, irrespective of whether it is in the form of written, oral, or visual communication messages (Elo & Kyngäs, 2008; Flick, 2009; Kondracki et al., 2002; Lombard et al., 2002). Content analysis is a very convenient method (Kondracki et al., 2002), as it is flexible and can be used with different research

disciplines and traditional settings, and provides a key understanding of significant issues of communication studies (Elo & Kyngäs, 2008; Reinard, 2001).

Researchers provide a wide range of steps for the analysis procedure. In this study, five basic steps of content analysis were followed. The first step was to define a research problem, determine text of for analysis, and identify sources of texts (Reinard, 2001). In this study, the content analysis method was used to answer the following question: How do New Zealand universities' communication practices influence the negotiation process of Arab Muslim students' identities? Content analysis can be used in a research problem that deals with the influence of a dominant group in a contextual interaction (Reinard, 2001).

Once the research problem has been identified, the researcher should identify and select the sample of analysis on which to carry out the analysis (Kondracki et al., 2002; Reinard, 2001). Kondracki et al. (2002) noted that validity is a concern in content analysis, in particular when selecting the messages to be studied. Flick (2009) affirms that defining the material that is relevant for answering the research question is one important step in content analysis. As mentioned, university documents of regulations, and messages that attracted international/Arab/Muslim students were identified as sources and samples of texts; these were all written texts. The documents were imported to NVivo in order to be electronically coded and analysed. Nonelectronic documents were rendered into a digital format in order to be imported to NVivo (Kondracki et al., 2002).

Once a sample of texts had been selected, the second step involved selecting themes "to derive the main dimensions for the categorisation of the material from [the] research question" (Schilling, 2006, p. 30). In content analysis, categories or themes of interest must be identified and described (Flick, 2009; Ryan & Bernard, 2000). In this study, three themes were identified using thematic analysis: gender-relations, socialisation, and the *hijab* (dress code). By identifying these three themes, "easy identification ... of content relevant to the research questions" could be achieved (Kondracki et al., 2002, p. 224). Elo and Kyngäs (2008) explained that the purpose of the study is to determine whether an inductive or deductive form of analysis will be used. Predetermining the study's themes means

that the researcher uses the deductive analysis approach (Kondracki et al., 2002), which means “the structure of analysis is operationalised” on these three themes (Elo & Kyngäs, 2008, p. 109). Notwithstanding, these three themes were inductively identified through students’ interviews.

The third step was to determine coding and analysing units (Elo & Kyngäs, 2008; Reinard, 2001) in order to analyse text from the examples chosen. In the case of this study, topic frequency was not an intention and coding units consisted of a single word, a sentence, or a paragraph (Schilling, 2006). The fourth step was to code texts into the three nodes (three themes). The main aim of this step was to reduce raw data, while preserving the important contents that are relevant to the three nodes (Flick, 2009; Schilling, 2006). The fourth step was carried out using NVivo. Its use allowed me to create three nodes: gender-relations, socialisation, and the *hijab*. I familiarised myself with these three themes by reading and rereading texts in order to understand their essential features (Elo & Kyngäs, 2008).

Next, I identified passages or texts that matched these three nodes and coded them into the categories already identified (Elo & Kyngäs, 2008). I paid considerable attention to ensuring that the extracting and coding sentences from the text were directly relevant to the three themes and answered the research question (Reinard, 2001). Elo and Kyngäs (2008) suggest that choosing the contents for analysis is based on the aim and research question of the study. Both manifest and latent meanings of texts were included in the analysis (Kondracki et al., 2002). Applying the latent content means that subjective interpretations, based on the researcher’s understandings of texts, will be provided (Lombard et al., 2002).

After analysing the first text, I embarked on the same step in analysing all texts (Smith & Osborn, 2008). Having identified all texts relevant to the three themes, I attempted to make sense of, and became immersed in, the data (Elo & Kyngäs, 2008). Then, I moved on to the last and fifth step which required interpreting texts and inferring meanings from texts in order to answer the research question, and provide vivid quotes (Kondracki et al., 2002; Reinard, 2001; Schilling, 2006). This step was simultaneously combined with interpreting students’ stories about the three themes. The main aim was to consider both students’ and universities’

perspectives, and to understand the influence of universities in the negotiation process of Arab Muslim students' identities.

4.2.6.4 Structural Analysis

The structurational method of analysis was also applied along with thematic analysis and content analysis to specifically examine the data set from the organisational perspective. Structural analysis was used only after thematic analysis has been completed to answer the following research question:

How do New Zealand universities' communication practices influence the negotiation process of Arab Muslim students' identities?

Arab Muslim students study at New Zealand universities. Both the students and universities were not only guided by their own structures but also reproduced these structures in their mutual social interaction contexts. In order to obtain a good structurational analysis, it is essential to pay attention to the three core concepts of structuration [discussed in Chapter 2]: the structure (identity), the agent-agency (system), and the duality of structure (duality of identity) (Giddens, 1984; Scott et al., 1998).

Duality of structure was the central focus of my analysis and so it was actualised through considering the structural dimensions: those of signification, domination, and legitimation (Giddens, 1984). Although structural dimensions overlap with each other, these structures can be analysed independently. As (Giddens, 1984) clearly states: "structures of signification are separable only analytically either from domination or from legitimation" (p. 33). Poole et al. (1996) supported this view by stating that these structures "tend to be compounded in every action" (p. 122). For instance, rules govern the language (signification) that is used to express norms (legitimation), which support actors to take the position of domination (Olufowote, 2003).

The structurational analysis process involved two main phases. The first phase analyses student interviews thematically in order to explicitly identify structural significations that these students experienced while studying, interacting, and communicating in New Zealand universities. The analysis found three main

structures: gender-relations, socialisation, and the *hijab*. Unlike the analysis of data from student interviews, existing themes were used. In other words, the process of reviewing and analysing administrative interviews and university documents was based on these three structural issues. The aim was to understand how universities understood and communicated these issues. The second phase examined these structures by reflecting on the other two structural dimensions—domination and legitimation—in order to understand how these structures influenced student identities and might affect New Zealand university practices.

For example, Arab Muslim female students indicated that the *hijab* dress code was a significant structure they faced at New Zealand universities. Both the women and the universities interacted with and communicated the dress code issue through norms in order to practise legitimation. These norms came into play when the students and the universities relied on authoritative and allocative resources, which ultimately allowed power to be exercised. The analysis process involved analysing student interviews to clearly understand religious and cultural identity views on the matter of dress code, investigating university activities, such as orientations, workshops, publications for training programmes, posters, the code of practice for pastoral care, and other publications. In addition, the interviews with administrator were interpreted to reveal university views of dress code, and to highlight how this issue affects both individuals' identities and New Zealand university practices. The following figure shows the process of structural analysis for this study.

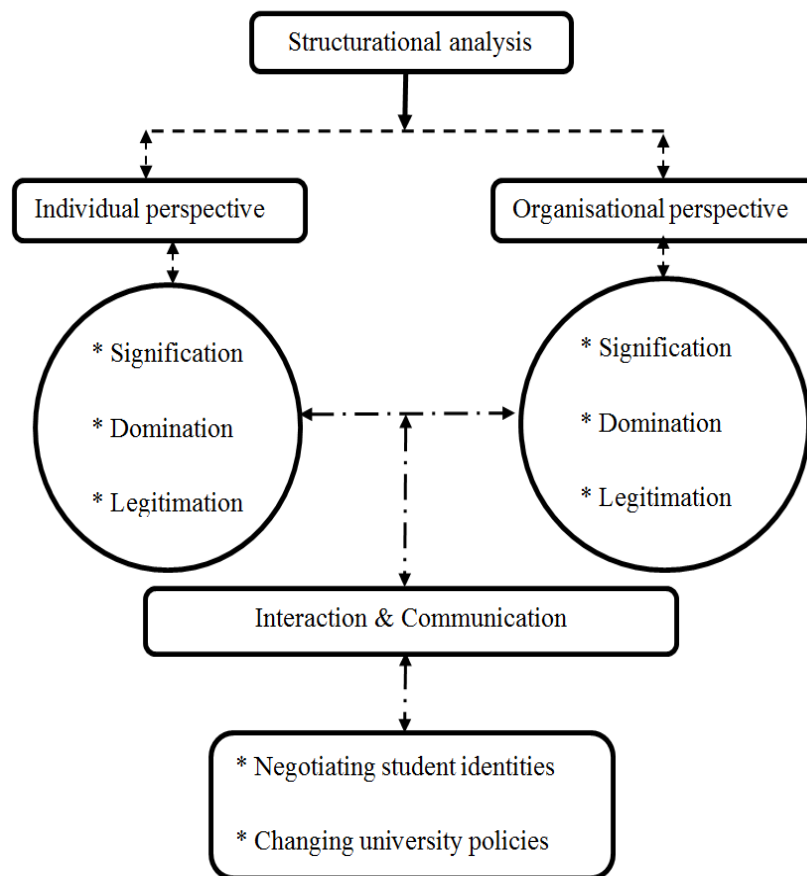


Figure 9: The process of negotiating identities, adapted from Giddens (1984).

After finishing the analysis, I began to reread participants' stories under this theme in order to give me a feel for how I should go about writing and presenting the findings. This process forms one stage in transferring themes into a narrative account (Smith & Osborn, 2008). In this study, the strategy of linking themes with literature and the theoretical framework was adopted (Smith & Osborn, 2008). Themes were presented and quotations from several participants were provided to support the argument. I then revisited and engaged with the literature in order to relate themes that were found in the analysis with previous knowledge. This approach allowed me to avoid being guided by preconceptions drawn from the literature about the themes (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Chamberlain et al., 2004; Denscombe, 2007). Given my previous involvement with existing studies, it is unrealistic to argue that themes were entirely data-driven (Bryman, 2001; Joffe & Yardley, 2004; Smith, 1995). Gibbs (2007) clearly indicated that "qualitative analysis is guided and framed by pre-existing ideas and concepts" (p. 5). However,

using NVivo with a line-by-line coding strategy enabled me to avoid pretheoretical conceptions and to pay close attention to participants' meanings.

4.2.7 Ensuring the Quality of the Study

The concepts of validity and reliability have concerned qualitative researchers for a long time. Some researchers argue that these terms are inappropriate in the qualitative tradition and suggest the use of other terms, such as “trustworthiness”, “rigorousness”, or “quality” of the data (Welsh, 2002, p. 4). Ensuring the quality of this study requires consistency in its interpretive philosophical and methodological assumptions. This study is based on the qualitative tradition that recognises that subjectivity guides every step in the research process. Thus, reliability in the interpretive approach does not aim to reach an objective reality because that goes beyond its purview. Rather, the researcher provides for reliability by demonstrating and explaining how he monitors his or her own interpretations throughout the research process. This monitoring included formulating the study questions, ensuring the reliability of the data collection method, demonstrating the process of analysis in a transparent way, generating findings that cover the topic under investigation, selecting and interviewing participants, analysing data, and reporting findings (Sandberg, 2005; Welsh, 2002; Willig, 2008).

Being aware of their own interpretations and subjectivity throughout the research process assists interpretive researchers to obtain good qualitative research. I considered all of this advice and detailed steps to control my own interpretations in order to minimise my influences on participants' lived experience. The quality of the data collected method was ensured by conducting the pilot study. By conducting the pilot study and revealing that findings accurately represented the inquiry, the internal quality of the data collection method was shown to exist. NVivo enabled the researcher to achieve an accurate and transparent process of analysing the data by presenting a number of figures which made it possible to obtain rigour and transparency (Welsh, 2002; Yardley, 2008).

Criteria for evaluating the quality of this research include rigour, credibility (trustworthiness), and reflexivity (Ajjawi & Higgs, 2007; Merrick, 1999; Willig,

2008). In order to ensure rigorous research, I paid significant attention to the following issues: detailing the rationale behind selecting the interpretive tradition, using multiple methods of data collection, detailing the process of analysis, being transparent in documenting every step of the research process, engaging in a dynamic dialogue with a wide range of participants, and recording interviews (Ajjawi & Higgs, 2007; Willig, 2008).

Credibility is also an important aspect for ensuring and evaluating the quality of interpretive research. It goes hand in hand with qualitative research and refers to “the vividness and faithfulness of the description to the phenomena or trustworthiness of the findings of the research” (Ajjawi & Higgs, 2007, p. 631). Credibility can be achieved by encompassing the components of good research practice (Merrick, 1999). In this study, the criterion of credibility mandated interviewing multiple participants through in-depth interaction, describing participants in detail, providing evidence of both my voice and the voices of my participants, demonstrating examples of the analytic procedures, and providing rich descriptions (Ajjawi & Higgs, 2007; Merrick, 1999; Willig, 2008). For example, a number of participants were interviewed and given a chance to speak of their own experiences. The study provides quotations from their stories which reveal a form of representation (Merrick, 1999). Detailed information about participants was also presented (see section 4.2.3) to allow the reader to verify that the findings represent the lived experience of participants (Willig, 2008).

Importantly, the legitimate concern of credibility requires checking the coherence of interpretations, ensuring the accuracy of research, and persuading readers to believe in it (Glaser, 2004). Sandberg (2005) proposed the strategy of “communicative validity” (p. 54) to justify the knowledge (truth of the participants’ lived experience) that is produced by the interpretive approach. In this study, communicative validity was achieved by establishing a good understanding with participants as I myself share the same culture, religion, and experience, and by engaging in a constructive dialogue by using general and probing questions, considering coherent interpretations, and discussing findings with participants and other researchers and professionals (Sandberg, 2005). I had an opportunity to discuss and review the study’s findings and analysis with

professional people⁵ who hold a Ph.D. degree. This engagement gave me an opportunity to refine my findings and thoughts. In addition, participants were given a chance to review interpretations regarding their stories to ensure accurate reporting of their meanings. None of the participants had any concerns about my interpretations.

4.2.8 Reflexivity

Engaging with the subject under investigation requires reflecting on the researcher's role in the study. Reflexivity "involves critical reflection on how researcher, research participants, setting, and phenomenon of interest interact and influence each other" (Glesne, 2006, p. 6). Reflexivity is a significant factor in transparency (Yardley, 2008) and plays a fundamental role that may affect different segments in such research study and its quality (Lincoln & Guba, 2000; Merrick, 1999). Accordingly, qualitative researchers should discuss three main areas: their position in influencing the research setting, their interaction and relationship with participants (i.e., rapport), and their cooperation with participants in coconstructing knowledge (Finlay, 2002; Lincoln & Guba, 2000; Willig, 2001).

First, the researcher is not merely interested in the research topic. Rather, he/she is the instrument and the backbone of qualitative research (Janesick, 2003; Liamputtong & Ezzy, 2005; Maxwell, 2005; McCaslin & Scott, 2003). Consequently, researchers should explain their own perspectives and relationship to the study, their professional roles, personal experiences, and their relationships with participants (Alasuutari, 2008; Ellis & Bochner, 2000). This type of reflexivity has been identified as "personal reflexivity" (Merrick, 1999, p. 31). The researcher must also deal with any biases that are relevant to the topic (McCaslin & Scott, 2003). This reflection must be maintained throughout the research process with researchers starting with personal experiences and keeping them in mind, acknowledging their personal roles, multiple identities, positions, and interest in the research in terms of choosing participants, selecting specific

⁵ Dr. Aisha Boulanouar and Dr. Zakaria Boulanouar.

questions, constructing knowledge, and producing a research report (Ellis & Bochner, 2000; Finlay, 2002; Glesne, 2006; Krauss, 2005; Lincoln & Guba, 2000).

I am aware of my position and the way it may influence this research. I am an Arab Muslim student who comes from an Arab Gulf country. I have been in New Zealand for a while and have experienced and still experience a number of issues in communicating and interacting with others in this country. I am aware that my own multiple identities—as an international Arab Muslim student holding bachelor's and master's degrees in Islamic education and a postgraduate in public relations—become salient in conducting and collecting data for this study. These multiple positions and identities may affect the research process and data interpretation. To some extent, these positions allowed me to gain easy access to Arab Muslim students. However, I minimised my position when interacting with participants and instead established a cooperative interaction and democratic communication that allowed me to understand the participants' lived experience (Sciarra, 1999).

Second, in qualitative research, knowledge is a coconstruction process between researchers and participants. The researcher is understood as an actor who works with other actors (participants) (Sciarra, 1999). Researchers are encouraged to build a relationship with participants and talk to them in order to understand and become immersed in their experiences as they answer the research questions (Maxwell, 2005; Yoshitake, 2004). Building a rapport is required in order to facilitate a good relationship with participants (as discussed is 4.2.4.4).

Engagement and interaction allow interpretive researchers to reflect on their own understandings that are based on their prior knowledge, assumptions, interests, norms, values, and cultural affiliation (Sciarra, 1999).

Social construction highlights the roles of researchers and participants in shaping participant cooperation and the way in which collecting, presenting, analysing, and interpreting data is undertaken (Collier, 1998; Janesick, 2000; Lincoln & Guba, 2003). Interpretive research views participants as active collaborators with researchers in presenting their world-views and perspectives (Collier, 1998; Deetz, 1996). Collier (1998) explained that in order to give participants a strong position in a study, they should be given the interpretation draft so they can provide

suggestions, comments, and examples, and should be allowed to present their stories in their own words. To achieve this goal, Arab Muslim students were allowed to present and express their views and understanding of their intercultural communication experiences with others through in-depth interviews and were given an opportunity to view the research interpretations.

Interpretation is a crucial aspect of qualitative research and it needs significant attention. The whole process of interpretation relied on me as a researcher, which entails a degree of subjectivity (Giorgi & Giorgi, 2008). Evaluating the research interpretations required that I be open to negotiation and agreement to discuss, raise, and interpret any matters or concerns among these interpretations. Instead of giving summaries of participants' views, their own words were presented in the study in the form of quotations. Krauss (2005) affirmed that allowing participants to talk and present their own perspectives is a way of honouring and respecting them. Importantly, in order to address any contention over my translation, I requested two bilingual translators to check my translation in order to ensure that participants were not misquoted by me.

4.3 Conclusion

This chapter consists of two parts. The first part details the reasons for choosing the interpretive paradigm and phenomenological methodology. It also outlines the advantages of using in-depth interviews to examine the lived experience of participants. The second part reflects on the research design and provides a description of the study procedure. It starts with ethical considerations and moves to describing participants. This section is followed by detailing the process of developing, conducting, and analysing interviews. Finally, the issue of study quality is addressed.

The next chapter is the first of two that deals with the study findings. In each of these two chapters the findings are both reported and discussed.

Chapter 5

Findings on Research Question 1: Intercultural Communication Experiences on Campus

The findings of the current study are presented in two chapters. These chapters present the voices of the 45 male and female Arab Muslim participants who agreed to take part in this study and the universities' voices through administrative interviews and university documents. The participants offered their own reflections concerning their intercultural communication experiences in New Zealand learning and social contexts and how these experiences affected, and were affected by, their cultural and religious identities. The participants' stories provided much insight which allows an in-depth understanding of their lives in the dominant culture.

Chapter 5 reviews Arab students' interaction and communication experiences with other people at New Zealand universities, and looks, in particular, at how these experiences both affected, and were affected by, the students' cultural and religious identities. Interviews with Arab students and university administrators, and university documents, were analysed to answer the first research question: How do New Zealand universities' communication practices influence the negotiation process of Arab Muslim participants' identities?

The chapter starts by indicating that being granted a scholarship was the main motivation that encouraged participants in choosing New Zealand universities as a preferred destination. Next, university structural issues of gender relations, socialisation, and the *hijab* are interpreted through the three dimensions of signification, domination, and legitimation.

5.1 Being Granted a Scholarship

All participants indicated that they had been granted government scholarships. A number of factors encouraged Arab students to apply for a scholarship and study overseas. To study in Western universities epitomises the dream and desire of most students. The dream begins from an early age. Saud, an Omani female

student, whose parents studied in America and lived for a number of years in Holland and Kuwait when she was a child, remarked:

As a matter of fact, my dream to study overseas was inspired by my dad, who studied overseas. So the dream began when I was young and at intermediate school. I wanted to become like him. So I studied very hard at high school and thank God that I achieved a grade which enabled me to get the scholarship.

The Saudi King Abdullah Scholarship Program, launched in 2005, was the main motivation behind Shrooq's dream to study overseas. Shrooq graduated with a diploma in management and declared that her aim was to study for a master's degree:

The idea of studying overseas started when I was at intermediate school. In class, a teacher told us that the government provides scholarships to students. So the dream of winning a scholarship began at that time and I kept it in my mind until I got the chance and applied twice...

The foundation for students' dreams was parents and schools, and started from an early age. Other participants expressed their dream in the desire to learn to speak English. This goal was mentioned by both male and female students but mostly by men, who most frequently indicated their desire to learn to speak English and have the opportunity to find a good job. The desire to apply for a scholarship in order to improve English skills is exemplified in the following quotes:

My dream of studying overseas began when I was at intermediate school. At that time, one of my relatives received a scholarship and that motivated me. I also started viewing things differently and making comparisons between studying in my country and studying overseas. I liked to study English and to use it when interacting with others, so I said to myself, it is a chance for me to get a scholarship and achieve my dream and improve my English. (Sarah)

I preferred to study overseas because I had good grades in all areas of studies except English. You know we don't use and speak English. It was

an opportunity for me to come here with the goal of learning and improving my English. (Haitham)

Improving English skills and becoming proficient enough to speak it readily was a motivation to study overseas. For those participants, studying overseas was a chance to gain proficiency in English and to enhance their educational development. They knew that being proficient in English could be achieved only by studying and immersing oneself in an English speaking country like New Zealand.

The prestige of gaining a qualification from a Western university was mentioned by most participants, regardless of their gender or nationality. Studying overseas meant a positive reputation for them and a comparison was made between national and international universities. Students were disappointed with the qualifications that they had as these qualifications were less recognised than those from foreign universities. So, they preferred a foreign university to improve their academic skills, to study English, and to secure future employment, as the following excerpts illustrate:

I have an online MBA which is not recognised in my country, so it was a chance to apply for a scholarship and study overseas. I also needed to get a good job and improve my skills and stature among my own people who hold high degrees. Studying overseas meant achieving all these things. (Noor)

I preferred a foreign country to complete my master's degree. I knew many people studied overseas and mastered various skills. So I decided to apply for a scholarship and obtain a Western qualification, which is certainly more recognised than a local one. (Zahra)

To be honest, my main aim in coming to New Zealand is to study at the best universities, which are more recognised than local universities. Studying at a foreign university and obtaining a Western qualification mean that I can get a good job with a high salary. (Marwan)

The meaning of social reputation was defined by participants as gaining a prestigious degree with the associated recognition. The concept of recognition is illustrated by specifying that a foreign qualification is more internationally recognised than a local qualification in many cases. The value of international degrees comes from gaining knowledge and practical skills, which are not emphasised by national institutions. For participants, graduating from a foreign university meant having a greater opportunity to secure good jobs with a high salary than those who studied at local universities.

Governmental encouragement was the main reason for selecting New Zealand as a study destination. Except for two Saudi students, all the participants indicated that governmental choice was a prominent motivation to come and study in New Zealand. For medical participants in particular, New Zealand universities were the only institutions for which scholarships were granted by their governments. Yousif, an Omani student in second-year medicine, mentioned that his intention was to study overseas and he chose America to study engineering but he was accepted only to study medicine in New Zealand. "To be honest, I did not want to come to New Zealand," he confessed. "I wanted to go to another country but unfortunately, medical scholarships were only offered for this country. So, there was no option." It seems that Gulf countries made the choice on behalf of sponsored students to come to New Zealand even though some students wanted to travel to other Western universities. Luqman, a Ph.D. candidate from Oman who had been in New Zealand for 6 years, explained:

I worked in a government agency, which has visited New Zealand universities and got a good impression about the educational quality of these universities. There is educational cooperation between those universities and my home institutions. So, they encouraged me to come and study here.

Two positive factors encouraged Gulf countries to motivate their students to choose New Zealand: cooperation between educational institutions, and the quality of education in New Zealand universities. The question that should be asked is: why did some participants not want to study at New Zealand universities? Most of the participants confessed that they had very little knowledge of New

Zealand, its geographic location, traditions, customs, social life, or universities before they arrived, as the following comments by Omar and Jaber show:

It is far away and is close to Australia. It exports meat and milk and is a green country.

New Zealand is a small country and is not a well-known location like America or Australia.

Unlike other countries, New Zealand was not a well-known place for participants. Participants seemed to have only simplistic, superficial, and general information about the country. Importantly, most information that students had related exclusively to New Zealand's geographical and economic features; they had virtually no understanding of the situation in education and its quality in the country.

5.1.1 Discussion

The findings indicate that Arab Muslim students were personally and socially motivated to study overseas and had been granted a government scholarship. Arabian Gulf countries encourage their students to pursue their education at Western universities by providing scholarships. These countries understand being educated abroad as a key aspect of modernisation, development, improvement, and prosperity (Baki, 2004; Meleis, 1982). By studying overseas, Gulf students will be prepared to meet the demands of modern industry and will be qualified for employment in the private sector, which is currently dominated by foreign workers (Baki, 2004; Gauntlett, 2005; Hamdan, 2005; Prokop, 2003).

For these students, being granted a government scholarship meant obtaining social value, honour, and reputation. Social honour and reputation derive from four main aspects: obtaining a prestigious degree from a Western university, being a skilful and qualified person, having proficiency in English, and securing a good professional job with a high salary. For these students, achieving these goals would not only bring honour to them as individuals but would also extend that honour to their families and tribes.

Preferring a qualification from Western universities is based on the general national and international academic acknowledgment of these schools. There are similarities between the attitudes to studying abroad expressed by participants in this study and those described by Lu (2006), McDermott-Levy (2008), Shaw (2010), and Skyrme (2008). This study also shows that participants have a negative image of the qualifications offered by their home academic institutions and a positive image of those of Western academic institutions, such as those in New Zealand. The students showed a disinclination to identify with their local universities and high identification with Western universities. Martens and Starke (2008) explained that students view studying abroad “as a means to high-ranking qualifications (or, at least higher ranking qualifications than those offered by domestic institutions) and, subsequently, better access to a wider job market” (p. 5).

Being qualified, speaking English, and securing future employment were described by participants as a means to gaining a desirable social reputation. Both Islamic and Arab cultures play a significant role in encouraging participants to seek overseas education. Islam not only views education as an individual matter and right in itself, but also encourages its followers to be well educated and trained (Mostafa, 2006). It urges Muslims to gain knowledge and education regardless of distance and source, even from non-Muslim countries (Bahiss, 2008; Gunel, 2007; Hamdan, 2005). In Arab culture, the stature of people is linked with social honour, which indicates the importance to participants of obtaining a prestigious qualification overseas (Carty et al., 2007). Thus, participants understood that studying abroad means more than just obtaining a qualification. It entails religious obligation and brings social honour as local people prefer Western universities because of their prominent academic reputations and advanced technical knowledge.

The direction of people’s lives is determined by their cultural identity. Social and cultural values, such as studying abroad, give Arab students direction and add meaning to their educational decisions (Carty et al., 2007). As they see it, foreign universities provide a better education for participants, improve their practical and theoretical skills, enhance their abilities, promote their academic success, and

make them qualified for better jobs with higher incomes (Mostafa, 2006; Sarroub, 2010). Graduating from national universities, by contrast, does not guarantee Saudi students jobs after graduation (Baki, 2004). By mastering the skills taught at foreign universities, participants gain social standing and will be preferred for professional jobs over those who have graduated from local universities.

5.2 University Structural Issues

The structuration framework of signification, domination and legitimation guides the analysis of how New Zealand universities' communication practices influence the negotiation process of the students' identities. Structuration theory draws attention to the rules and resources that guide participants' interactions and communications, in this case at universities. According to Giddens (1984), structure refers to the rules and resources which affect people's actions within a social organisation. Rules mean formal and informal principles and ethics that affect people's behaviours and interaction, whereas resources are the ability to influence material and nonmaterial objects (Healey, 2006; Jones, 2007).

Participants mentioned a variety of issues, both positive and negative. These issues can be classified into structures and analysed through structuration theory concepts: the structural dimensions of signification, domination, and legitimation. Whereas signification refer to rules that guide and direct individuals and organisations in their activities (Jarzabkowski, 2008; Jones & Karsten, 2008), domination refers to authoritative and allocative resources that focus on the physical location of an organisation and the exercise of power within this organisation—i.e., who is responsible within an organisation—and these structures (Giddens, 1984; Staber & Sydow, 2002; Yuthas & Dillard, 1999). Structural legitimation reflects universities' and participants' formal and informal normative rules and values, and refers to the ability of these agents to implement certain policies and regulations, access resources, and practise authority (Dillard, Rogers, & Yuthas, 2011; Halperin & Backhouse, 2007; Kristi, Jesse, & Rodney, 2004).

Examining and applying concepts of structuration theory to participants' stories and universities' perspectives can identify the negotiation process of these

participants' identities. Structuration also explains that participants and teachers were not only mediating their own objectives but that they were also being guided by their internal structures; these structures produced and reproduced further internal and external structures. The following figure illustrates how structural issues are influenced by participants' identities and also university practices.

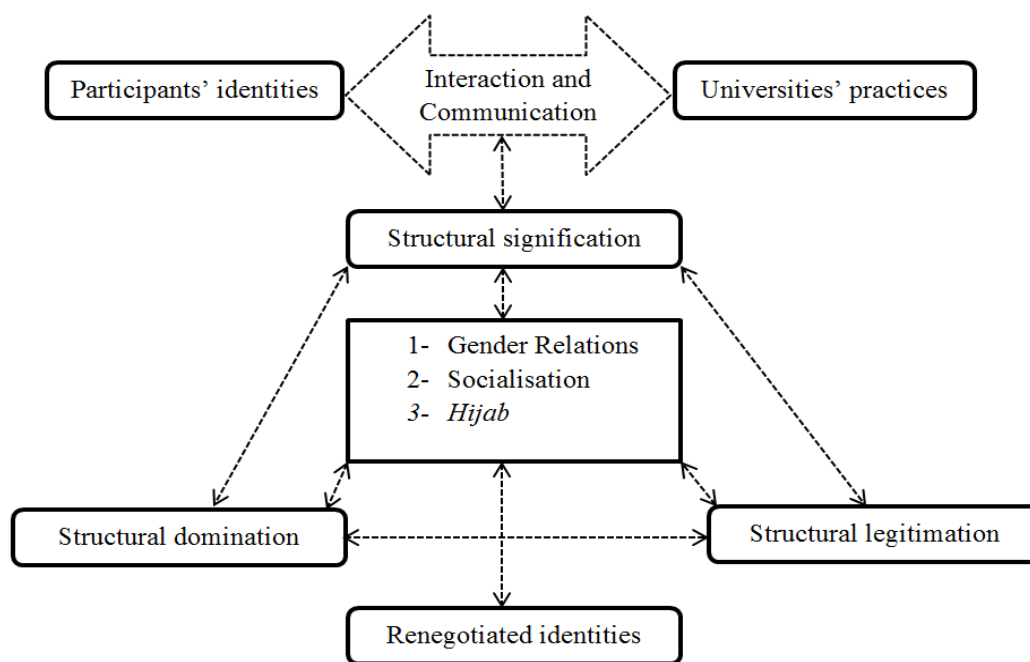


Figure 10: The negotiation process of participants' identities

According to the figure above, there are three structural issues that guide Arab Muslim participants while interacting and communicating with other people at New Zealand universities. These issues influence participants' actions and behaviour and both enable and constrain them in their intercultural communication with others. The structural issues involve gender relations, involvement with university activities, and being very conspicuous. The analysis reveals that participants experienced stress, anxiety, discomfort, and loneliness when they encountered a new Western educational system, and had limited occasions for interaction and communication. These limitations were extended by a general lack of acknowledgment of participants' religious and cultural identities. During the process of mitigating these difficulties, participants experienced limitations and isolation in their interaction and communication with others and this experience encouraged a renegotiation of their identities (Sümer, Poyrazli, &

Grahame, 2008). The degree of these negative feelings varied for newly-arrived participants and those exposed to the environment for a longer time. These three structural issues—gender relations, socialisation and the *hijab*—are respectively presented.

5.2.1 Structure of Gender Relations

The structural issue of gender relations concerned participants. It refers to participants' new experience in interacting and communicating with the opposite sex. About 90% of participants highlighted that working and communicating with the opposite sex in the dominant culture could not be easily adapted to. The finding indicated that cultural and religious identities guided participants in their first interaction and communication experiences with the opposite sex. On the other hand, these experiences affected participants' views of their cultural rules about not sitting with someone of the opposite sex and having mixed interaction. These experiences influenced participants to renegotiate these rules. The influence of universities on participants' identities is apparent. The following table summarises the structure of gender relations, and indicates the core issues in each of signification, domination, and legitimation.

Table 3: Structure of gender relations and its main issues

Structural issue of gender relations	Core issues		
	Signification	Domination	Legitimation
Participants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Interacting between the sexes is avoided. - Being in a mixed environment is a cultural shock. - Being guided by religious and cultural values. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Preferring the same gender. - Attempting to avoid working with the opposite sex. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Showing a struggle between internal values and university norms. - Indicating less emphasis on own values. - Creating new rules for interaction between the sexes and accepting the mixed gender role.
Universities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Mixing between genders is normal. - Encouraging group work and mixed learning. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Using teachers as human resources to encourage students to mix and direct them to work together. - Benefitting from the physical structure of universities and the gender policy (nonhuman resource) asserts the norm of mixing. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Practising no regulations to obligate working with the opposite sex. - Interacting with the opposite sex is a voluntary norm and not mandatory.

5.2.1.1 Signification

Group work is used by university and English language teachers as a learning tool to promote interaction and communication among students. Working in mixed-gender groups was a new learning experience for participants, who would, by preference, have worked with the same gender. The preference was based on their cultural and religious values and norms that guide interaction between the sexes.

Participants' interaction and communication with other students were guided by their identities and by university norms. The norm of interaction and communication with the opposite sex through studying in groups was obviously experienced by participants in university classrooms. The strategy of group work is used by university teachers as a learning tool to bring international and domestic students together in order to encourage multicultural learning among students. For example, the University of Waikato encourages its teachers to "plan regular smaller group activities" (University of Waikato, 2009, p. 6) when teaching international students.

However, about of 90% of participants reported culture shock in mixing and working with the opposite sex, as it was a new experience. They were directed by their cultural and religious norms in preferring to work with the same gender and refusing to communicate with the opposite sex. The participants showed a strong adherence to their own values and attempted to keep to this practice even in the dominant culture. They preferred not to work with the opposite sex when studying English and working with other international students, as the following quotes show:

I do prefer to work with males. I do not like to work with females. I was afraid of them ... So, I prefer to sit beside males and avoid females but [teachers] sometimes forced us to work with others. (Alhusan)

I do prefer to work with women. I chose a woman because I knew it is best for me. To be honest, I do not like to work with men and prefer not to. (Sarah)

It was a culture shock for us because we come from a culture where male and female students study in different schools. It was a difficult moment for me and I preferred to work with men. I tried to avoid women when we had group work. (Baddar)

Studying in a mixed environment was a learning shock for participants. The connection between preferring to work with the same gender and expressing terror at the thought of sitting with the opposite sex indicates that participants are directed by Islamic and cultural principles that determine their gender-relationships and interactions.

5.2.1.2 Domination

The strong influence of the university and English language teachers towards group work compelled participants to slowly accept mixed learning. According to participants, universities—through teachers and social and learning practices—attempted to exercise power and socialise these participants into university practices. All participants, regardless of their level of study, reported that teachers strongly urged them to work with other students regardless of nationality, culture, and background. Teachers attempted to manage any difficulties and minimise any contradictions that might hinder group work involvement. The physical structure of university classrooms, and the policy of viewing gender as a human resource, also benefitted universities in their exercise of power over participants and in changing these participants' attitudes towards the norm of mixing.

The preference to work with the same gender did not last, as participants said that they were strongly encouraged by teachers to work with others, which included the possibility of working with the opposite sex. Universities communicate the reason for this norm and support it. One main advantage of group work is to provide a positive environment for socialising with others by encouraging group assignments (University of Waikato, 2009). A number of participants related how teachers and the physical structure of universities encouraged them to mix with the opposite sex. Most students believed that although they preferred to work with the same gender, teachers strongly encouraged them to work with the opposite sex, as some of the comments below demonstrate:

Our teachers encouraged us to study with other international students and to work with people of the opposite sex. (Ibrahim)

I always choose to work with women. There is a Christian nun in the class, so I went to work with her but the teacher came and told us to go and work with a man. (Sarah)

Of course, I preferred to work with women but you are studying in a mixed class. The teachers determine your partner and I'm not allowed to say that I want to work only with a woman. (Faten)

I don't like to work with the opposite sex and prefer the same sex but then I know that the university supports mixing in studying, so I began to accept this kind of interaction. (Yahia)

University teachers negotiated the structural norm of mixing the genders and could order students to work with the opposite sex. This approach profoundly influenced participants to take on this norm as a factor in accepting mixed interaction and slowly diminishing the preference for the same gender. The university's physical structure and gender policy for allocative resources provided opportunities for both genders to learn, interact, and communicate without any separation. These resources were used by universities to encourage participants to work with the opposite sex. Over time, this encouragement greatly influenced participants to view this norm as a factor for their acceptance of mixed interaction and helped them to develop proficiency in talking to the opposite sex.

5.2.1.3 Legitimation

Negotiating and navigating between home values and local mainstream norms were obvious in this structure. The strong influence of university domination of human and nonhuman resources encouraged participants to rethink and renegotiate their own values. The negotiation process began with participants giving convincing rationalisations for not accepting mixing, moving to creating interaction guidelines, and ending with the acceptance of mixing. Over time, the tendency towards the acceptance of mixed learning was obvious and ultimately participants had no difficulty with mixing.

Participants showed an inability to affect university policies for coeducational contexts and indicated that, although learning with the opposite sex was voluntary and not mandatory, teachers strongly encouraged them to get involved and work with the opposite sex. The struggle between internal identities and external educational norms eventually led participants towards acceptance of the opposite sex and also legitimated their actions. Three main reasons motivate the students to prefer staying with the same gender: encountering a new educational environment, feeling at ease, and having a smaller number of same gender students. The following excerpts from Safia, Jana, Omar, and Noor respectively show these reasons:

I had many opportunities to work with students who come from different countries and backgrounds. However, I used to work only with Chinese or Korean women's groups because I have not had any experience in a coeducational system. We had separate schools in my country. Thus, I felt uncomfortable working with men. (Safia)

I preferred to work with women because I am a woman so certainly I feel more comfortable working with women than with men. (Jana)

It was a new experience for me to study in a mixed environment. I kept away from women and felt uncomfortable working with them. (Omar)

I worked with the opposite sex because most students were women and there were only a small number of men. (Noor)

Participants rationalised their preference for keeping to their own gender. There are particular reasons that move these participants to refuse association with the opposite sex. These are dealing with a new experience, feeling ill at ease, and being the minority gender. These three reasons seem to be based on Islamic and cultural values and norms. However, participants did not explicitly say anything about their identities. This omission indicates that these participants continued to observe their values in the dominant culture, even though they attempted to accept working with the opposite gender if there were a sufficient number of their own gender to give balance.

Participants indicated that the mixed university structure influenced them to find a balance between university norms and their own. They applied interaction guidelines that included not being alone when working with the opposite sex, not sitting too close, avoiding touch, and establishing personal space. These interaction guidelines were applied by participants when they had to work with the opposite sex, as the following quotes demonstrate:

In one group assignment, a girl had to come to my room because at that time I was sick, so I asked a friend to come and be with us. I didn't want to be alone. (Mohammed)

In my biology class, there was a Chinese boy who didn't understand the subject and always asked me questions. So one day we went to the library and I helped him. (Jauher)

Noor experienced fewer opportunities for interaction and communication with host students but hoped to find more ways of encouraging and facilitating their interaction. Yet again, Islamic rules establish guidelines for this interaction. He indicated:

I hoped that I could find a Kiwi student in order to practise my English and learn about New Zealand culture. There is no Islamic prohibition against interacting with a girl if we sit together in a public place.

Keeping a distance was a strategy that female participants also applied to avoid touch. The females had no objection to working with the opposite sex, but they created personal space between themselves and students of the opposite sex by avoiding sitting too close and touching, creating space between chairs, and choosing to sit on the opposite side of a table or desk. These guiding strategies are illustrated by the following excerpts:

In my foundations study, I have worked with men in the biology and chemistry classes. I think it is okay to work with men because it all has to do with study and helping each other through group work or preparing for our study. However, there are some limitations which I will never overstep.

For example, if anyone unintentionally touches me, I will indicate to him that this action is not acceptable but I will do it politely. (Safia)

They do not know that physical contact between the sexes is unacceptable in Islam. So you need to explain your own views and inform them about yourself, your culture, and religion. I also tried to create personal space to prevent touch and I told anyone if he unintentionally touched me. (Jannat)

I did not tell men directly about any limitations when I would have a chat with them. I would communicate it to them only indirectly through my actions, which indicated that there should be a space between me and that person. I also did not look them directly in the eyes when we chatted face-to-face. We had space between us. (Suad)

Participants agreed that they accepted working and studying with the opposite sex, but they attempted to establish interaction guidelines in order to retain their own values while at the same time agreeing to work with the opposite sex.

Significantly, participants took a further step by finding religious support for their actions and informing the opposite sex, in either direct or indirect ways, about their roles in interaction. Touch was a concern of both male and female participants while interacting with the opposite sex. However, women placed a stronger emphasis on the issue of preventing touch and aligned themselves closely with Islamic and cultural rules.

Over time, the acceptance of interaction and communication with both genders was observed among both new and longer-term participants. This compliance indicates that university practices explicitly influenced participants' identities, regardless of the time spent in the surrounding mainstream culture. Consequently, participants began to prefer mixing and to criticise the separation of the sexes. Jamal was disappointed that he was not able to integrate with local students and had become separated from them. As a result, he offered to work with an international female student. The following story explains the situation.

There was a Columbian girl who studied with me in the same course. One day I said to her, "look, we are both international students and no one else can work with us." She agreed and we exchanged phone numbers. Then

we worked and did our group assignments together. Even if we had individual assignments, we still met and tried to help each other.

Shrooq had the same experience as Jamal but she exchanged her phone number with two fellow national male students. Previously she preferred not to interact with them but finally agreed to it, in order to make their contact easier and to do assignments. She explained: “When we worked together on the same assignment, I exchanged my cell phone number with two boys so we could discuss our ideas together.” Yousif did not have any problem at all in working in mixed groups, saying:

It is okay to work with girls and I think we need to do so because when I’m a doctor, I’ll need to interact with both sexes. I visited my friends who study at my home university. I found they lacked professional communication with the opposite sex.

Participants began to propose mixing by exchanging cell phone numbers and criticising those who would not work with the opposite sex. Being an international student, not finding any other students they could associate with, and desiring to fulfil study assignment requirements seemed sufficient reason for normalising mixing and for motivating participants to work with the opposite sex.

5.2.1.4 Discussion

The structure of the student-student relationship and the student-teacher relationship was guided by participants’ identities and university norms. Naidoo (2009) indicated that “teachers and students are located at the interface of ‘structure’ and ‘action’” (p. 44). Understanding the relationship of these agents in a classroom requires taking into account their social structures in a broad sense. Teachers used group activities as a strategy that promotes intercultural communication between participants and other students. This tactic was also employed by teachers, who motivated diverse students to work with each other in classroom activities and to build social networks (Gunel, 2007; Ko, 2008). The strategy helped to establish multicultural knowledge among students (Gunel, 2007). This behaviour indicates that teachers’ actions towards the norm of group work are based on university rules and resources (Giddens, 1984). Holmes (2006)

described classroom communication in New Zealand as having a dialogic style that enriches mutual interaction among students.

Different cultures view the norm of mixed gender interaction differently. The organisational structure of Western classrooms that emphasises mixed gender cooperation noticeably conflicts with Islamic cultural rules and challenges Arab Muslim students' interactions and communications with others (Abukhattala, 2004; McDermott-Levy, 2008; Shaw, 2010; Zine, 1997). Single-sex education in the home culture, and the coeducation and normalised gender-mixing of the surrounding dominant culture, explained the difficulty that participants faced at New Zealand universities. In Arab Gulf countries, there are clearly defined limits that guide social contact between men and women who are not related. Interaction and communication between the sexes can be inhibited by the idea of Islamic gender segregation (Roald, 2001).

Participants attempted to observe this practice even in the dominant culture where the mixed-gender educational system is supported. These students preferred to work with people of the same gender and tried to avoid studying with the opposite sex. These actions reflected the religious and cultural reasons behind segregation from the opposite sex as Croucher (2009) indicated that an ethnic identity influences individuals' behaviours. The strong attachment to culture indicates that participants express their "front region identity", which means that they show a positive relationship between identity and identification, and the concept explains the importance of their identity (Giddens, 1984; Scott et al., 1998). By retaining their own cultural and religious values with regard to gender segregation, participants showed their adherence to Islamic and cultural values and norms. Knowledgeability means that individuals understand their actions and the reasons behind these actions (Giddens, 1984).

The domination of the universities explicitly influenced participants to conform to prevailing gender relation practices. Universities rely on both human and nonhuman resources to support this norm. Pressure from the educational system and teachers and the structural mixing of classes wielded great influence on participants and prevailed upon them to accept working with the opposite sex. Universities employed teachers as authoritative resources to communicate their

norms of mixing groups. Thus, participants were strongly encouraged by university teachers to accept working with the opposite sex and to conduct group study with both genders. As teachers communicated university practices, they were not only framing and constructing participants' knowledge in accordance with university objectives and goals; their daily practices were also driven by their own social and organisational policies, and the norms and structures within the dominant culture (Naidoo, 2009).

The university's physical structure and gender policy were also used by universities as allocative resources. Universities benefitted from these nonhuman resources to exercise power over participants and to force them to work with the opposite sex (Poole et al., 1996). The universities had the ability to dominate objects and goods and also had the ability to access them (Jarzabkowski, 2008). This power profoundly influenced these participants to acknowledge this norm as a factor in accepting mixed interaction. By employing both authoritative and allocative resources, universities were able to pass on to participants the norm of mixing gender.

Involvement with the practice of classroom interaction influenced participants to accept the value of mixed gender education over time. Structural domination explains how universities employed resources to exercise power over participants. Thus, participants began reframing their learning practices and accepting working with the opposite sex, within certain limitations. The strong influence of the surrounding dominant values and the desire to maintain their own values encouraged participants to begin negotiating and reflecting on their own values and those of the university. Negotiating cultural differences encourages participants to accept certain mixed gender rules, to inform others about their own culture, and simultaneously to create new gendered rules in order to mediate between their own values and those of the dominant culture (Valadez, 2008).

Participants experienced a growing acceptance of the mixed gender role. Instead of appealing to Islamic and cultural norms that restrict participants' interaction with the opposite sex, participants began to give new reasons why they now found it acceptable to mix. The reasons included dealing with the new experience of mixing, feeling ill at ease, and having only a small number of the same gender.

These rationalisations indicate that participants continued to observe their values in the dominant culture even though at the same time they attempted to show their acceptance of working with the opposite sex when there were enough individuals of the same gender. The rationalisations too are based on Islamic and cultural values and norms.

However, participants did not explicitly mention their cultural and religious identities when giving reasons for preferring not to work with the opposite sex. Rationalising their actions indicates that participants understood their daily actions (Banks & Riley, 1993). Moreover, they drew on discursive consciousness as they orally expressed their reasons and goals for specific activities (Giddens, 1984). The failure to express their own motivations for preferring not to work with the opposite sex shows that participants lacked the ability to do so. Motivation is one aspect of others that explains the connection between individuals and actions that encourages them to accept behaviours (Phipps, 2001). Giddens (1984) argued that individuals might encounter difficulty in expressing their motivations for action explicitly.

Participants found a new strategy of interaction and communication that balanced university norms with their own norms. Being knowledgeable about the reasons for their actions assists participants in monitoring their own and others' interaction and activities (Canary, 2010; Day Ashley, 2010). Scott and Myers (2010) explained that participants have the ability to manage their interaction in both social and physical contexts. Thus, participants applied interaction guidelines that allowed them to interact and communicate with the opposite sex, but which required them to establish a personal space and avoid touch.

Female participants used the strategy of keeping a distance to prevent physical touch, not sitting too close, and avoiding sitting side by side. These findings concur with another study that found female Muslim students created a balance in their interaction with others (Zine, 2001). Both male and female participants created boundaries in their classroom interactions with the opposite sex in order to find a balance between the rules their identities imposed on them and university interaction practices. Female participants placed strong emphasis on this matter.

This finding is also consistent with a study that found that women identified more strongly with Islamic and cultural rules than men did (Zine, 1997).

Two types of sanctions can be practised by universities and participants. Participants' identity sanctions can be divided into observable and nonobservable sanctions. Observable sanctions were practised by some participants when they criticised other members' actions with regard to avoiding working with the opposite sex. Some participants indicated that they were inhibited from participating in mixed group work. Yet, these participants were encouraged by observable university practices to work and participate in mixed learning and social activities. Nonobservable sanctions refer to participants' recall of their cultural and religious rules and guidelines and feeling aware of these rules. Religious and cultural conscience functioned as an internal sanction that directed and guided participants in their learning activities.

Participants showed an inability to affect university policies for coeducational contexts. Participants indicated that although learning with the opposite sex was voluntary, not mandatory, teachers strongly encouraged them to get involved and work with the opposite sex. Participants reported that their cultural and religious interaction rules, in effect, eliminated opportunities for learning and intercultural communication experiences. However, they attempted to find ways to enhance their interaction and communication with other students and rationalised their actions and behaviours, which clearly indicated their positive attitudes towards reconstructing and renegotiating the practices required by their identities. Thus, the participants created new interaction guidelines that were based on their religious and cultural identities and also on university norms.

By creating interaction guidelines, participants attempted to "reassert and (re)legitimise" their cultural and religious identities (Hotho, 2008, p. 731). This strategy is actually related to practical consciousness, even though, when these participants talked explicitly about the tactic, the strategy moved from the practical to the discursive level (Healey, 2006). Individuals are able to express orally and coherently the reasons and goals of their behaviour and action through discursive consciousness. Although they did not use words to express what they know, their motivations through practical consciousness as agents show that these

individuals engage in actions or routine social practices without giving any analytic attention to actions (Banks & Riley, 1993; Giddens, 1984; Olufowote, 2003; Poole et al., 1996). The influence of universities on the negotiation process of participants' identities also affected these students' reflection on their actions and behaviours. Scott and Myers (2010) indicated that the influence of an organisation expands to include its members' thought processes, which persuade them not to resist its domination. Individuals start accepting the organisation's influence and ask themselves the question: "Is there any alternative?" This questioning clearly indicates the influence of university practices on participants' identities.

5.2.1.5 Summary

To conclude, gender relations were the first structural issue that participants experienced when interacting and communicating with others at New Zealand universities. Cultural and religious rules guided participants' interaction and communication with others, in particular with the opposite sex. Moving to New Zealand, where the mingling of the sexes is normal, created a culture shock for participants. Participants retained and maintained their religious and cultural values with regard to sex segregation. They initially preferred to work with the same gender and avoided mixing with the opposite sex.

However, universities used human and nonhuman resources to exert power over participants and influenced them to accept the new norm. Both teachers and the physical structure of universities encouraged participants to reflect on their own values and norms with regard to the interaction of the sexes. Consequently, participants had to negotiate and navigate between their own and the university's norms. Over time, reflection resulted in growing acceptance of the new Western norm of mixed gender learning and in giving rationalisations that are less consistent with the internal values of their cultural identities. By rationalising actions and behaviours, participants explicitly expressed their positive attitudes towards reconstructing and renegotiating their identities' practices. Thus, the participants created new interaction guidelines that were based on their religious and cultural identities, and also on university norms. The new interaction

guidelines indicated that participants tried to “reassert and (re)legitimise” their cultural and religious identities.

5.2.2 Structure of Socialisation

The previous section focused on participants’ experiences in their interaction and communication with the opposite sex in class. It explained that participants reconstructed and renegotiated their learning practices in order to fit in with university practices. This section concentrates on participants’ socialisation experiences on campus. The socialisation issue focuses on participants’ experiences in their involvement, interaction, and communication with others on campus outside the classroom. Participants reported a number of university social events that prompted intercultural communication among diverse students. However, they had negative experiences at these events, which essentially limited their interaction with others and affected their identities. The following table summarises the structure of socialisation and indicates the core issues for signification, domination and legitimation.

Table 4: Structure of socialisation and its main issues

Structural issue of socialisation	Core issues		
	Signification	Domination	Legitimation
Participants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Refusing to participate in social activities because of alcohol, unavailability of halal food, and physical displays of affection. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Highlighting the importance of supplying halal food and granting some money for own cultural and religious activities. - Respecting diverse values. - Being recognised. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Reflecting own values and norms. - Employing a new strategy to facilitate social interaction and to preserve own values.
Universities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Drinking alcohol is an acceptable and normal social practice. - Consuming food that is not restricted by any religious or cultural norms. - Displaying affection is accepted. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Arranging social activities that are based on the dominant values. - Having a lack of communication to negotiate students' needs (halal food). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Respecting diverse students and different cultures. - Not obligating but encouraging attending social activities.

5.2.2.1 Signification

Most participants were dissatisfied with university social events and activities as these activities contradicted their own cultural and religious identities. They listed a number of issues that affected their social contributions and minimised their interaction and communication with others. These include the consumption of alcohol, the unavailability of *halal* food, immodest dress, physical contact between the sexes, and other activities that conflict with participants' religious and cultural beliefs.

All participants regardless of their gender, length of time at New Zealand universities, and specialisation pointed out that alcoholic beverages and non*halal* food were the dominant factors that inhibited their social involvements and reduced their interaction with others. Ali illustrates this position:

Actually, here are many activities but I didn't get involved and interact with students because there is alcohol at most of these activities.

Alhusan had never involved himself in any social activities when studying English. At the end of each course, his fellow students gathered together and enjoyed a dinner at a restaurant but he did not participate. He said:

I never went with these guys because, you know, they go to restaurants and they drink alcohol and these restaurants also don't supply *halal* food.

Besides drinking activities restricting involvement, the unavailability of *halal* food also prohibited participants' contribution to these activities. Although participants were pleased that *halal* food was available on their campuses through restaurants, they were dissatisfied that *halal* food was not provided in university activities. The following quotes illustrate the point.

I was happy that the university supplies *halal* food through some restaurants. (Alhasan)

There are two restaurants on campus that supply *halal* food. (Ali)

The university provides *halal* food, more than enough for students and there is even a food court that supplies Arab foods. (Yousif)

I don't take part or get involved in university activities. For example, if there is food, they don't provide *halal* food. Actually, we don't request or inform them about our needs. I have no motivation to attend these activities. For example, my school organised an event and sent an invitation. I did not go because I knew that alcohol and only non *halal* food would be served. (Luqman)

The issues of consuming alcohol and unavailability of *halal* food also restricted the participants to involve in any social activities that are organised off campuses. Mohammed alluded to the difficulties in socialising off campus with other students because of different values and norms and unshared interests.

We have different cultural values which restrict our interactions with each other. For example, I cannot go with them on a trip, to any restaurant, or to participate in a party because I know that they will drink and there is no *halal* food.

Students felt they had little in common with New Zealand students when they talked about going to parties and drinking. Socialising in nightclubs, drinking alcohol, and the unavailability of *halal* food were crucial factors that discouraged participants' social engagement with host national students. They felt they had nothing in common with these social life activities. Islamic and cultural morals prohibited participants from full interaction and integration with both host and international students.

Drinking and food are significant factors that constrain participants from involvement. Expecting alcohol to be served and the unavailability of *halal* food reduced the motivation to attend the school event. Feeling uncomfortable with alcohol being served at social activities leads participants to believe that alcohol is available at every social activity and event. Omar attended many university activities and concluded that:

If there are no Islamic and Arabian activities, you will necessarily find alcohol. In New Zealand, most activities contain alcohol because Western people don't appreciate any event that does not provide alcohol. Even at the seminars you find red or white wine.

Participants understood that social drinking of alcohol is one of the country's customs. They stated that alcohol is a normal component at New Zealand social activities and is a normal social practice in New Zealand social life. Universities acknowledge that alcohol is an acceptable part of social interaction in New Zealand (University of Auckland, 2004; University of Waikato, 2012). An international student advisor confirmed this acknowledgment but also mentioned how this practice ignored Muslims. He stated, "New Zealand is an alcohol drinking culture that kind of automatically excludes [Muslims] from events that we may be running because there's a lot of people drinking."

Furthermore, participants expressed the feeling that their cultural and Islamic values and norms prevented them from participating in activities that included immodest dress and display of affection. The following quotes illustrate the reaction of participants towards those activities:

These activities were not appropriate for us. One day, they were engaged in stupid and strange activities. They brought wax and the activity involved boys and girls. The girls put wax on the boys' chests and back and if they did not answer their questions, they would take it off and check if they could manage pain. They also imitated the sounds of sexual intercourse and shouted in front of others. Anyone with common sense would condemn such behaviour. It was immodest. (Noor)

You know, some activities are not consistent with our values. In one activity, students exposed themselves and played music very loudly. (Mohammed)

I went to one activity and I really got a shock. I found that the activity involved nakedness, dancing, and distributing condoms among students. I felt uncomfortable because these activities are not suitable for Muslim students. (Jaber)

Certain activities might clash with participants' ethics. Participants expressed their objections to these activities and described them as being acts of immodesty. They also revealed a sense of adherence to their cultural and religious identity by refusing to become involved in these activities. Participants' cultural and religious rules, as well as those of the university, may lay a foundation for these participants to determine whether or not they contribute to partake of these activities.

5.2.2.2 Domination

Nonhuman resources were used by universities to pass on Western norms to participants by arranging social events and activities. However, universities acknowledge the existence of diverse students who have different cultures and views by inviting them to raise any issues and communicate their needs. The issue of the unavailability of *halal* food indicated that there was a lack of communication between universities and participants. When participants pointed out that they had the right to have their religious needs regarding food accommodated, university administrators indicated that no one had raised the issue to them before and that they were more than happy to listen.

These universities arrange a number of on- and off-campus social activities and events to promote interaction and communication among diverse students. The following quotation clearly explains the main goals for university activities:

ISPACE is the University's international space—a room dedicated to international students and for the promotion of internationalisation on campus. It is a place where you can attend workshops and information sessions to help you adjust both to life at The University of Auckland and in New Zealand. It is also a place that hosts social and cultural activities for your enjoyment and gives you the opportunity to meet people from all nations. (University of Auckland, 2012, p. 9)

Although participants are encouraged by universities to attend social activities, they are also invited to raise any issues and to communicate their wants and needs in order that they can be accommodated. An International Students' Adviser encouraged participants to communicate and negotiate about their needs. She said,

“We would love to hear what their needs and wants are and then to supply their requirements.” The issue of the unavailability of *halal* food is a good example of the negotiation of power between participants and universities. As participants felt dissatisfaction on this issue, they emphasised that universities must supply *halal* food in university’s social activities. The following excerpts of Abdurrahman and Fuaid indicate that participants took the issue of *halal* food seriously:

To be honest, I don’t like to attend university activities because they don’t supply *halal* food even though there are many Arab and Muslim students. (Abdurrahman)

We are like other university students. As I understand it, we pay around \$90 in fees for activities. Consequently, we have the right to expect them to provide *halal* food but they don’t. This is evidence that they don’t recognise other cultures. (Fuaid)

Participants underlined the importance to them of supplying *halal* food and supported their arguments by pointing out the increasing number of Muslims and the matter of fees. However, an international student advisor disagreed with this claim by saying:

No request has been made to us and we were unaware of the cultural sensitivities on the matter. We have to plan for a large group of people. You brought to my attention that there is a *halal* butchery close to campus and it would be worth trying to get some meat there so that we can make it possible for the Muslim students to participate in the barbeque. This is the point I was making, that we have to know about such requirements. (Tom)

It seems that there was a lack of communication between participants and activity organisers because no action was taken to inform or make requests about food requirements. All participants who mentioned the food issue were asked whether they had informed organisers and requested *halal* food. Only one participant, Noor, had done so. Arab Muslim students should take action and inform universities about their needs as New Zealand universities have agreed “to observe and be bound by the Code of Practice for the Pastoral Care of

International Students published by the Minister of Education” (University of Waikato, 2013, p. 8).

Universities ensure that all students have access to student clubs or establish their own clubs in order to be entertained, refreshed, and integrated within the university community, and to maintain their own social activities. Participants indicated that social and fun activities were provided through student clubs. These clubs were based on students’ interests and on their nationalities. Mohanad, a Bahraini student, and Abdulazes, an Omani, gave examples of support and entertainment activities that are provided by their university.

It is very easy to set up a club to pursue your own activities. For example, we have a Bahraini club and we can apply for grants to organise our own activities.

The university arranges many fun activities ... and there is an Omani club. If we need anything, the university tries to provide it.

Participants gave examples of this support that involved securing grants for arranging their own events and activities, giving support for organising traditional exhibitions and arranging a national day, and providing rooms for social gatherings. However, participants added that university support is limited and they require more financial and resource support, such as providing rooms free of charge outside university hours to arrange and conduct their activities. For example, Noor, a Saudi student, was dissatisfied with his experience, after finding difficulty in booking rooms to hold a social gathering to break their fast in the evenings of *Ramadan* [the fasting month]. He said:

Last winter, we booked a room to break our fast but unfortunately it was not good because it didn’t protect us from the rain and it was very cold. If we wanted, we could take a photo of it and then tell others how the university treated us.

Fuaid, an Omani student, described his experience when an Omani club organised a big gathering for all Omani students who were studying at New Zealand universities. He stated:

We asked them to book a room so we could hold some activities but I was informed that they required us to pay for it and the room was very expensive to hire, even though we were studying at the university and paying fees.

Organising and conducting their own activities connected participants to each other and to their own cultural and religious identities. Retaining their own activities promotes cultural, religious, and social support for participants in the dominant culture, enabling them to maintain their connection to their own identities. By supporting and making provision for participants to arrange their own activities, universities showed they appreciated the students' needs and helped them in their efforts to maintain their own identities.

5.2.2.3 Legitimation

Universities indicated that participants had the choice whether or not to take part in social activities. As most social activities were arranged in accordance with the dominant values, participants started navigating between their own and university norms regarding social involvements. This navigation and negotiation resulted in establishing new standards of social interaction, which allow participants to take part in any university activities that do not include touching, dancing, mixing, or immodest behaviour.

Participants showed an unwillingness to attend and be involved in university social events and activities because these activities contradicted their own values and norms. Although it was made clear that these activities were voluntary and not mandatory, universities attempted to strongly encourage participants to become involved, and to socialise with others. However, as New Zealand universities host international students who come from different cultures, these universities assert that different views and cultures are welcomed and respected. For example, the University of Waikato "is known for ... respect for other cultures" (University of Waikato, 2013, p. 4).

Participants' stories indicated that most social activities are based on the dominant values, which might contradict their own values. When the issue of dominant values in activities was raised with administrators, they made it clear that

participants have the option to take part in activities or not. However, they are encouraged to participate in dominant culture activities. An international advisor asserted that “[Arab students] have the option to involve themselves in university activities or not but we encourage them to do so.” Another administrator said:

We understand cultural sensitivities and if [participants] don’t feel comfortable, we definitely won’t force them to do anything. On the other hand, we also encourage them to be involved with all activities because they are in New Zealand and the culture is the local one.

The significant influence of the dominant values and the desire to maintain their own values and socialise with others inspired participants to start searching for other possibilities and strategies. These strategies managed any tensions which resulted from attending social activities, and promoted participants’ interaction and communication with others. Female participants seemed to be the ones who used this strategy the most. They agreed to involve themselves only with activities that did run counter to their own values, as the following excerpts show:

I was a volunteer for a cancer charity foundation but I didn’t participate in any activity that involved dancing, mixing, or touching. (Saud)

I cannot get involved in social and sports activities that involve touching or being touched. I only get involved with certain activities. For example, last week I participated in a talent activity. (Khadija)

I take part in any activity but it must not contradict my own values. If any activity is not suitable for me as a Muslim, I refuse to be involved with it. For example, I refuse to participate in activities that involve touching males or holding each other. (Jannat)

Participants happily accepted participation in academic and general discussions, and fun and voluntary activities but refused to take part in any activities that contradicted their own values. This response shows that participants are guided by their own values to reflect on their daily activities. The coping strategy was based on the participants’ religious and cultural identities. The new strategy involved

establishing new standards that mediated participants' social event involvements and promoted their interaction and communication with others.

5.2.2.4 Discussion

Participants reported dissatisfaction with university student activities as these contradicted their own cultural and religious values. Conflict with Islamic rules of behaviour made "many Muslim participants feel alienated by the social and institutional practices" (Zine, 1997, p. 107). Islamic and cultural values regulated participants' daily activities. The main concern of participants was that social activities were not consistent with cultural and Islamic morality because they involved the consumption of alcohol, the unavailability of *halal* food, immodesty, physical contact between the sexes, and other activities that are in conflict with participants' religious and cultural beliefs. The different cultural and religious values raised the level of uncertainty among participants, evoking anxiety, and making communication and friendship with others difficult.

Similarity in values and norms plays an important role in developing relationships. Sharing similar cultural norms, such as drinking, and having common interests bring students together and assist them in organising social events and activities and then building good relationships (Ujitani, 2006). Participants showed less interest in socialising with New Zealand and international students as the latter pursue activities such as drinking alcohol, dancing, and going to parties, which are not acceptable according to their cultural and religious values and norms. Cultural and personal differences constrained good communication and friendships (Hawke et al., 2011; Holmes & O'Neill, 2012; Ko, 2008). The general sense of belonging to another culture and the lack of cultural similarities result in rejection and isolation and in less interaction (Ko, 2008). In New Zealand, studies have found that the lack, and low level, of interaction between international students and domestic students diminishes the desire and expectation to make local friends (Anderson, 2008; Campbell & Li, 2008; Campbell, 2012; Ward & Masgoret, 2004; Zhang & Brunton, 2007).

Participants revealed that they reflected on university social activities. Reflexivity continually occurs before, during, and after activities (Giddens, 1984), which

means that reflexivity is not only influenced by structures, but means that human agency also plays an important role in such behaviours (Healey, 2006).

Participants were also knowledgeable about their actions as they preferred not attending any social activities that were inconsistent with their own values (Canary, 2010). Providing verbal explanations and rationalisations for their actions means that participants were able to acknowledge their activities at the discursive level (Olufowote, 2003).

Female participants determined certain guidelines that regulated their social involvements. These women were certainly knowledgeable in their choices about activities and made a connection between involvement in social activities and the consistency of their own values (Day Ashley, 2010). Abukhattala (2004) noted that women are expected to adhere more strongly to the regulations, even though equal duty and responsibility are allocated to both genders. Since the culture assigns different gender roles, those roles explain why women are required to pay more attention to physical activities than men (Jiwani & Rail, 2010). Women felt ill at ease with male physical contact. This finding is supported by another study that found Muslim girls felt uncomfortable with physical contact and interaction between men and women (Gunel, 2007; McDermott-Levy, 2008). It is obvious that universities try to socialise participants by employing “the hidden curriculum” (Zorn & Gregory, 2005, p. 213), in which formal and informal social activities are conducted in order to influence participants in favour of university norms and values.

Both organisations and members attempt to influence the other party and make their own voice heard. Universities employed a number of social activities as nonhuman resources that allowed these universities to exercise power and to influence participants. Involvement in university social activities constituted “symbolic representations” (Dillard et al., 2011, p. 9) that carry meanings for participants and others who interact with them. The concept of “role expectations” is understood as a structure that regulates the relationship between an organisation and its members (Scott & Myers, 2010, p. 82). Universities organise social activities in order to entertain, refresh, and promote cultural understanding among

diverse students. Students are expected to get involved and contribute to these activities.

The presence of dominant and resistant interaction and communication between universities and participants allowed the latter to assert their individuality in certain ways and practise their agency and identity (Scott & Myers, 2010). Zorn and Gregory (2005) explained the mutual influences between an organisation and newcomers through the organisational assimilation concept. They indicated that an organisation tries to influence newcomers by socialising them into its values and practices through a number of activities. However, these newcomers attempt to construct their own roles and individuality as they engage with and involve themselves in the organisation's activities (Zorn & Gregory, 2005).

The participants wanted universities to recognise the requirements of different identities and cultural backgrounds. They attempted to negotiate power with universities by asserting that the availability of *halal* food is a right rather than a favour from universities, and that these universities must consider diverse values when arranging activities. The participants also highlighted the desire for an improvement in the quality; they insisted on more financial and resource support in this area. The idea of the right suggests a new approach to understanding the relationship between an organisation and its members. Participants not only justify their observances by saying "I am a Muslim" or "I should behave in this way" but also ask why the universities do not meet the requirements of their identities (Scott & Myers, 2010). They emphasised that universities should consider the full diversity of students' cultures and acknowledge the wide range of ethnicities on their campuses in order to promote integration and intercultural communication among these this diverse body of students (Basford, 2008; Ko, 2008; McDermott-Levy, 2011; Zine, 1997). If it is only the dominant culture and its values that are represented in these activities, then a devaluation of the goal of integration between minority and majority groups occurs (Ragoonaden, 2010).

The administrative staff reported that they had no objection to providing *halal* food. However, they pointed out that there was a lack of communication between themselves and Arab Muslim students. Thus, administrators were unaware of the food requirements and had little knowledge of Islamic dietary regulations. The

administrators indicated that university practices recognise participants' cultural differences and religious backgrounds. They encouraged participants to report their needs and food requirements. On the other hand, the participants assumed that, although they had not informed the administration about their needs, they could nevertheless expect the universities to satisfy these needs. Scott and Myers (2010) highlighted the communication issue of "group-organisational norms" (p. 92) by saying that these norms function as structures that explain the negotiation process in the organisational-individual relationship. They suggest that through formal and informal channels, both the organisation and individuals should clearly and directly communicate their norms to the other party.

The negotiation of power between universities and participants allowed both parties to communicate what they liked and disliked, and to choose what activities they could conduct, organise, and participate in and those they could not. It is not suggested that there is equal power between universities and Muslim students but as Scott and Myers (2010) explained, the interaction of power between these agencies allows participants to maintain their uniqueness and personal identity in some matters, even though these participants rarely possessed the power to change university practices. Universities encouraged participants to take part in social events and activities in order to provide them with a number of benefits, such as entertaining themselves and enhancing their social skills.

However, the university's ability to practise a sense of control over participants' involvement and how the participants were able to resist these activities showed that both universities and the participants attempted to control the other party. Giddens (1984) talked about the dialectic of control concept that refers to "the two-way character of the distributive aspect of power (power as control); how the less powerful manage resources in such a way as to exert control over the more powerful in established power relationships" (p. 374). In other words, both those at the top and those at the bottom possess power, as they have access to some sort of resource where it is related and connected in a dialectical way (Hussain & Cornelius, 2009). Legitimation clearly explains what actions can be taken in order for both parties to exercise power.

The participants were always aware of their cultural and religious norms and values while conducting any activities. The reward and punishment systems have much power and may have a significant influence over individual behaviour within an organisation (Kristi et al., 2004). These normative rules of reward and punishment operate as a primary source of sanction within universities and influenced the negotiation process of participants' identities and affected those identities as they were negotiated and renegotiated. This process of negotiation explains why Arab Muslim participants started rethinking and renegotiating the norms and values of their identity in order to allow them to accept participation in some activities and nonparticipation at other times.

The legitimation structure validates individuals' actions and behaviours and reports whether these activities are congruent with individual and organisational values, norms, and goals (Hossain, Moon, Kim, & Choe, 2011; Hussain & Cornelius, 2009). Universities attempted to legitimate their social activities by referring to the dominant social norms that underpinned these activities. The university's acknowledgment of alcohol consumption as an accepted part of New Zealand social interaction was a clear example of this point. Not only did universities "mediate the goals and functions of the educational system" and communicate their norms and policies and structure, but they also communicated the norms and structures of the dominant culture in which they functioned (Naidoo, 2009, p. 44).

Although universities communicated the dominant norms for social activities, they did not apply any strong, direct sanctions on participants who did not want to be involved in social activities. Participants behaving in accord with their cultural and religious identities did not face any punishment for their avoidance of university social activities. The common experience of participants indicated that there was a good attitude on the part of the university towards acknowledging their identities. For instance, participants mentioned that they were not forced to join in any activities in which they did not want to take part. Importantly, they were encouraged to report their needs and wants.

On the other hand, participants searched for legitimation for their actions and behaviour at New Zealand universities by constantly referring to the university

guidelines and to the norms set by their identity. This process assured participants that their daily activities were in line with their identities and university practices. The uncertainty they experienced led participants to understand that they should decrease the gap that exists between their own values and the new dominant social norms. This process can be achieved by employing a strategy that allows participants to find a balance between university norms and practice and the values determined by their identity.

Participants created a new standard of social involvement. This strategy is actually related to practical consciousness, even though when these participants talked about these tactics, the discussion of these strategies moved from the practical to the discursive level (Healey, 2006). The strategy indicates the participants' desire to adjust to the new educational social setting. They seemed to negotiate cultural differences within the context of their daily social experiences and to obtain ontological security (Giddens, 1984; Valadez, 2008). The cognitive sense of security, "which individuals are looking for, is constantly created, sustained and reinforced in action through practice" (Busco, 2009, p. 255). By engaging in the cultural experience of the host country, international students are able to enhance their cultural understanding (Pedersen et al., 2011). These understandings functioned as elements of intercultural competence that facilitated and advantaged interaction and communication between host and international students (Shaw, 2010).

5.2.2.5 Summary

To conclude, socialisation is the second structural issue that participants faced. Participants were guided by their own cultural and religious values and norms to reflect on university social activities. They found that these activities contradicted their own values so they preferred not to socialise with other students. For these participants, issues of the consumption of alcohol, the unavailability of *halal* food, immodesty, physical contact between the sexes, and activities that conflicted with their religious and cultural beliefs played a significant role and deterred them from social involvements. For universities, these social norms are accepted.

Although universities strongly encourage all students to be involved and participate in a variety of social activities, they acknowledge international students and respect their cultures. The universities mentioned that participants are welcome to raise any concerns and communicate any issues with regard to their religious and cultural needs. The negotiation of power between universities and participants was initiated as participants insisted that universities must supply *halal* food and consider their values. A lack of communication between universities and participants occurred as both universities and participants seemed to expect the other party to manage the issues raised. The influence of dominant values and the desire to interact with others encouraged participants to reflect on and to renegotiate their own values, which resulted in their employing a strategy of social interaction. The strategy allowed them to preserve their own values and at the same time socialise with others.

5.2.3 Structure of the *Hijab*

Dress code is the final structural issue that formed a particular part of the experience of female participants. Being conspicuous on Western university campuses because of their clothing framed and structured female participants' interpretation of *hijab* and their interaction and communication experiences with others. The following table summarises the structure of *hijab* and indicates its core issues in signification, domination, and legitimation respectively.

Table 5: Structure of the *hijab* and its main issues

Structural issue of <i>hijab</i>	Core issues		
	Signification	Domination	Legitimation
Participants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Islamic and cultural values determine style of dress (wearing hijab/niqab and long dress). - Dress is a part of identity/a valuable aspect/the whole life. - <i>Hijab</i> means protection from any harm in the new environment. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Expectations of the dominant culture with regard to dress: be a different person/avoidance of negative perception (fear)/caring about others. - Reflection on own style of dress. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Adaptation a new style of the hijab and dress into a new form. - Explanation of the new style: (Being normal, being accepted/avoiding attention/improving interaction).
Universities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Freedom of dress. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - External perceptions: suspicion/fear/avoidance/irritation/less interaction/ lack of information. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - No obligation to a certain style. - Acceptance of different cultures and norms of dress.

5.2.3.1 Signification

Negotiating dress identity was a notable issue that female participants experienced while interacting and communicating on the university campus. A number of meanings for *hijab* were given by women which included emphasising *hijab* as a part of cultural and religious identity, and as a protection from any harm in the new country. The following quotes illustrate how *hijab* comes to signify an essential element of a female's own identity:

I view *hijab* as a part of my own personal identity. It is also a part of my culture. I don't care what others think and I wear it in any place, even here in New Zealand. (Jannat)

The *hijab* means everything to me and to any Muslim woman. It represents everything in my life and it does not prevent me from living a normal life. (Saud)

I never question my *hijab* because even in my country I can take it off. For example, I can wear it in front of my family and then take it off outside the home. (Faten)

Hijab signifies a valuable and unique aspect of women's identity, one which is impossible to ignore in the new country. The choice to wear *hijab* overseas contradicts the assumption that *hijab* is enforced by women's families. It makes clear that being in the new culture without parental supervision does not cause women to compromise their *hijab*, and shows how women practise *hijab* without any oppression or control by men or families because it represents a valuable aspect of their lives.

However, in the new culture the meaning of *hijab* shifts. The following comments from three females indicate that *hijab* means a valuable object, a protection from harm, and prevention of harassment.

Hijab is like the pearl which is very expensive, so it must be protected in an oyster. Likewise, women are protected by their *hijab*. (Khadija)

I see the woman as a pearl that not everyone is allowed to see. The girl is hiding inside the seashell, which protects her. (Faten)

Many students asked a lot of questions about *hijab* and what it means to me. I told them that *hijab* is like a seashell that protects women and prevents harassment that could cause them harm. (Saud)

Hijab is not just a customary item or a symbol of religious identity; rather, the new meaning of protection is made clear. *Hijab* is a crucial practice followed for the practical purpose of protecting women from any harm in the new culture. Participants liken the importance of *hijab*'s ability to protect something precious to the shell that protects a pearl. The metaphor is used by female students to show its connection and adherence to their identities.

5.2.3.2 Domination

Religious and cultural values guided female participants in their dress. Moving to a new country and being in a culture that has different norms and views towards dress significantly influenced these women in their need and desire to consider the issue of dress and reconstruct it. Having a conspicuous identity as an Arab Muslim at university led to a number of challenges for female participants, that resulted in less interaction and communication.

Expectations concerning the dominant styles of dress were the first external factor that moved women to think of their dress. As female participants intended to live and study in New Zealand for at least 4 to 5 years, they started wondering about the way they should dress even before departing for New Zealand. Shrooq mentioned that *hijab* dress code was a main concern for her even before flying to New Zealand, as most Saudi women cover their whole body and face, in accordance with the dominant interpretation of appropriate female dress in Saudi Arabia. Apparently, Shrooq was not able to decide whether it would be enough to simply cover her head and leave her face visible in New Zealand and to wear dispense with the long loose garment (*niqab*) that covers the body and the head as well. She stated:

In my country, I studied about *hijab* before moving to New Zealand. I was concerned about how I was going to dress in NZ. This confusion was because all women in my country are veiled and clothes cover the whole body. I started thinking about the wearing of my veil and *hijab* and thinking deeply about them. I understood that Islamic scholars have two interpretations of Muslim women's dress: covering the whole body, or wearing *hijab*. (Shrooq)

Wearing certain styles of *hijab*, such as *niqab* or *abaya*, or wearing a headscarf, in the mainstream culture might come into conflict with local students' views of women. The concern and struggle refer to the specific style that is adopted in the new culture. Participants cared about and considered others' views of Muslim women's dress. Sarah asked her friends who study at Western universities for advice concerning dress and they recommended that she did not buy a long outer garment to wear in public in New Zealand. Although she likes long clothes, she considered how others would view her style of dress. Sarah's comments illustrate the point:

Hijab styles and what I am going to wear here in NZ are another issue. I do care about NZ students and other people when I think about wearing my *hijab* in a specific style. I do not want them to think that we are not well dressed. (Sarah)

Jana also was concerned about how others would view and understand *hijab*. Studying abroad and moving to another culture could be the cause of serious stress and anxiety for Jana. Specifically, interaction and communication with non-Muslims could be restricted by her conspicuous identity, as Jana mentioned, and this thought inspired her to think about her dress even before arriving in the country. She said:

There are many challenges that I face in New Zealand. For example, they may not understand the rationale of wearing *hijab*. When they see us with *hijab*, they may feel unease or disdain, which can negatively affect our interaction.

Covering the face and wearing the *abaya* (loose dress) were practised by some female participants. However, they anticipated that this choice might contradict the host country's norms. The challenge involves understanding the Islamic scholars' interpretations of *hijab* and veiling and bringing clothes that are consistent with the views of the dominant home culture. Thus, participants accepted uncovering their faces and so restyled their *hijab* style. The students talked about their desire to fit into the new dominant culture and adapt their dress code to suit the new cultural conditions. They used rationalisations to explain their decisions and behaviour, and these indicated the desire to appear "normal" and promote interaction and communication with others. These rationalisations are articulated by women to legitimatise their actions. (See 5.2.3.3 below for more detail).

On some occasions, women's expectations of a negative reaction to their *hijab* in the dominant culture were realised. The dress code indicates another level of identity which goes beyond just being Muslim to being a Muslim woman, making the differences in identity obvious. Having so conspicuous an identity creates a number of challenges for women that can be attributed to fear or the lack of information about Islamic *hijab*, and can result in harassment and in less interaction and communication. The following comments by Shrooq, Zahra, and Jauher respectively illustrate their experiences with wearing *hijab* in the new culture and how others might view it:

New Zealand students are suspicious of us because we are new to their country and culture. As I mentioned, we have barriers, which are Islam, language, and *hijab*. These barriers specifically affect Muslim girls. A Muslim man's appearance means he can easily interact and deal with others. New Zealand students deal with Muslim men and women differently because they are suspicious of us due to *hijab*. (Shrooq)

Of course, I had many group assignments and I worked with different students. I assumed that New Zealand students were reluctant to work, interact, or sit close to me because of my *hijab*. I think they don't want to bother me and they tried to create a comfortable environment for me. (Zahra)

There is a guy who always attempts to bother girls because of their *hijab*. Although I informed him of the main purpose of *hijab*, he continued asking me about it and asked, “Why you do not allow me to see your hair and beauty”? He said, “I want only to see it.” I told him I was sorry he was not trying to understand this issue but, rather, was trying to bother me. (Jauher)

Although female participants explained their own Islamic cultural attitudes towards the concept of *hijab*, these views are fundamentally influenced by non-Muslims who have different attitudes towards the matter. Non-Muslim attitudes suggested that female Muslim dress and appearance result in suspicion, fear, misconception, and misunderstanding, and indicate the desire to hide beauty. These perceptions demonstrate how female participants may struggle with their identities as a result of being in the mainstream culture.

5.2.3.3 Legitimation

As mentioned previously, universities accept and respect diverse cultures. Universities do not require any form of dress or communicate any norms, and freedom with regard to dress is practised. However, the influence on female participants of the dominant values concerning dress was significant, and pressured these women to restyle their preferred form of dress. The main reason for restyling their clothing included being seen as “normal,” avoiding attention, being accepted, integrating, and improving interaction with others.

The issue of *hijab* was raised with administrators and they all mentioned that universities do not require any style of dress and students are allowed to wear what they like, as some of the comments below demonstrate:

We have some women from the Middle East. They are fully covered and wear the *niqab* but nobody pressures them to remove their *niqab* when they attend classes. (Ismail)

Students can dress however they like. And that’s the same for all cultures. We had a monk here from Thailand and he wore orange, like just a piece

of material. And yeah, there is no issue at all. People can wear whatever they're comfortable wearing. (Katharine)

The university understands religious and cultural practices. A lot of women need to cover their heads and, to a degree, their faces apart from the eyes. The university accommodates this choice, even in exams, and women are asked to unveil their head only in order to identify them. These women do it not for decoration or because it's fashionable. It is part of their culture and religion, so it is respected from that angle. (Rose)

There is a good attitude on the part of the university, acknowledging female students' conspicuousness, and accepting diverse cultures and views. Students are not obligated to wear a certain type of clothing, nor does the university require them to compromise their identities in order to fit in with the new cultural norms. They are allowed to observe the requirements of their identities and to retain their own values.

There are no university norms and obligations that require women to wear or avoid wearing certain styles of dress. However, the daily influence of the new cultural norms on female participants' views towards their dress is strong. Thus, these women began renegotiating and reconstructing their own values and norms, which resulted in adopting a new style of dress. Participants gave rationalisations in order to legitimise their actions, as the quotes below show:

When I am in a hurry, I just open my cupboard and then start thinking "What am I going to wear today?" You know, women do not want to wear the same dress every day. Sometimes, I may find a dress which is short and inappropriate. I wear it. A friend of mine may ask, "Why are you wearing that?" I just say, "I got tired of carefully choosing my dress. (Shrooq)

In my country, we used to wear the *abaya*, which covered us completely. However, after arriving in New Zealand I started only wearing *hijab* without the *abaya*. I entered the university and found that Kiwi students prefer not to interact and mix with us. After this, I think my dress has changed. (Zahra)

In my country, I prefer to wear *abaya* or a long dress because it covers my whole body. In the university, I prefer not to wear the long dress because I found it difficult to walk with it and also I am in a Western society. So, if you wear the long dress that means students will stare at you. (Faten)

Over time, the women have shown less attachment to Islamic and cultural dress guidelines compared to when they first arrived in the country. The dominant culture influences female students to reconsider their clothing style and start accepting new/local ways of dressing. Female students legitimised and rationalised their actions by saying that not retaining appropriate clothing was because of a lack of time, personal preference, avoidance negative perceptions and attention, and development of mutual interaction and communication with others.

5.2.3.4 Discussion

The meaning of *hijab* varied among female participants upon their arrival in the host country. *Hijab* was a part of their identity, gave a sense of protection, limited interaction, and signalled hiddenness. Wearing *hijab* meant “symbolic representations” (Dillard et al., 2011, p. 9), which carry identity meanings for participants and others who interact with them. The meaning of *hijab* for participants is influenced by their ethnic identity; it protects modesty and encapsulates a crucial part of Islam (Croucher, 2009; Croucher, Oommen, et al., 2010). Being conspicuous in New Zealand universities directly illustrated that female participants actually reflected on their identities’ social structures, and, in turn, interpreted the meaning of their dress both for themselves and for others. For women, *hijab* is an inherited part of their cultural and religious identities, and it does not signal oppression by parents and communities even though some Western people assume that Muslim women are oppressed or forced to wear *hijab* by their family, husband, or the by the superiority of men in general (Croucher, 2008; Poynting, 2009).

However, the new culture has shifted the meaning of *hijab* to mean protection and prevention from harm in the dominant culture. The meaning of *hijab* as security and protection of the body from outsiders was also reported by other Muslim

women in France (Croucher, 2008). Adhering to familiar practices in a strange culture spares women from any preventable acts of harassment and harm (Gao, 2009). For females, the *hijab* means “a way to secure identity, reduce uncertainty and enhance self-esteem” (Croucher, 2008, p. 205).

Participants also mentioned that insisting on *hijab* and refusing to take it off did not prevent them from living a normal, ordinary life. This finding is supported by a Canadian study that has found that Muslim women viewed *hijab* as a freedom of movement and an individual mobility (Hoodfar, 2003). This point contradicts the finding by Veelenturf (2006) that a veil can be a restriction on freedom and the participation of Muslim women in the New Zealand community. One explanation for this contradiction might be that my participants had been in New Zealand only for a short time. This fact means that they did not have very much experience in socialising with others in the country.

Female participants encountered a number of challenges in the academic context due to their conspicuousness. Islamic dress rules impose certain standards, such as being loose, using opaque material, using solid colours, and being austere (El Guindi, 1981). On the other hand, dress code, particularly for New Zealand male/female students, is consistent with their own individualistic views and the general identity of New Zealand. For example, the University of Waikato explicitly states that it “is aligned unambiguously with an Aotearoa/New Zealand national and cultural identity” (University of Waikato, 2012, p. 12). However, this alignment does not discourage female participants from signalling their identity, for example by wearing *hijab*, as New Zealand respects and acknowledges religious freedom and different cultures. There is a tension between these two freedoms. Thus, dress code differences might create an intergroup problem. It would appear that being a veiled Arab/Muslim woman and an international student means facing double jeopardy (Cole & Ahmadi, 2003).

Dress and appearance evoke fear due to the image people have of Muslim women. People will avoid them because of the way they view fully covered Muslim women, and because these female students exhibit different characteristics. This reaction also relates to another issue, namely, that the purpose of wearing a veil is not fully understood by some New Zealand students and others who lack

information about Islam or have a very limited knowledge of it. *Hijab* also seems to generate communication conflicts and fear about the interaction of the sexes. Gender plays a role in women's interaction with others. These women wearing *hijab* are highly conspicuous and this, as the respondent states, leads to less interaction with others, whereas their male counterparts are less readily identified as different.

Although female participants showed a strong preference for wearing their *hijab*, the social and educational pressure of the dominant culture profoundly influenced upon these women the need and desire to question and study the matter, and to alter the style of their dress. This influence was felt even before flying to the new culture as women considered dress standards. This consideration involved understanding different interpretations of women's dress and accepting new styles of dress that are consistent with the views of the dominant home culture.

Participants also indicated the connection between their identity and dress, and how they adapt their style to renegotiate identity in the host culture. Giddens (1984) explained the relationship between identity and (dis)identification through the concept of "front-back regions" (pp. 124-126). This relationship is additionally developed through "the front region associated with 'positive' identifications and the back region associated with more 'negative' dis-identifications" (Scott et al., 1998, p. 315). Female participants emphasise and show positive identification (front region) when they socialise with their own group of people—those who share a similar identity. However, moving to a different dominant culture and socialising with a variety of individuals makes them feel uncomfortable with this socialisation. This feeling affects them negatively so that they hide their own identification and do not display it publicly, which results in expressing negative identification (back region) (Giddens, 1984; Poole & McPhee, 2005; Scott et al., 1998).

Nowadays, it is common to find two distinct interpretations of *hijab*. The first interpretation of *hijab* is simply the covering of the head, as indicated by the wearing of a headscarf by, for example, Malaysian or Indonesian Muslim females. This form of *hijab* often accompanies western-style dress like jeans or trousers, which cover the female body (modest clothing), rather than wearing *abaya* or

niqab. Westerners have become relatively familiar and comfortable with this form of the *hijab*. The second interpretation of the *hijab* involves covering the whole body and some women do cover everything. This is the common form of *hijab* for Gulf Arab Muslim women. This form of the *hijab* might bother some non-Muslim people, because the obscuring of one's physical identity runs counter to their cultural norms (Croucher, 2009; El-Geledi & Bourhis, 2012). In this study, the females made a concession to Western uncomfortableness with a covered female face, and so they have taken the decision to reveal their faces in New Zealand and to restyle their dress.

Thus, participants attempted to practise domination of dress by restyling their *hijab* in order to obtain a balance that moderates the dominant cultural influences and respects their identity requirements regarding dress. Jones and Karsten (2008) explained that "clothes do not simply indicate who a person is, but also convey important messages about the powers that they are considered to hold" (p. 129). The new style of clothes combines Western and Islamic styles. Studies found that facing social pressure from the new country, wanting to fit in, adapting to the new culture, and desiring to enhance the interaction and communication experiences with others were the main factors motivating female students to reconsider and restyle their dress (Cole & Ahmadi, 2003; Zine, 2001). The meaning of being an Arab Muslim female in New Zealand changed as they tried to hold fast to their own identities while becoming a part of the new culture (Croucher, 2008).

The theoretical framework of "identity tenure" might help to explain the process of identity change (Scott et al., 1998, p. 317). Individuals hold involuntary, enduring identities, such as gender and nationality, and voluntary identities capable of change, such as characteristics of dress and behaviour (Scott et al., 1998). Over time, it is noticed that interaction with the social context causes the voluntary identity of female participants, seen in their dress style, to undergo alteration and reconstruction.

The university's structural legitimation "defines the appropriate dress code in particular settings, the transgression of which may invoke sanctions" (Jones & Karsten, 2008, p. 129). However, the analysis of *hijab* here showed that universities did not apply any strong, direct sanctions on female participants who

observed the dress requirements of their cultural and religious identities. Women were allowed to follow their own religious and cultural rules with regard to dress. They could observe these rules, with their universities allowing them to be photographed with their face covered.

As mentioned previously, universities mediate educational systems goals, and communicate their own norm, as well as the dominant culture's norms and structures (Naidoo, 2009). The pressure of the dominant norm of dress strongly motivated the females to question and to reconsider their dress. They began to rationalise restyling their dress in a way that clearly indicated their positive attitudes towards reconstructing and renegotiating the practices required by their identity. This finding supports previous research into this area which links the influences of the first culture on restyling dress (Cole & Ahmadi, 2003; Zine, 2001).

The strategy of designing new styles of dress and reconstructing a new meaning of *hijab* was applied by women. Whereas this activity derives from practical consciousness, it moved from the practical to the discursive level when the women explicitly mentioned this tactic (Healey, 2006). Participants' reflexivity concerning their actions and behaviours is also affected by university influences on the negotiation process of women's identity. Scott and Myers (2010) indicated that the influence of an organisation expands to include its members' reflexivity which pressures them not to resist its domination, so the individuals start accepting organisational influence and asking themselves the question, "Is there any other option?" The other option for these women was to create a new world accommodating the values and perspectives of both home and the dominant culture for Muslim dress.

5.2.3.5 Summary

To summarise, *hijab* is the final structural issue that female participants negotiated in the new culture. It represents a part of their personal, cultural, and religious identities. In the new culture the meaning of *hijab* shifted to include protection from harm. Others viewed *hijab* as hiding beauty. The influence of the new culture on women is clear despite the fact that the new culture accepts

freedom of dress. Consequently, female participants constructed new meanings of *hijab* to cover scarves and dresses that form a hybrid between Islamic and Western dress norms. Female participants drew from their stock of knowledge to interpret their behaviour and actions and to rationalise the importance of restyling dress. The role of daily university activities in constructing and reconstructing the participants' cognition and actions is clear. This role exerts a critical influence in the process of negotiating the participants' identity, as signalled by dress.

5.3 Conclusion

This chapter has investigated the influences of university practices on Arab Muslim participants' identities. It addressed the following question: How do New Zealand universities' communication practices influence the negotiation process of Arab Muslim participants' identities? The chapter found that for Arab participants, studying abroad means social honour and reputation as they want to improve their language skills, graduate from a prestigious Western university, gain skills and qualifications, and secure a professional job. These factors should be understood in the context of Islamic and cultural views that place great emphasis on education and the stature of people who rank highly because of their knowledge.

The chapter also revealed three structural issues: gender relations, socialisation, and *hijab*. Each of these issues was enriched by considering the structural dimensions of structuration theory: signification, domination, and legitimation. It emerged from the findings that intercultural communication experiences of participants in the academic environment require that attention be paid to the cultural, religious, and university structures that shaped and framed these participants' experiences. This mixture yields a complex view that should focus not only on all these structures but also on other personal factors that construct and reconstruct the participants' interaction and communication with others at New Zealand universities. For Arab Muslim participants making the transition to a Western educational system, the adjustment to this different educational context can either be a challenge or go smoothly.

The process of reconstruction and renegotiation suggests that the engagement of these participants is on-going and is an active and dynamic process. It explains that these participants link their own identities and agency in a continual and reflexive way. This reflexivity mediates participants' action and behaviour in the new educational environment. Thus, the issue of agency and structure lies at the heart of the participants' reconstruction in the new educational setting. Crucially, this connection of agency and structure leads to a significant implication that understands identity as a dynamic phenomenon which is constructed and reconstructed in different contexts.

Consequently, over time these participants, without any further examination or objection, came to accept certain practices. Participants acted, behaved, and carried on activities that were based on university norms. This shift indicates how the structure of universities functions as a duality that both enables and constrains human agency. Participants accepted New Zealand university practices of normal interaction and communication with the opposite sex, participation in learning and social events and activities, and normalisation of other university activities, and reflected these practices in their actions. Yet, cultural and religious identities still guide participants in these structural significations. This acceptance actually shows a simple form of organisational identification, which is shaped and reshaped by an individual's actions and behaviour (Scott et al., 1998; Scott & Myers, 2010). Ashforth et al. (2008) argued that "behaviour should be regarded as a probabilistic outcome of identification, not as a necessary component" (p. 331).

Chapter 6

Findings on Research Question 2: Communication Practices

The previous chapter investigated the influences of New Zealand universities on the negotiation process for participants' identities. The current chapter looks into participants' impressions upon arrival, and their experiences in interacting and communicating with New Zealanders and others in the New Zealand community. It also shows how cultural and religious identities influence the students' interaction and communication experiences with others in different contexts, and how these experiences frame and reframe student identities to allow them to achieve integration within the community. This chapter specifically aims to answer the second research question: What communication practices do Arab Muslim students adopt in managing acceptance or exclusion, and how successful are they?

Chapter 6 contains two main parts. The first part describes the culture shock participants faced from their experiences upon arrival because of cultural and religious differences. The second part examines the participants' interaction and communication experiences with New Zealanders as they lived in the community and generally adopted integration. In these two sections, communication practices accepted by Arab Muslim students in their interaction and communication with others are interpreted. The overall experiences of Arab Muslim students indicated that they aimed to achieve integration, which is one of a number of ways that illustrate the relationship between a cultural group and the host culture. However, this integration does not take place in one go and the students have developed a gradual integration as they have intended to avoid any activities that conflicted with their own identities and when they strongly desired to preserve their own values.

6.1 Culture Shock

This section reviews participants' experiences upon their arrival by understanding their first impressions and experiences in their interaction and communication with New Zealanders. Culture shock is an emotional reaction that reveals an inability to predict and anticipate the behaviours of others. This form of shock was the predominant impression among participants. The reaction is caused by cross-cultural transitions, which can cause anxiety and stress, and refusal of some aspects of dominant culture (Fritz et al., 2008; Wadsworth et al., 2008). As earlier mentioned in the literature review, one of the main causes of this anxiety and stress can be the existence of a significant mismatch and a dissimilarity of values between an individual's home culture and the host culture (Fritz et al., 2008; Mehdizadeh & Scott, 2005; Pedersen et al., 2011), as is the case between the Arab Islamic culture and the culture of the West (Bahiss, 2008; Mostafa, 2006). Identity struggle was reported by participants as they engaged with, and became involved in, the community.

The struggle was precipitated by holding different norms, facing conflicting norms, and missing Islamic and cultural values. Drinking alcohol, dressing immodestly, and displaying affection in public were the areas where the cultural clash was felt most keenly. The first impressions of participants revealed that they experienced separation and segregation from the host culture, but that they attempted nevertheless to accommodate and adjust to that culture. They experienced a gradual integration. Separation and segregation occur when a cultural group asserts its own cultural identity and avoids any connection with others whether by choice or not (Berry et al., 2002; Ward et al., 2001). The following table summarises themes and the core issues of experiencing culture shock in the New Zealand community.

Table 6: Experiencing culture shock

Themes	Core issues
Homesickness	<p>1) A number of issues provoked homesickness that involved:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Emphasising the issues of the protection of femininity, the prevention of hardship, the family and tribe's honour and reputation, and the concept of modesty and chastity. - Missing family and friends, - Missing social, cultural, and religious values, and - Losing social and spiritual connections. - Reflecting on one's own values, and - Redefining the role of gender and the concept of being alone. <p>2) Managing symptoms of homesickness can occur through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Keeping contact with families and friends, - Associating with conational students who speak the same language and share the same cultural and religious values and norms.
Arab Muslim sensibilities	<p>New dominant norms can be managed by:</p> <p>A - Using active strategies,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1- Requesting changes of behaviour, and 2- Changing homestays. <p>B - Implementing passive strategies involves:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1- Using the tactic of avoidance, 2- Using the tactic of normalisation.

6.1.1 Homesickness

Before flying to New Zealand, a number of female participants experienced difficulty in convincing their parents to allow them to study overseas, due to the intervention of close friends and relatives. Being an Arab woman and needing protection from daily challenges were sufficient reasons for close relatives to be reluctant to support the idea of study overseas. Thus, eight females had a hard time convincing their families. Nevertheless, they persisted and could ultimately persuade parents to accept their wishes, as the following excerpts demonstrate:

My grandparents were reluctant to allow me to study overseas. The main reason is that I am a woman. People tend to view women as reliant on men and as needing to be protected, along with the family's honour. (Safia)

I got the chance to apply two times for a scholarship. The first time, my brother who studied in America was able to influence my dad to refuse to allow me to get the scholarship but the second time I was able to convince him [my dad] because he came with me to New Zealand. (Shrooq)

The thought of a young woman lacking skills in daily living and the desire to shield her from risk were the main reasons discouraging parents from allowing their daughters to study overseas. Men's role in protecting femininity is also made explicit as another reason not to allow women to study abroad. The protection of women was associated with two words, *honour* and *shame*, as rationalisation for the tendency to refuse to allow women to study in Western societies.

In the new culture, homesickness was the first significant issue that participants faced in the new dominant culture. Participants encountered unfamiliar traditions, norms, customs, people, and surroundings. They felt homesick because they missed families' support, and their own social and religious values. However, they attempted to mitigate these issues by contacting their families and friends and associating with conational students. The first sign of participants' homesickness was missing social support and religious values. The loss of the family gathering, spiritual gathering, and the family were keenly missed, as was social support during the first moments of arriving, and during the month of fasting and prayer, as the following quotes show:

In the first days after arrival, I missed *Ramadan* [the fasting month]. I stayed with a host family. Those days were among the most difficult for me because the month of fast means a family atmosphere and I really missed it. However, I knew that I should adjust to this new life, so I called my mum every day. (Albatool)

There was no mosque nearby at all. Mosques are located far away from the city. I missed *Adan* [the call for prayer], my prayers at the mosques, and my *Tarawih* prayer [practised during *Ramadan*]. In my country, I normally go to the mosque to pray regularly and meet my friends. (Ibrahim)

Being in another country was a strange feeling. In my country, I always used to be accompanied by my family who provided for me anything I wanted. I felt under stress as I had to manage my own affairs and depend on myself. (Jana)

Living in another country means doing things for yourself. In my country, my family does everything for me and secure my wants and needs; they cooked, cleaned, and washed my clothes. I need to learn these things and do them by myself, because they are essential for girls. (Faten)

The participants linked the new environment with missing their own cultural and religious values and encountering norms and values that decisively influenced their own identities. Participants experienced loneliness and unease at missing out on times of social and spiritual gathering. For participants, missing social and religious values was a significant cause of stress and isolation. Cultural differences in values became apparent when participants began comparing their own culture with that of the host country. This comparison accentuated the feeling of reluctance to engage with the host culture, even though participants knew that they were now living in a non-Muslim country.

Negotiating daily activities in the new environment was more of a challenge for women than for their male counterparts. Difficulties they encounter can be linked to gender roles in Arab and Islamic cultures. Settling into a new culture was described as a stressful experience for women who are used to relying on their

families to fulfil their wants and needs. Consequently, travelling abroad was a strategy to develop independence. Travel offers them the benefit of being responsible for themselves and refusing dependency on others, such as the family. The women stressed that immersing themselves in a totally different country and culture empowered them to develop their skill potential. The desire to establish an individual identity is clear and explains these young women's reconstruction of cultural and religious identities.

Participants understood that they needed to adjust to the new culture and manage their reactions as they encountered host cultural issues. Their worldviews and perspectives were influenced by their home culture, but they needed to shift and adjust their ways to the dominant culture. Thus, participants adopted strategies to deal with homesickness by keeping contact with families and friends, and associating with their own group of students. With the new technology, participants had the ability to contact their families and friends. Albatool and Abdulhakim explained how they managed their first experience of homesickness and less interaction with their homestays, and of missing social gatherings and families by saying:

Every day, I used to call my mum who supported me and helped me to overcome the issue. (Albatool)

In the first week, I was not comfortable. I lived with a homestay who hosted four other international students. I felt that it was a business and there was no interaction between us. I was homesick and I used to call my family every 2 days. (Abdulhakim)

Most of Tariq's friends rejected the idea of studying overseas, but he left his job and had the total support of his mother and father. He remembered how he used to call and talk with his father who continued to support him, in particular, in the first 3 weeks. He explained:

I said to myself that I had a job with a good salary so why did I come here? I used to chat with my mum and dad who really supported me and encouraged me in those difficult first days.

Keeping contact with families and receiving social support helped participants to allay their homesickness and cope with the lack of social support.

Associating with conational students was another tactic that participants employed to reduce their homesickness. Their anxiety was relieved as participants met and socialised with other Arab students who shared with them the same journey of studying abroad and the same backgrounds. They started establishing social relationships with their new friends and accompanying them, which helped them to deal with pressure. Speaking the same language and understanding the same culture encouraged participants to associate and gather with their compatriots in order to manage the new experience of travelling or being alone, to feel secure, and to deal with homesickness, as the following comments demonstrate:

At my country's airport there were six of us students who had received the first scholarships. I met two girls. One of them wore *hijab* and I lived with her later in New Zealand. I started my new social relationships beginning at the airport. (Jana)

In the first week in New Zealand, I got to know some Omani and Saudi women. We gathered together, prepared food for breaking our fast, and chatted with each other. We felt like family. (Badra)

Actually, my first experience in New Zealand was so good and I was able to manage homesickness. There were many Bahraini and Gulf students, who lived in the same hostel, and we socialised together every day. (Bassam)

Participants commented on the importance of forming good connections that supported their Islamic and cultural identities. The students dealt with the anxiety of the new challenges by associating with fellow students who had come from the same country, spoke the same language, and with whom they shared cultural and religious values and norms. They felt more at ease by socialising with fellow Gulf Arab students.

6.1.1.1 Discussion

Homesickness was an emotion experienced by participants when they first arrived. It is understood to be a major component of cultural stress (Hendrickson et al., 2011). The experiences of loss and mourning accompanied participants as they moved from their home countries into the host culture (Henry et al., 2009). Early on, participants encountered cross-cultural differences, an experience which is fraught with anxiety (Hoffman, 1990). Midgley (2009) argued that international students are likely to face homesickness in the host culture because of cultural distance. Cultural distance is caused by significant differences in language, values, norms, and traditions (Pedersen et al., 2011; Yang et al., 2006). Participants realised cultural differences between New Zealand and Arab cultures were a source of anxiety and stress. The significant mismatch and dissimilarity between the host's and home cultural values, and the degree of the participants' uncertainty slowed their integration into the new culture and caused difficulty in promoting intercultural adjustment (Fritz et al., 2008; Mehdizadeh & Scott, 2005; Pedersen et al., 2011).

The Arab family and cultural and religious norms are an influential factor in children's educational decisions, in particular for females who want to study abroad. The importance of the extended family is still promoted and generally insisted upon in Arabian Gulf countries (Kamal & Maruyama, 1990; Sarroub, 2010). The family represents an important entity in Arab culture and Islamic faith (Britto & Amer, 2007). Both Islamic identity and the culture highlight the importance of the family and constrain individuals to maintain it (Britto & Amer, 2007; Mostafa, 2006). Arabs pay significant attention to maintaining family and close relative networks as they value social capital (Mansouri & Percival-Wood, 2008). Archer (2002) indicated that "educational choices are not rational or neutral individual processes" (p. 359). Rather, they involve family's influences as well as cultural and religious constraints, which may restrict Muslim female students from being allowed to study in higher education (Archer, 2002). These restrictions may appeal to the need to protect female students' morality against the dangers of Western culture, which can damage the family and these students' honour and reputation (Archer, 2002; De Voe, 2002). This comment explains the

reasons for the way family members may participate in, and have an influence on, children's educational decisions.

Thus, the first important issue for female participants was redefining the understanding of gender roles and the significance of being on their own, which leads individuals to reconstruct their cultural and religious roles. The structure of the Gulf family establishes the role of men and women in daily activities. In Arab culture, the roles of both genders are based on mutual respect, rather than equality (Aroian et al., 2006). Traditionally, Arab men work outside the home and are responsible for helping women to fulfil their wants and needs, whereas the role of women is to maintain the home (Aroian et al., 2006; Bahiss, 2008; McDermott-Levy, 2011; Schvaneveldt et al., 2005). The desire to develop an individual identity by learning new skills results in the reconstruction of certain concepts specific to this identity, such as being independent from men. The present study shows the link between Arab women's going overseas alone and the redefinition of their understanding of gender roles. This finding contributes to the literature, as McDermott-Levy (2011) argues that this idea has not been identified among other international students and may be unique to Arab female students.

Participants began comparing their home values and the dominant values. The comparison reflected a tension between what is valued in these students' cultures and what is valued in New Zealand culture. Kopp (2002) explained that Arab/Muslim students are disappointed at the difficulty involved in practising their own social and religious values in Western societies. The lack of religious and social gatherings and support from their own families and friends seems the most painful experience that participants encountered in the new society. Losing a supportive family environment means missing a sense of belonging to one's own cultural identity (Britto & Amer, 2007). The mosque plays a critical role in developing Islamic identity by promoting a feeling of connectedness with fellow followers, providing security, and achieving a sense of belonging (Mansouri & Kamp, 2007). For the participants in this study, the mosque means not only a place to pray, but also functions as a social environment and social gathering place, which is of major importance for Muslims living in a non-Muslim country (Kopp, 2002).

Participants missed a form of “bonding social capital” and social networks important for social involvements and connections with others (Mansouri & Percival-Wood, 2008, p. 67). Social capital refers to the bonding relationships, connections, and networks with the community, the family, and friends (Mansouri & Percival-Wood, 2008). Thus, participants wanted to engage with a religious organisation by attending a mosque because it meant establishing “a sense of identity” (Mansouri & Percival-Wood, 2008, p. 66), and strengthening solidarity (Witteborn, 2004). Adhering to one’s own group of people helps minority individuals to mitigate dominant values and to maintain their own values (Croucher, 2008). Participants come from a collective culture that promotes cooperative and bond relationships, which explains why they complained about the lack of social and religious gatherings (Ward et al., 2001).

Participants had to manage the new experiences of missing social support, spiritual gathering, and encountering new cultural norms and values. They understood that they needed to adjust to the new culture and manage symptoms arising because of host cultural issues. Acknowledging the cultural differences and being aware of the need for adjustment successfully assist participants in acclimatising easily to the new culture. McDermott-Levy (2011) pointed out the concept of a “shifting paradigm” (p. 272) to explain how Omani female students could become accustomed to different worldviews between their home and American culture. The process of reconstructing identities was initially begun as participants began to recognise that they had moved from being part of the religious majority to forming a religious minority (Duderija, 2007). Adopting strategies that included keeping contact with families and associating with their own group of students was a constructive way to deal with homesickness. Participants viewed their religion, family, and peers as a familiar support in coping with homesickness problems (Alazzi & Chiodo, 2006).

With the new technology, participants had the ability to contact their families and friends. By keeping in contact with families, participants were able to relieve their homesickness. Relying on the family as a social support constructively reduces the feeling of homesickness (Ward et al., 2001). Using new technology such as the Internet and cell phones to contact family and friends allowed participants to

link with their home identity and remind themselves of it, seek family advice, and manage homesickness (Campbell, 2004; Campbell & Zeng, 2006; Hendrickson et al., 2011; McDermott-Levy, 2008, 2011; Moores, 2008; Zhang & Zhou, 2010). Moderating high levels of anxiety and homesickness successfully eliminated participants' isolation, promoted their adjustment to the new community, and enriched their intercultural communication with New Zealanders (Wadsworth et al., 2008; Wang & Mallinckrodt, 2006).

Building and connecting to a network of fellow nationals helped participants to mitigate anxiety in the new dominant culture and to negotiate their cultural problems. Seeking social and emotional support from conational students was a good strategy that helped international/Muslim students to manage their experience of culture shock in the host culture (Campbell & Zeng, 2006; Mehdizadeh & Scott, 2005; Moores, 2008; Munawar, 1997). International students seemed able to achieve rewarding experiences by establishing relationships with their own student group (Fritz et al., 2008). The strategy of bonding social capital with one's own group of students who speak the same language and share the same religion demonstrates that members of the same culture help each other to cope with any painful experiences and attenuate the stress felt in the dominant culture (Hendrickson et al., 2011; Mansouri & Percival-Wood, 2008).

Studies have found that there is a close link between language use and cultural identity associated with reminders of home (Britto & Amer, 2007; Brown, 2009). Thus, participants attempted to mitigate the feeling of missing familiar values by building walls around themselves and seeking involvement with their own student group (Zine, 2001). However, participants should understand that preferring mono-cultural practice and a strong attachment to traditional customs may substantially increase their segregation and absence of interaction with host people, and complicate their participation in the community (Brown, 2009; Kaplan, 2005; Midgley, 2010).

6.1.2 Arab Muslim Sensibilities

Participants encountered culture shock in New Zealand because of cultural and religious differences. As mentioned previously in chapter 5, participants reported a disconnection with university activities because of the consumption of alcohol, the unavailability of *halal* food, immodesty of students, physical contact between the sexes, and other activities that are in conflict with participants' religious and cultural beliefs. These issues were also experienced in the community context when they interacted and communicated with New Zealand homestay and people.

Participants dealt with these contrary norms in active and passive ways. Requesting a change in homestays was used by participants as a proactive strategy to resolve the issue of drinking alcohol and immodesty, and to indicate dissatisfaction with the dominant values. Some participants took action, for example, asking their host families not to drink in front of them, especially while having dinner, as Said and Jaber indicate in the following comments:

I told the homestay mother not to drink when having dinner. (Said)

My homestay father would always drink and I felt uncomfortable with it. So, I told him not to drink too much but he was unhappy. (Jaber)

The decision to change homestays was based on participants' difficulty in accepting behaviour that clashed with their own values. Participants commented on their first experience living in homestays, which was not easy at all. The following excerpts explain the main causes of that difficult moment.

I lived with a New Zealand family only 1 month. I didn't feel comfortable because they drank alcohol, so I decided to move out. (Mansoor)

I lived with a homestay and I was shocked to see alcohol. I didn't like to be in a place when alcohol was there. So my dad helped me to move to another family. (Faten)

Living with homestays means to sacrifice your values because they would drink in front of you, eat different food, and wear immodest clothes, so I decided not to live with host families anymore. (Mohammed)

Participants took the initiative to change homestays to avoid unacceptable behaviour that was against their values. Changing host families revealed that participants showed a strong adherence to their own values and preferred to separate from homestays in order to avoid any inconvenience. However, separation from local people and the preference for private accommodation might noticeably affect participants' intercultural communication experiences with New Zealanders.

Other participants used passive methods by adopting a strategy of avoidance to reduce the tension of clashes in values. For example, participants attempted to avoid seeing public displays of affection, but it is difficult always to avert one's gaze as the norm is a frequent cultural phenomenon. The strategy of avoidance is illustrated by the following quotes:

Seeing a male and a female kissing each other was to witness disgusting behaviour. So I tried to avoid it and look aside. (Faten)

Seeing women who wear immodest dress and exposing parts of their bodies is normal in New Zealand. Sometimes, it is difficult to avert your eyes. (Noor)

Participants who did not change homestays avoided sitting with their host families when they were drinking. Hatem was lucky to live with homestay hosts who secured *halal* food for him and provided an opportunity to practise English, but alcohol was an issue for him. He stated, "I was uncomfortable seeing the host family's father drinking alcohol, so I would try not to sit with him when he drank and I'd go to the kids' room." The strategy of avoidance was also used to prevent attending family parties. Luqman was invited to attend a family party with his homestay but he excused himself. He said, "I knew that alcohol would be served, so I excused myself from attending my host family's party. I told them that I was busy with my studies." The same strategy of asking to be excused was also applied by Khadija, who accepted an invitation to attend a social party with her homestay but went to a different room and played with the children when alcohol was served. She indicated:

I went to the party with my family and when they gave me food they assured me it was *halal*. At the end, they started drinking alcohol, so I went to another room and started playing with the children.

The strategy of avoidance allows participants to retain their own values and norms and, at the same time, benefits them in their socialising and interacting with others.

6.1.2.1 Discussion

Cultural differences are very apparent in the dominant culture. Moving to a culture characterised by Western liberty in dress, regular consumption of alcohol, and the public display of affection was a shock and a stressful experience for participants. In their own cultures, dress for both genders is also guided by Islamic teaching concerning modesty. The teaching defines what human parts of the body may be publically or privately exposed, and it constructs the rules for watching or performing intimate acts (Boulanouar, 2006). Participants come from countries where they are prohibited from consuming any toxins and from socialising or interacting with others who perform these practices. Drinking alcohol by the host family meant a clash in values for participants and evoked anxiety, which in some contexts limited their interaction and communication. Anxiety tends to be higher among newcomers, who experience new cultural norms and behaviours, and have to interact and communicate with others (Fritz et al., 2008; Gudykunst & Nishida, 2001; Wadsworth et al., 2008).

The influence of religious and cultural backgrounds on the intercultural communication experiences of Arab/Muslim students in the West draws attention to issues of alcohol consumption, immodesty of dress, and public displays of affection. These dominant behavioural norms negatively affected intercultural communication between participants and New Zealanders. Spencer-Rodgers (2002) affirmed that value differences play a significant role affecting intercultural communication between people, and create cultural tensions. Participants had to live with alien cultural norms and behavioural conflicts (Alazzi & Chiodo, 2006). Thus, cultural groups represented by the participants may seek avoidance to prevent any cultural clashes and tension (Berry, 2005). Asmar et al. (2004) indicated that “a sense of religious dissonance can affect Muslims’ sense

of belonging, and limit their opportunities to interact” (p. 60). This observation explains why some participants gave priority to preserving their identities by isolating themselves from homestay activities or changing their homestays.

Upon arrival, participants emphasised the fact that they valued retaining the practices associated with their own identity more highly than their desire to integrate and interact with New Zealanders. This strong identification moved participants to take an active role in changing behaviour that clashed with their own values by requesting change and informing others about their own concerns, and changing homestays. They understood their religious identity as a guideline for life and a way of being in the West (Cainkar, 2002). Participants viewed their religious values as a “high personal priority” that encouraged them to employ active roles to accommodate new values (Asmar et al., 2004, p. 60).

Adhering to Islamic and cultural values restricted participants from opportunities for personal and social interaction with others. Thus, by their own choice, participants experienced isolation and alienation from New Zealanders, and chose rejection of the host identity (Schmidt, 2004). Choosing separation from the local first culture meant that participants still showed strong adherence to “heritage culture maintenance” (Ruggiero et al., 1996, p. 47). Rejecting socialisation, refusing enjoyable activities, and preferring isolation were strategies to deal with homesickness and culture shock (Hendrickson et al., 2011; Pedersen et al., 2011).

The priority of protecting their own identity was experienced by participants who implemented passive and active ways to manage cultural issues. The strategy of avoidance, the idea of seeking advice on ways to change the behaviours of others, and the act of changing homestays indicate that participants might adopt either passive or active means to manage unacceptable behaviours that were contrary to their values. These strategies can affect students’ interaction and communication with others and lead to integration or separation. Participants implemented “the avoidance communication strategy” in order to prevent themselves experiencing anxiety while socialising with people who consumed alcohol (Duronto, Nishida, & Nakayama, 2005). They attempted not to be fully segregated and instead applied a strategy of avoidance so as not to socialise and interact with New Zealanders when alcohol was served and immodest dress worn.

6.1.3 Summary

In sum, moving to a dominant culture means to experience culture shock. The concept of protecting femininity was clear in the stories of the female participants. Close relatives appealed to the concern to protect women to support their endeavour to persuade the women's parents when they were reluctant to allow their daughters to study overseas. Thus, parents and families appealed to two values—honour and reputation—in advising their women to maintain these when studying abroad.

Participants indicated that being in New Zealand led to missing people they loved, cultural and religious values, and also social and spiritual gatherings. Keeping in contact with families and associating with conational students were constructive strategies that assisted participants in mitigating homesickness. Drinking alcohol, immodesty of dress, and the public display of affection were further cultural norms that shocked participants in New Zealand. These cultural sensibilities were managed through active and passive strategies. The strategies started with indicating a strong adherence to their own identity by requesting change in behaviour and changing homestays. Over time, participants showed less emphasis on their own values and began using the strategy of avoidance in order to benefit from retaining their own values but also socialising and interacting with New Zealanders. They began to move towards the practice of integration.

6.2 Integration: A Double Identity

Arab Muslim students are a cultural group of people who have moved from their home countries to New Zealand for educational purposes. The ability of this group to integrate into the mainstream culture is a complex issue since they face uncertain positions and expectations. These positions are based on the instability of their residence that involves leaving the country of origin and returning home when they finish their study. International students are most aptly described as sojourners who stay temporarily in a country and return home when their goal is accomplished (Wang & Mallinckrodt, 2006; Ward et al., 2001). The intention to go back home plays an important role that constrains international students, such as Arab students, to maintain their identities in the host culture (Sarroub, 2010).

This section explores the experience of creating a double identity that allows participants to retain their own identities and simultaneously integrate into the host culture by questioning their own values. Most participants reported constructive experiences in living, interacting, and socialising with New Zealanders who display positive personal characteristics, such as being friendly, being less discriminating, and being accepting of cultural diversity. They also adopted a number of strategies to enable their easy integration into the community by showing good manners, and reflecting on, and questioning their own values and norms. Integration was evident because they showed an ability to socialise and interact with others in the community, while at the same time retaining their own values, but reinterpreting their own norms while immersing themselves in the dominant culture. Integration refers to the ability to maintain one's own values while at the same time showing acceptance of the dominant culture's values (Berry et al., 2002; Ward et al., 2001). The following table summarises the issue of integration and indicates its main issues.

Table 7: Experience of integration

Integration	Themes	Core issues
The New Zealand community	New Zealanders' positive characteristics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Being a less discriminatory country. - Being friendly: providing for having no restrictions/ showing patience, trust, affection, and encouragement. - Starting conversations easily, practising English, understanding NZ culture, becoming involved in social activities and establishing social networks.
	Practising identity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Being a multicultural society. - Advocating religious freedom (praying freely and having mosques).
Participants	Showing good manners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Using the strategy of gifts and greeting with a smile.
	Reflecting on and questioning own values and norms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Reflecting on own practices: reading Quran and praying at the right times. - Questioning and critiquing one's own values: drinking alcohol, immodesty of dress, and gender relations.

6.2.1 New Zealanders' Positive Characteristics

Positive images of New Zealand contributed to participants' incentives in choosing the country. New Zealanders are reputed to be friendly and less discriminatory than others. Relatives and friends, who had studied or visited New Zealand, served as a positive factor, and encouraged participants to choose New Zealand as a country in which to study. Khadija, a newly-arrived Omani woman who wanted to study medicine, asked her uncle who had studied in New Zealand for a while to help her choose an overseas study destination. She said:

My uncle, who studied medicine in New Zealand, said to me that you will never find a better country than New Zealand. It is a safe country. Their people are friendly and no one will bother you or treat you badly because you are a Muslim and wear the *hijab*.

Zahra, a Saudi woman, was guaranteed a scholarship but had difficulty in choosing which country she should apply for. The following story explains her concern:

I chose New Zealand over America and Australia. My dad and mum were worried and didn't encourage me to go to America because a number of Saudi students went there and faced security issues. I met a close friend who studied a year in New Zealand and assured me that New Zealand is a safe place and New Zealanders are naturally warm, welcoming, and friendly, and less discriminatory.

Participants were stimulated and enthused to make the decision to travel to New Zealand. The country was preferred because it is a safer country than others, and it allows people to maintain their own identity. In addition, one is unlikely to face discrimination or encounter problems because one's identity is obvious.

By being and living in New Zealand, the participants confirmed the same positive image of the country. They had very enjoyable experiences living, interacting, and socialising with New Zealanders who held positive attitudes towards them. The

common reaction among participants was that New Zealand offers a friendly atmosphere; it is less discriminatory than many other countries; and, that New Zealanders are a friendly and welcoming people. This environment enabled participants to experience cultural inclusiveness.

Being in a less discriminatory country was a positive aspect that both married and unmarried participants experienced in New Zealand. All married male participants reported positive experiences when they went out with their wives for shopping, attending social activities, or socialising in the community, as the following quotes of Alhusan and Said illustrate:

My wife wears a dress that covers the whole body. We go shopping and we travel around New Zealand and no one bothers us. (Alhusan)

Of course, my wife wears a long black dress. She feels comfortable and no one comes and makes negative comments to her. (Said)

Unmarried participants confirmed the same absence of discrimination against them. Jauher had been in New Zealand for more than 7 months and studied in a foundation programme. She preferred to complete her undergraduate study in New Zealand because no one reacted to her negatively because she wore the *hijab*. She said:

I want to stay here because the community is not discriminatory. If you ask any Muslim girls, they will say that they don't face any discrimination. Instead they help and respect us. There is no discrimination in New Zealand. My brother, who studied in Ireland, told me that he faced some discrimination.

Jannat talked about her experience of being an Arab Muslim woman who wants to maintain and practise her visible identity. She observed that "people in New Zealand are friendly and do not discriminate against you. I went to England and we might get hit if we went out with our *hijab*. My sister actually faced this in that country." Participants mentioned nondiscrimination when they integrated and

socialised with New Zealanders. This positive integration encouraged participants to retain their own values, to prefer being in the country, and to promote opportunities of interaction and communication with others.

The most commented upon personal characteristic of New Zealanders was their friendliness. Participants experienced this constructive aspect while living with New Zealanders in homestays, or while interacting and socialising with them in the community. For homestay participants, a number of incidents were understood as indicating that New Zealanders are friendly. Friendliness was expressed in various ways. For the students, it meant providing for their needs, not needing to be concerned about daily chores, being treated with good manners, and being shown patience, trust, and affection as the excerpts below demonstrate:

The family prepared food, washed my clothes, and did not restrict me from having long showers. I really was lucky as other Arab students encountered some restrictions. (Alhasan)

My homestay hosts were very kind and friendly. They didn't ban anything and encouraged me to do what I wanted. (Ali)

The family was so nice. They provided me with anything I wanted and treated me in a kind way. (Almunther)

My homestay was very kind and friendly. I asked them many questions. They showed patience and answered all my concerns. (Marwan)

The mother and kids were so friendly. I would eat with kids from the same plate and I gave them sweets. Sometimes, I took them to visit my friends or go shopping together. She allowed her kids to hang out with me.
(Hatem)

Participants experienced constructive relationships with their host families, which could be described as a congenial connection and relationship. They associated "being friendly" with providing for their needs, applying no restrictions, showing trust, kindness, and encouragement. These personal positive characteristics

promote a friendly atmosphere that cultivates interaction opportunities for participants.

A friendly relationship with the community was also observed. The ability to interact and socialise with New Zealanders was also experienced by Amal, Shrooq and Zahra, Saudi women who were involved in a Christian group activity. The main motivation for these women was to develop their speaking skills as they found that the language institute did not focus on these skills. Zahra said:

The Christian people were so kind and friendly. From time to time, we went on trips outside the city. One day, we went to another town and stayed there for 2 days. My Saudi girlfriend's father came with us. Sometimes we didn't pay any money and they provided *halal* food.

The desire to socialise with the host people may encourage participants to renegotiate their identities and to accept the dominant culture's norm of mixed gender association. The process of renegotiating identities allowed participants to interact and socialise with others, which facilitates integration.

Satisfactory relationships and feeling comfortable allowed for the creation of a positive environment to establish intercultural communication with New Zealanders and to encourage integration. Participants mentioned that interacting and communicating with New Zealanders allowed them to get involved in social activities. Participants acknowledged that living with host families was a great advantage that helped them establish social interaction and communication opportunities, build social networks and be involved with social activities, in particular with New Zealanders. The following quotes demonstrate these positive experiences:

I had a good time talking and interacting with my family. They would also invite other families or we would visit other families, which helped me to meet other people and to practise English. (Yousif)

One day, they told me they were going biking and asked me if I wanted to join them. I accepted and went on the cycling activity. I said to them, it is one of the most incredible experiences I have ever had. (Ibrahim)

I am very comfortable with this family. They are so kind to me and treat me like their daughter. One day, I went with them to their friend's party. I met many people and they were so kind and respectful. They also advised me if the food at the party contained alcohol or not. (Khadija)

Living in a good atmosphere and experiencing the positive personal characteristics of New Zealanders benefitted participants in their interaction and communication with others. The constructive connections with homestays really encouraged participants to develop their language skills, meet new people and develop personal relationships, build awareness of New Zealand culture, and contribute to social activities. These positive experiences helped participants towards integration.

6.2.1.1 Discussion

Before coming to New Zealand, participants relied only on close relatives and friends to acquire key information about the country. This finding is in agreement with Lewthwaite (1996), Lu (2006) and Ho, Li, Cooper, and Holmes (2007), who found that Asian students had little to no information on New Zealand and its universities and relied significantly on “word of mouth” from people who had experience of the educational institution in mind. This point highlights “the necessity of providing satisfying experiences for current international students as their recommendations exert stronger influence on the choices of prospective students than the recommendations of so-called experts” (Ward & Masgoret, 2004, p. 27).

The advice of close relatives and friends to both male and female participants can be understood through the concept of the social network among Arabs and Muslims. The matter can also be linked to the importance of family solidarity. Mostafa (2006) explained that interpersonal ties are a unique feature of Arab and

Muslim relationships and are at the heart of Islamic and Arab cultures. Both Islamic and Arab cultures highlight the importance of the family (Britto & Amer, 2007). Arab culture places “high value on ‘bonding social capital,’ that is, the maintenance of family and kinship networks” (Mansouri & Percival-Wood, 2008, p. 66). These two aspects, the social network and family solidarity, were evident as relatives assured participants that New Zealand was a safe environment, that they would be able to maintain their own cultural and religious values, and that they would not face any hostility because their religion is immediately obvious. The desire to remain connected with family members illustrates the concept of family solidarity that is practised not only in the home country but also overseas.

In reality, participants experienced little discrimination in the New Zealand community. Being a conspicuous Arab Muslim student did not at all mean encountering religious harassment in the community. The general finding of this study does not support the general trend reported in New Zealand studies that Arabs and Muslims face discrimination and negative sentiments due to the markers of their identity (Bahiss, 2008; Jasperse, 2009; Veelenturf, 2006). The positive experience of participants in encountering less discrimination in New Zealand promotes their integration and socialisation and enables opportunities for interaction. Studies have found that discrimination against Arab/Muslim students reduced their interaction opportunities with others (Mansouri, 2007; Mansouri & Trembath, 2005; Oikonomidou, 2007; Rich & Troudi, 2006).

This positive relationship also leads participants to be included in the community and to experience integration rather than marginalisation (Berry, 2005). By experiencing integration, participants are encouraged to show interest in keeping their cultural heritage (indicated by their dress), emphasise the maintenance of Islamic and cultural identity, and seek intercultural communication opportunities (Spencer-Rodgers, 2002). These positive aspects enabled participants to feel they were included and encouraged a strong desire to interact with the dominant people (Berry, 2005; Mohammed-Arif, 2000; Poynting & Noble, 2004; Zine, 2001).

A close-friendly relationship between participants and New Zealanders, either in homestays or in the community, was reported. This constructive relationship was based on the positive personal characteristics of New Zealanders, who were friendly, kind, and respectful. Eighty two per cent of participants lived with homestays and around 92% of them had positive experiences. By living with host families, participants had a great advantage in building good relationships, having positive interaction and communication, getting involved in social activities, and establishing social networks with local people. These positive factors facilitated participants' interaction and created communication opportunities with them.

Homestays played a very important role in the experiences of participants. Living with a homestay enabled international students to experience the new culture and to have opportunities for interaction and communication with the host national people (Campbell, 2004; Moores, 2008; Pedersen et al., 2011; Zhang & Brunton, 2007). Participants were displeased and unhappy with homestays hosts who drank alcohol; however, they generally were able to mitigate this issue and appreciated their involvement and intercultural communication with New Zealand homestays. This finding contradicts other studies that have focused on Asian students and found that these students had limited relationships and interaction with New Zealand homestays as they tended to lack support from their homestays, to feel lonely because of language barriers, and to segregate themselves from host families' social activities (Campbell, 2004; McFedries, 2002; Ward & Masgoret, 2004; Zhang & Brunton, 2007).

Getting involved in the family's and the community's social activities assisted participants in meeting new people and using English in the real world.

Participants viewed this opportunity as a way of connecting with the host people and with the community, enabling them to fit in with the host culture. Zhang and Brunton (2007) found that the opportunity to engage with local activities was positively linked with living with homestay families. Spending free time with the host people and creating constructive interaction and empathic relationships provide a good means to integration (Moores, 2008). They also promote effective intercultural communication and eliminate uncertain contact among people from

differing cultures (Gudykunst & Nishida, 2001; Hubbert et al., 1999; Spencer-Rodgers, 2002). The experience of living in a homestay can be a successful first step towards integration into the New Zealand community.

In addition, participants reported that host families expressed interest in accommodating their cultural and religious needs, being friendly, and showing affection and encouragement. Receiving support from host families and other host national people can be conceptualised as “bridging social capital” (Hendrickson et al., 2011, p. 284), which noticeably leads to experiencing positive emotions (Fritz et al., 2008). The phrase “bridging social capital” refers to contacts between people of different backgrounds in a society, regardless of their identity, ethnicity, age, gender, education, and status (Mansouri & Percival-Wood, 2008). Being accepted and providing a positive environment for interaction have also been found to be crucial elements that enable immigrants to integrate and interact positively with host national people (Abukhattala, 2004; Fritz et al., 2008). The present study confirmed that receiving emotional support and being welcomed promote harmonious relationships, facilitate interaction and communication experiences between participants and New Zealanders, and enable integration.

6.2.2 Practising Identity

Participants linked their good impressions of the community with New Zealanders’ positive attitudes. They found that New Zealand welcomes cultural diversity, promotes religious freedom, and respects the practices of cultural identities.

Participants highlighted that New Zealand is a multicultural society that accepts and respects other cultural and religious backgrounds. They observed that the community welcomes and respects cultural diversity, acknowledges other identities, and allows others to maintain their own practices, as the following quotes demonstrate:

New Zealanders welcome other people and the community accepts other cultures. You find Chinese, Indian, Arabs, and Somali people who live harmoniously together. (Mohammed)

We can freely pray and fast in the country. There are mosques and people respect your practices, and are accepting and tolerant towards other cultures. On the last trip, we stopped in a street to pray and no one bothered us. New Zealand is a multicultural society. (Almunther)

I feel like in my country. There are mosques and we are allowed to pray freely and organise our religious activities. (Bassam)

The family asked me about my *hijab*. I told them about it and the reason behind it. Then they said, “We respect you, your *hijab* and your religious practices.” They never knocked at my room door because they didn’t want to bother me while I was praying. One day, I fasted and they were surprised but they respected me and tried to offer me anything that I might want. (Jannat)

Participants found that New Zealand is a multicultural society, which accepts and welcomes those of other cultural backgrounds. The attitude of New Zealanders is to be tolerant and welcoming of other people regardless of their different identities and religions. Recognising and respecting identity made participants feel comfortable in living and being in the community. Participants did not face any difficulties in practising their Islamic and cultural values, but instead were allowed to freely perform prayers, even in public, and could readily fast and wear *hijab*. Promoting tolerance and acceptance of cultural diversity and allowing people to retain their own values and practices indicate that the dominant culture promotes integration, rather than assimilation, among cultural groups.

6.2.2.1 Discussion

Moving from a majority culture to forming a minority one can be a challenge. For Muslim newcomers, the maintenance of cultural and religious identities can be a

difficult issue in the dominant culture (Fukuyama, 2006; Peek, 2005). In this study, participants reported positive experiences in retaining and maintaining their own religious and cultural practices. They confirmed that New Zealand is a multicultural society that accepts and welcomes different cultures and promotes religious freedom. The New Zealand ideal of religious freedom allows participants to feel accepted, respected, and recognised, and to live in a peaceful, integrated country. Kolig and Kabir (2008) noted that New Zealand is a secular society that shows acceptance of cultural differences, freedom from religious policy restrictions, and promotes tolerance of religious and cultural diversity. Croucher (2013) found that there is a reduction of host culture receptivity as a result of feeling or being threatened by minority groups. Participants felt included in the New Zealand community as it was very open and “tolerant of differences” (Novera, 2004, p. 484). An attitude of welcoming and accepting others indicates that New Zealand respects “cultural pluralism” (Berry, 2005, p. 703) and supports a “positive multicultural ideology” (p. 703) that prompts integration rather than assimilation (Kolig & Kabir, 2008) by respecting minority newcomers (Ward et al., 2001).

The recognition of difference is the basic foundation of cultural pluralism, which stresses that “all cultural, ethnic and religious groups should have equal access to social and civic life without abandoning their identities” (Ahmad & Szpara, 2003, p. 296). Participants indicated that they had the freedom to retain their religious and cultural identities. Establishing mosques has been identified as a good strategy that enables minority Muslims to maintain their own identities in non-Muslim countries and to feel that they are recognised (Bartels, 2000; Kolig, 2006b; Mazuri, 2003; Mohammed-Arif, 2000). Participants appreciated the presence of mosques in the community and noted the importance of mosques in their daily lives enabling them to perform prayers, maintain their own values, and arrange their religious activities. In this sense, “the mosque provides a safe social environment where [Muslims] can be socialised free from the risks of assimilation into the dominant culture” (Salih, 2004, p. 1003). The fact that New Zealand upholds the concept of cultural diversity means that participants were supported in

freely choosing to practise integration (Berry, 2005). Integration can be easily adopted and developed within a society like New Zealand that encourages multicultural groups and cultural diversity (Berry et al., 2002).

6.2.3 Showing Good Manners

Although Arab Muslim students were pleased that New Zealanders respect their identities, they showed good manners and consideration towards New Zealanders in order to assist their social cohesion and integration into the New Zealand community. Participants implemented a number of tactics to promote their interaction with New Zealanders, such as giving presents and greeting with a smile, which help them to be accepted and integrated with others and to build close social relationships.

The strategy of giving gifts was adopted by participants to show good manners and to promote their integration and interaction with others. Students were able to build a positive relationship with New Zealanders in order to interact with them, to be a good Muslim in the community and give a positive impression of Arab people, and to practise English, as the following excerpts show:

I started building a good relationship with New Zealand neighbours by giving small gifts. My aim was to have a good relationship with them so I can practise my English language. I also noted that the behaviour of some Saudi students was unacceptable, so I wanted to give a positive image of Arabs and Muslims. (Zahra)

On many occasions, I try to be generous. For example, I brought some gifts from my country and distributed them to my neighbours and said to them that these are gifts from Saudi. (Noor)

Certainly, I tried as much as I can to be kind because the first impression is important to build trust among others and to have a good relationship with the family. I also brought a traditional gift and gave it to the family. They were so happy. (Ibrahim)

The intention of participants was to build positive relationships with others by showing good manners and displaying good behaviour. They adopted the strategy of giving gifts and courteous behaviour to enable integration and interaction with others and to show a positive image of their own nationalities, Arab culture, and the Islamic religion.

Greeting with a smile was another strategy that participants implemented to build a harmonious relationship with others. Cultural differences were not an issue for Jannat who preferred to interact and communicate with others. She explained:

People think that Muslims are not friendly. It is not true. Islam teaches us to get to know others and learn their languages and cultures. Thus, I started greeting people with a smile. Now, I have many friends from different countries who say, “You have changed our views. We thought that Muslim women were not friendly.”

The same approach of greeting with a smile was also adopted by Amal who visited many places in New Zealand and in every place tried to build good relationships and interactions with others. She stated:

When I go shopping or travelling around New Zealand, I normally start smiling, greeting and talking to people. Some people said, “You are crazy but you have changed our views about Muslim women who wear the *hijab*.” I do that to interact with people and be involved with them.

Almunther also used the same strategy with his homestay. He intended to greet the family with a smile every day and invited them for Arabian coffee every weekend. He said:

It was a good experience. I try always to smile and tell funny stories. Every Sunday, I invited the family to my room to have Arabian coffee together. I told them that they had to follow the Arabian custom by sitting on the floor and only taking three small cups of coffee. They really like it.

Islamic interpretation was used to explain that Muslims are friendly and to explain action and behaviour in interacting and communicating with others, especially with the opposite sex. The desire for integration and interaction with others significantly encourages women to start greeting, talking to other people, and having multicultural friends. Non-Muslims assume that interaction between the sexes is prohibited in Islam and this prohibition is explicitly connected with *hijab*. They assume that *hijab* functions as a control to restrict women from interaction and communication with others. Initiating greetings and conversation with others reduces the stereotype that Muslim women are unfriendly and unwilling to communicate with others.

6.2.3.1 Discussion

Good manners are an essential component of the Muslim identity. The participants showed good manners and connected these manners with Islam and cultural norms and customs. They tried to explain that Islam mandates courtesy in dealing and interacting with non-Muslims. Islam respects cultural diversity and promotes integration and interaction with others (Bangura, 2004). Integration with non-Muslims by showing good manners is supported by Islam. *Allah* says in the *Qur'an* (Chapter 60, verse 8):

Allah forbids you not, respecting those who have not fought against you on account of your religion, and who have not driven you forth from your homes, that you be kind to them and act equitably towards them; surely Allah loves those who are equitable (Ali, 2008).

Participants are motivated by their Islamic identity to show good manners and to act in an ideal way. Abd-Allah (2003) explained that Islam encourages its followers to show positive attitudes towards others. Ethnic identity determines individuals' behavioural expectations (Croucher, Oommen, et al., 2010). Croucher (2009) stated that for religious Muslims, Islam guides their behaviours and way of life. By giving gifts and greeting with a smile, participants attempt to connect their identities as Muslims to good values and manners. For participants, being a Muslim is a reminder for these students to show good behaviour. Being Arab Muslim women who wear *hijab* requires them to

behave well as these women view *hijab* as a “behaviour check” (Droogsma, 2007, p. 304). Participants were highly motivated to use these strategies in order to be accepted and integrated, and to show a positive image of their own identities. Duronto et al. (2005) argued that being motivated to communicate with strangers promotes opportunities for interaction.

6.2.4 Reflecting on and Questioning One’s Own Values and Norms

Participants reflected on and questioned their cultural and religious values in two ways: reinforcing, and critiquing these values. As regards reflection and reinforcement, participants understood their experiences in the New Zealand community as a practical way to show commitment to their cultural and religious norms and values, and to demonstrate the reality of certain norms, such as respecting others. The second way involves critiquing one’s own values concerning drinking alcohol, immodesty, and gender relations to achieve a sense of acceptance and integration. The following subsections review these two pathways.

6.2.4.1 Reflection on One’s Own Values

Before flying to New Zealand, female participants received advice that basically focused on the importance of cultural and Islamic values while settling in the new culture. Paying considerable attention to morals and values was the top priority figuring in parental advice and the advice of other family members. Considering reputation and choosing good companionship were the main pieces of advice given to female participants. Suad, an Omani student, remembered the advice that her parents gave her a week before she was to travel to New Zealand:

My parents not only gave me advice about my study but they pointedly advised me to choose good companionship, maintain my morality and protect my reputation. I am a girl so I must consider all these issues and values.

Sarah, another Omani woman, received advice from her brother, who had studied in England and had good experience of living abroad. His experience was an advantage for Sarah because she could ask many questions about living overseas. She remembered that the main advice given was to be a good Muslim woman. “My brother told me to remain close to God, read the *Qur'an*, have good friends, and, most of all, to maintain my morals and values.” The importance of considering cultural and Islamic values while settling in the dominant culture was highlighted. Paying considerable attention to morals and identity values was the most frequent advice mentioned.

As female participants received advice to observe their cultural and religious values, they commented on a new meaning of the freedom of travel abroad to mean observing one’s own values and norms. Suad, an Omani student, reflected on the question of whether seeking freedom from her parents and family was her intention in applying for an overseas scholarship. She asserted:

I am not looking for freedom. In fact, I have known the boundaries set by my family since I was a child. I grew up with these boundaries. So I’ll never exceed them, even when I am here. I’ll never change anything [just] because I left my home and my family.

Badra, a Bahraini student who had been in New Zealand for 4 years, also spoke of knowing the boundaries in dealing and interacting with others. She explained that she was enthusiastic about studying overseas and experiencing a new country, but that it was not her intention to seek freedom as she had freedom in her own country. “I didn’t come to New Zealand to gain freedom from my parents or my family,” she said, “I know what the boundaries are and also I have to protect my own and my family’s honour.”

Safia, a young Emirati woman, also emphasised the same point that she would not behave differently in a new environment. As an example, she mentioned protecting social honour, saying that “there are certain lines that women should not cross, such as having a boyfriend.” For female participants, seeking personal freedom from parental or societal restrictions and control was not their intent, as

they knew their own limitations, and paid significant attention to their own and their families' social reputation and honour. The female participants intended to observe their own religious and cultural guidelines in the new culture and would not attempt to change their behaviour. For these women, freedom meant to retain cultural and religious values and norms.

Being in the new host culture, the participants reflected on towards certain Islamic practices, and respecting other people and different perspectives. Participants positively reflected on their lived experience by showing commitment, appreciation, and adherence to their main principles and being close to their God, *Allah*. For them, being a Muslim in a Western country meant an increasing attention to religious observance, such as praying and reading the *Qur'an*. Being in a Western country entailed thinking of their religious practices as religious duties rather than as cultural customs. By the time of the second interview, Ibrahim had been in the country for more than 11 months and he pointed out what it meant to be a Muslim:

To be honest, we Muslims don't appreciate Islam and its values because it is passed on to us. Living in New Zealand allows me to see a different angle. Now I view Islam as a valuable thing that mentors and guides our lives.

Living in a non-Muslim country for some time helped participants to understand the beauty of Islam, to notice some changes in their values, and to reflect on their own values, as the following quotes show:

In the month of fast, I feel fasting is a religious practice more than a traditional norm. (Badra)

Prayer was the first and most important thing that I started practising. Before coming to New Zealand, my dad said to me, "I hope your prayer is a religious practice rather than simply a traditional norm." Now, I understand what he meant. (Hatem)

Living in New Zealand encourages me to be closer to Allah than before. Now, I am reading the *Qur'an* more than before and also I have started praying on time. I was not observing the proper times for prayer before but now I pray on time and I do not like to delay it. (Amal)

I started understanding Islam in depth and valuing my prayer and reading the *Qur'an*. (Omar)

Yes, there are a number of values that have become much more important to me, such as praying on time and reading the *Qur'an* every day. (Bassam)

Living in a Western country has positively influenced participants' perceptions regarding the values and morals that are part of their identity. Participants' experiences in interacting and communicating with others resulted in adhering to, reinforcing, and asserting Islamic values and norms. They started understanding these values, such as praying and reading the *Qur'an*, as religious obligations rather than inherited traditional practices. Being in a Western country reinforced participants' commitment to observing, caring about, and paying significant attention to the *Qur'an* and their prayers. It is mandatory for Muslims to pray five times a day. It is the second most important pillar of Islam. The *Qur'an* is the holy book that provides teaching, guidelines, and direct instruction for Muslims in this life.

Arab Muslim students stated that their experiences in New Zealand have taught them to respect people, their opinions and ideas, regardless of their nationalities, religions, and backgrounds. When participants were asked what New Zealand values they most appreciated and wanted to take back with them to their own countries, most declared that they wanted to keep and take back the value of respecting others. Abdurrahman said:

I learned many values from New Zealand, such as respecting other people and acknowledging their opinions and views even if these people are different from us and have different backgrounds. I want to keep this value in my interaction with others.

Mohammed affirmed:

Respecting others was one value that I learned in the New Zealand community. The community forces you to respect others because New Zealanders do respect you. This led me to think about myself, whether I was respecting foreigners and how I dealt with them. Islam encourages us to respect others who have different worldviews but my experience here gives me an opportunity to practise it. I'll take this value and practise it in future.

Jauher also emphasised:

Actually, respecting others is the most significant value I learned and I want to keep it. The New Zealand community provides a good example of accepting and respecting others. It will be good if we also accept and respect others.

Participants emphasised that living in the New Zealand community and integrating with New Zealanders and others enabled them to reflect on aspects of their own social life. Respecting and accepting foreigners regardless of their nationalities, backgrounds, and religions was the most significant life value that participants were satisfied with in the new culture. Most participants were disappointed that they missed this value at home even though Islam encourages its followers to show good manners and respect for others. The local mainstream community provided a helpful experience and a practical way for participants to practise the value of respecting others. Thus, participants reflected on their own previous experiences and affirmed their desire to take and practise this value in their home culture.

6.2.4.2 Questioning Own Norms

Participants did not just report reflecting on their own values, as living in a non-Muslim country for a while also forced them to question their own values and

norms. Critiquing and questioning their own values included showing acceptance and recognition of host values and norms, such as drinking alcohol, immodest dress, and gender-relations. Participants came to consider it normal to see people drinking alcohol. In the first interview, Jaber was uncomfortable seeing his homestay father drinking alcohol too much and told him so. In the second interview, I was surprised that Jaber now viewed alcohol as a normal thing. He said, "I feel comfortable with him. I don't have any issue because he drinks. It is his life and he can do what he likes."

In the second interview, Hilal mentioned the main reason that motivated him to remain in the same homestay since most in his group of students had moved to living alone. He said, "To be honest, the family is so good to me and respects me. My only concern is that they drink in front of me but it is okay by me. I understand that it is their lives." Mansoor changed his first homestay because they drank too much but later he added that it was fine if anyone drinks in front of him. He said, "It was a new experience for me to see people drinking alcohol and I didn't know how to act but now I think it is okay for me to socialise with anyone who drinks alcohol."

Other participants adjusted to the modesty issue. In the first interview, Hatem's attention was attracted by "women who wear short skirts." In the second interview, however, he viewed this behaviour as normal and did not care about it. In the second interview, Marwan again mentioned the issue of modesty as an important aspect of being a Muslim in New Zealand. He said:

Yes, there are many norms that clash with our own, such as women's dress, but I need to adjust to them. You know it is a free country and women can wear what they like. It is their personal choice.

Bilal, who had been at his university for more than 4 years, also commented on the matter of personal freedom. The main behaviours that clashed with Bilal's own values were:

To see drunk students coming to the university and girls wearing immodest dress but I don't care. I only feel discomfort when I see revealing dress during Ramadan.

Participants started accepting the dominant values of drinking and displaying affection, understanding these norms as a matter of personal freedom in a free country, and objected to them much less. This response indicates that social pressure from the dominant culture significantly influences participants' identities and that a form of renegotiation of identity values has begun.

The issue of gender mixing was another notable custom that was queried and provided a clear example where values were questioned. Interaction and socialisation experiences appreciably influence Arab Muslim students who started reinterpreting their Islamic and cultural identities to normalise the interaction of the sexes. Managing daily activities profoundly influenced the perception of both newly-arrived students, and those longer in the country, towards their Islamic values, in particular towards the norm of the interaction of the sexes. They began to eliminate the practice of isolation and moved towards integration by accepting the dominant culture's norm of gender relations. Ibrahim, a newly-arrived student, only participated in social activities which were arranged by the Omani group of students who came with him. He said:

We were six men and two women. In the first days, it was difficult to be in a new place. So we exchanged phone numbers, arranged and went on many short trips together. We didn't feel comfortable about this but they [the women] are like our sisters. I feel that we should look after and protect them from any harm.

Being in a new place encouraged Khadija upon arrival to share her phone number with others. She mentioned, "We were two girls and six guys. I went with two guys in the same bus and we exchanged phone numbers in order to keep in contact with each other." Experienced participants also accepted interacting and communicating with the opposite sex. Jana moved out of her homestay and moved into a studio flat. She had to rely on men to manage her daily activities and

needs. She said, “I asked Omani or Saudi guys to come with me on the bus and go shopping together, so they could help me and carry things to my room.”

At the time of the interview, Safia was accompanied by a male friend from the same country. She explained that socialising with men from one’s own country was accepted as they now lived in a different country and could help each other to manage daily routines. She said, “I have many colleagues from China and Korea and also I know Nasser. He is like my brother. My father met him and he knows his uncle. He has helped me to deal with various things.”

Participants started to ignore certain norms and to accept the norm of mixed gender in order to reduce tension in the new life. Participants indicated that going out and interacting with the opposite sex from their own nationalities and religion were acceptable and they agreed to exchange phone numbers with each other in order to keep contact. As they explained their actions, the main motivations involved mitigating homesickness, keeping in touch, managing in difficult circumstances, and exploring the new environment. Reconstructing a new meaning for gender relationships allowed participants to associate with the opposite sex.

Being in a Western country that regards the mixing of the sexes as normal contributes to a reassessment of participants’ own norms and traditions. Participants started rationalising their acceptance of gender relations and critiquing their own values and norms. Jamal talks about his experience in socialising and working with women. He does not mind mixing with women as he lives in a different culture that accepts this norm. He said:

You have to socialise or work with women. The culture here imposes on you to accept this norm. I have read an article that shows a person creates two identities when living in a new culture and I generally agree with it. If I only asserted my Islamic identity without considering others, I wouldn’t mix with the opposite sex.

Shrooq attempted to present Islam to others in a good way. Thus, she had a disagreement with fellow national women when arranging a national day at the university. She stated:

I don't like to mix or socialise with some of the women from my country who are not open-minded and want to conduct their religious and cultural practices in New Zealand as if they were still in their home country. For example, if they see me interacting and communicating with boys, they say that this is wrong. I had an argument with a girl when we were organising an exhibition on our national day at the university. She wanted to separate the men from the women but I refused. I told her that we want to represent Islam. They understood Islam differently from me and thought that their culture and customs meant Islam. I told her Islam is not what you think. We must inform them about Islam in the right way, not through veils or the big *hijab*. We are in their country and we should accept their lives.

Zahra was accompanied by her brother who disagreed with her and was annoyed by her behaviour, such as mingling and shopping with her girlfriends without making a point of returning home before it was late. She said:

I tried to explain to him that I haven't done anything wrong or gone against my religious values. My behaviour may clash with our traditional and cultural norms but these norms may be right to follow in Saudi but not in New Zealand.

She then explained in more detail what norms were not appropriate to follow in New Zealand.

One of these cultural norms is segregation of the sexes, which is highly valued in Saudi. My own people understand this norm as a religious mandate and they require us to observe it. I am not obligated to consider it here. I may be concerned about it if I am in Saudi but not in New Zealand.

The dominant culture plays a remarkable role in framing participants' understandings of certain norms, such as drinking alcohol, modesty, and gender relations. These dominant norms contradicted participants' religious and cultural identities. Navigating and negotiating between one's own values and the dominant norms results in accepting a new interpretation of religious and cultural norms. Participants gave coherent justification and reasons that allow and support them in their interaction and communication with others without considering religious or cultural norms that might restrict their social interactions.

The questioning and realignment of cultural and religious values succeeded in preventing conflict and contradiction among the students themselves. Participants explicitly refused to follow their own values and norms in the new culture and explained that these values need only be kept in the home culture. They clearly linked the reinterpretation of their identities with practices they considered appropriate in the dominant culture in order to integrate with others. Thus, students came to the point of criticising values of their own that do not allow and support integration and interaction with others.

6.2.4.3 Discussion

Both religious and cultural affiliations define behavioural expectations of Arab Muslim participants. In their home countries, mosques play an important role in maintaining and preserving Islamic heritage and values (Mostafa, 2006). The family's social network also provides social contact and support to manage stressful situations and reinforcement for retaining and maintaining cultural and religious norms and values (Alazzi & Chiodo, 2006; Suliman & McInerney, 2006; Witteborn, 2004). The institutions of family and mosque highlight the importance of staying on "the straight path", which receives significantly greater emphasis when individuals move to a non-Muslim country (Zine, 2001, p. 399). As Arab students move from their home countries to a new environment, they will miss this family and religious support. Thus, the strategy of giving much advice aims to remind these students of the importance of their cultural heritage and religious identity, as the family's honour depends on the behaviour of their daughters.

For young Arab women, a positive connection with Islamic and cultural identities is clear and the challenge for them is to protect reputation and honour as they live in the West. It seems that the family wants to develop the strategy of self-discipline among female participants in order to cope with Western freedom of interaction between the sexes and other values that could influence their own identities (Sarroub, 2010). The emphasis on one's own values enables participants to navigate new cultural experiences and pass through the turbulence of cross-cultural transition (Moore, 2008). Female participants were expected to give top priority to maintaining Islamic and cultural values in behaviour and in interacting, socialising, and communicating with people in the dominant culture.

Thus, the female participants emphatically rejected the suggestion that they sought freedom to escape from societal oversight. For these women, the concept of freedom contrasted with the Western understanding of freedom that emphasises the absence of social and emotional restraint (Kolig, 2006b). The women understood freedom as being "in total submissiveness to God [which] requires a total embracing of the rules of thought and behaviour, suppression of human nature, and total religious socialisation" (Kolig, 2006b, p. 239). Based on the participants' understanding of freedom, this study supports the conclusion proposed by (Ahmad, 2007), who found that for Muslim participants freedom does not mean abandoning cultural and religious values and practices. Rather, it means observing Islamic and cultural values in the new, dominant community.

The women considered their honour an essential part of themselves and their families, and paid significant attention to their values and to their family's reputations as well as their own while living in Western countries. These women are urged strongly by the family to pay careful attention to their own values and modesty (Ahmad & Szpara, 2003; Mansouri & Percival-Wood, 2008; Sarroub, 2010; Sarroub, 2001), since their behaviour reflects on the family's honour (Dagkas & Benn, 2006; Sarroub, 2001). Ajrouch (2004) explained that "[to] maintain honour is central not only for the girl herself; it extends to other family members and to the community" (p. 383). In other words, female participants understood that the family's honour depended on their behaviour in the new

culture and must be consistent with their own cultural and religious values and norms. Thus, one responsibility of these women living in the West is to protect and maintain both their own honour and the family's honour by, for example, avoiding establishing a relationship with a member of the opposite sex.

The participants' presence in the dominant culture, and their interaction and communication experiences there, helped them to think about, reflect on, and reinforce their values and identities. Studies have found that living in the West makes international/Muslim students more aware of their own values and cultural roots (Abukhattala, 2004; Ahmad, 2007; Bahiss, 2008; Moores, 2008; Munawar, 1997), increases religiosity, demarcates and negotiates Islamic teachings, and brings "Islamic practice into fresh relief" (Zine, 2001, p. 404). The comparison of two cultures allows participants to reflect on their own cultural roots. Collier and Thomas (1988) pointed out that comparison is a significant aspect of intercultural communication. The process of being in the New Zealand culture and entering its world, and reflecting on one's own traditional roots and practices, results in a strengthening of identity and evoking what is salient in that identity and what it means to be an Arab Muslim (Duderija, 2007; Naidoo, 2007).

In New Zealand society, participants engaged in the maintenance of "role performance", which is defined as "the internal criteria used by members of an ethnic/cultural group to determine group membership through the enactment of behaviours that are based upon and judged by shared cultural knowledge, value orientations and moral standards" (Zine, 2001, p. 403). Kopp (2002) indicated that Muslim immigrants pay considerable attention and commitment towards their Islamic observances in their Western lives. For participants, praying and reading the *Qur'an* were symbolic activities that identified them as Muslims with a particular identity. Reading the *Qur'an* means being endowed with "a spirituality or holiness, and empowering one's self against culturally-biased acts against Muslims" (Sarroub, 2010, p. 85). Showing a strong adherence to religious practices means that participants tried to maintain their relationships and link them with their cultural identity (Henry et al., 2009). Retaining religious identity was found to be a positive factor that helped Arab Muslim students to moderate

cultural differences, and provide a sense of satisfaction, protection, and serenity (Bahiss, 2008; McDermott-Levy, 2008, 2011; Mehdizadeh & Scott, 2005; Munawar, 1997).

Value contradictions motivated participants to think of their own values and evaluate them. They wanted to pay attention to the “purification of Islam” (Duderija, 2007, p. 150) by rejecting any understandings and cultural practices that are not consistent with Islam (Al-Romi, 2000). Being in a Western country encouraged participants to present Islam without any traditional and cultural influences (Mohammed-Arif, 2000). The need to gain acceptance pressures participants to navigate their own, dominant, and others’ identities which have conflicting parameters. Zine (2001) reaffirmed this position and noticed that acquiring acceptance in a dominant culture requires Muslim women to negotiate “three often conflicting cultural frameworks: the dominant culture, their ethnic culture, and Islam” (p. 404).

The norm of gender relations is one of the aspects participants most needed to navigate and negotiate. A more liberal personal position on the issue of interaction between the sexes was observed. Being in a country where they lack parental and communal supervision enables participants to practise freedom of gender relations without considering religious and cultural rules of interaction. In contrast with Westerners, Arab students come from a very patriarchal and matriarchal culture that sets firm guidelines for their public lives (McDermott-Levy, 2011).

Participants described their relationships with fellow nationals of the opposite sex as something like interaction with a close relative whom they can help and protect from any difficulties in the new culture. The phenomenon of gender segregation is a cultural norm in Gulf countries and is based on Islamic teachings (Abukhattala, 2004). However, the conventional norms of the dominant culture noticeably conflict with these Islamic and cultural rules (Zine, 1997). Thus, the encounter with a new norm of gender interaction and the influences of the dominant culture persuade the students, over time, to accept the new value. This finding is also

supported by another study which found that over time Muslim women adjusted to New Zealand norms, such as male-female interaction (Bahiss, 2008).

The question that needs to be asked is whether deliberately accepting a new understanding of gender-relations indicates a “[religious] identity anxiety” (Mohammed-Arif, 2000, p. 81). The logical answer comes from participants who explained and attempted to establish a division between religious values and cultural and traditional norms in order to show a disconnection and disagreement between Islam and cultural values. Participants mentioned that Arab culture might not represent authentic Islam as other countries also incorporate their traditions, understandings, perspectives, ideas, and cultures into the religion. Participants seemed to adopt “a sense of liberation from *taqlid* (traditional authority) and greater use of personal responsibility in *ijtihad* (interpretation) so as to make life comfortable” (Kolig, 2006b, p. 236). Participants conceptualised religion as a different matter from culture, which is related to ethnicity and nationality (Imtoul, 2006).

Over time, participants started normalising dominant values. Britto and Amer (2007) argued that “length of residence in [a mainstream culture] ... is linked with decline in cultural identity and increase in adoption of its cultural, social, and family values” (p. 139). Social pressure from the dominant culture perceptibly influences participants’ identities, and their own beliefs and practices are inevitably shaped and modified by the new culture’s circumstances and demands (Duderija, 2007). Participants adopted strategies in order to manage new cultural norms, to allow for integration with New Zealand values and interaction with New Zealanders. By applying these strategies, participants attempted to bridge the gap that exists between their cultural and religious requirements, and their interest in showing that they are not Westernised (Abukhattala, 2004; Cole & Ahmadi, 2003). Accepting the host culture norm of drinking and normalising the public display of affection was reported. This situation regarding participants’ religious identity can be described as “passive” (Mohammed-Arif, 2000, p. 79).

Applying normalisation strategies allowed participants to integrate and interact with New Zealanders without concerning themselves with certain religious and cultural rules. Participants held a different understanding of the unrestricted relationship with the opposite sex, which might contradict the Islamic view of the issue of relationships between the sexes. They also viewed drinking alcohol and immodesty in dress as a matter of personal freedom and were only bothered by seeing bodily exposure during *Ramadan* as they had to avert their eyes as otherwise their fast might be affected. A self-determined definition of gender modesty was adopted by participants who departed from traditional Islamic and cultural norms and relaxed interaction with the opposite sex while living in New Zealand society. The ability to understand and accept the host culture's behaviours and norms undoubtedly helps strangers to integrate into the first culture and promotes their intercultural communication with others (Fritz et al., 2008). Li (2005) found that effective intercultural communication can be achieved by accepting and understanding cross-cultural norms.

Participants seemed to apply a new understanding of their Islamic and cultural values and norms. Reunderstanding and reinterpreting Islamic teachings appeared to accommodate needs and pressures (Kolig, 2006b; Mohammed-Arif, 2000). By reframing Islamic principles and showing acceptance of Western values, participants practised the concept of "re-Islamisation" (Mohammed-Arif, 2000, p. 81), which includes reinterpreting Islamic requirements in order to satisfy their needs in the dominant culture. This strategy leads to constructing the meaning of integration in a way that helps participants to reduce the gap that exists between their home and host cultural values (Nasir & Al-Amin, 2006; Schmidt, 2004). The process of accepting host culture norms can also be understood through the theory of "personal-enacted identity gaps" (Wadsworth et al., 2008, p. 69). The theory explains that when individuals are forced to relate differently towards their previous identities, they actually encompass the dominant culture's norms and behaviours and reframe their own identities (Wadsworth et al., 2008).

Participants constructed with precision what it meant to live between host and home cultures. The negotiating and shifting of identity was a clear sign that

participants sought to integrate in the host culture. The process of identity formation was a flexible one and also a struggle as participants attempted to strike a balance between their own values and New Zealand values, especially as they were advised to stay connected to their own values (Sarroub, 2010). The experience of cultural flexibility enables individuals to adjust successfully in the host culture (Henry et al., 2009). On-going negotiation between home and host worlds might result in “shifting paradigms” (McDermott-Levy, 2011, p. 272) in order to try to “live simultaneously in two vastly different worlds” (Orbe, 2004, p. 133). Thus, participants had to bridge the gap between home and host cultures by attempting to find a balance between the acceptance of engagement in the mainstream community and maintenance of their own values. Husain and O'Brien (2000) argued that Muslims are required to show a good balance between accepting Western values and keeping their own values without compromising their own identity and principles.

There is an on-going negotiation of identity in the host culture. Participants negotiated their identities as a result of living in a totally different culture, interacting and communicating with other cultural groups, and desiring to present and assert their own values (Berry et al., 2002; Guirdham, 1999). The role of interaction and communication in the identity negotiation process is consistent with the theoretical framework of the Communication Theory of Identity (CTI), which emphasises that “identity is inherently a communication process” (Hecht et al., 2003, p. 230). The cultural identity of participants is socially constructed as a result of their interaction and communication experiences in the dominant culture, and of their personal reflections on these experiences. This finding is also supported by Collier (2000) and Orbe (2004) who emphasised that identity is constructed through individuals' interaction and relationships with both in-group and out-group people.

The finding confirms that participants negotiated their cultural identities as a result of cultural differences. This negotiation process leads participants to create a double identity that contains both host and home cultural identities, which allow them to live in two worlds. These two identities never completely replace one

another. Instead, they contain both old and new values and norms that promote openness and acceptance towards differences (Kim, 2005). The new identity is created as a result of negotiating one's own identity in a dominant culture to avoid clashes, to manage unexpected situations, and to attain integration (Berry, 2005; Young, 2008). The new identity allows participants to accept as normal the practices of drinking alcohol, immodesty, and the mingling of the sexes. Length of residency was found to be a critical factor in adopting dominant values and integration (Wang & Mallinckrodt, 2006). Studies have found that, over time, the mainstream culture influenced the level of Islamic adherence among Muslim students (Basford, 2008; Kaplan, 2005).

A number of labels have been suggested to describe the new form of identity, such as a "double persona" (Zine, 2001, p. 406), a "third space" (Koehne, 2005; Orbe, 2004), a "cultural hybridity" (Martin, 2007, p. 300) and a "double culture" (Mohammed-Arif, 2000, p. 74). For participants, creating an identity that engages with the mainstream culture and yet remains faithful to its own values does not mean a contradiction but instead allows for constructive integration (Duderija, 2007). Adopting the practice of integration is consistent with the general tendency of Muslims who embrace integration in the West (Kolig, 2006b), and enables participants to live as Arab Muslims in a Western country such as New Zealand.

6.2.5 Summary

In sum, close relatives and friends played a significant role in encouraging participants to choose a New Zealand university as a learning destination because of the positive image of the country. Being in a country where there is little or no discrimination and that promotes cultural diversity allowed participants to experience positive integration and interaction with New Zealanders. This positive experience was also reinforced by New Zealanders' being friendly and respectful. New Zealanders have positive attitudes that show patience, trust, affection, and encouragement, which facilitated easy conversation and promoted opportunities to practise English, understand New Zealand culture, get involved in social activities, and establish social networks with New Zealanders.

Participants showed good manners towards others by applying the strategy of gift giving and greeting with a smile in order to build a positive image of their identities and to promote their interaction with others. They indicated that their interaction and communication experiences with others helped them to reflect on their values. This reflection took two forms: reinforcing religious practices, such as reading the *Qur'an* and praying on time, and questioning and critiquing their own values. The main motivation in questioning their own values was to promote integration and interaction with others and to practise Islamic values without considering traditional influences. Reinterpretations and reunderstandings were adopted to navigate and negotiate the norms of drinking alcohol, immodesty of dress, and gender relations. The experience of negotiating cultural and religious values affirms that cultural identity is constructed and reconstructed on the basis of interaction and in communication contexts.

6.3 Conclusion

Arab Muslim students in New Zealand adopted varied communication practices. They developed a gradual integration. Isolation and separation were adopted by participants only when they had just arrived in the dominant culture. Facing homesickness and culture shock were the main experiences of participants upon arrival in the country. Feeling the loss of social and spiritual gatherings and missing social, cultural and religious values were the significant symptoms indicating culture shock. A number of factors motivated participants to be isolated. Internal motivations involve asserting their Islamic values and desiring not to disobey their creator God (*Allah*). It should be noted that participants adopted the strategy of avoidance at certain times. They separated from others who were drinking alcohol or conducting other practices that clearly contradicted their Islamic values and norms. Participants attempted not to separate fully but instead managed these cultural differences by taking proactive and passive measures, such as advising others about their norms. In this sense, Islam and culture occupy a notable place in the construction of participants' identity.

Over time, integration was adopted by participants. The participants positively experienced their living and integration with New Zealanders who held positive attitudes towards them. They were able to practise and perform what was required by their cultural and religious identities without any hesitation in homestays and in the community. Receiving support and encouragement and being respected in their religion and culture positively affected their interaction and communication with others. Experiencing positive attitudes towards New Zealanders significantly promoted intercultural communication experiences and critically assisted participants in understanding that the dominant culture was also required to change its own ways to adjust to the new worldview. The study revealed that although students refused certain dominant practices upon arrival, they implemented certain strategies. These strategies helped participants to live comfortably in New Zealand, fit into the new culture, negotiate the influence of the dominant culture, reduce associated tension, and achieve positive attitudes towards the new environment.

The findings show that the identity of participants is not fixed or static but, rather, is dynamic and undergoes development, depending on the students' integration and interaction with others. Participants attempted to integrate and build a positive relationship with others by taking the initiative and greeting people, displaying good behaviour, respecting others, and socialising with people. They believe that showing good manners allows them to build positive, close relationships with others. Most importantly, they understood that respecting others' opinions and their cultures and backgrounds helped them in being accepted and integrated. The students asserted that being accepted and respected by others allowed them to practise this value in their own real-life experience and they desired to take it home. They accepted socialisation with people while drinking and accepted as normal immodesty in dress and the interaction between the sexes. Practice in integration motivated participants to question and renegotiate their own values. The process of reinterpreting and renegotiating one's own values and norms while interacting and communicating with others demonstrates that cultural identity is constructed and reconstructed in an intercultural communication context.

Chapter 7

Conclusions and Implications

The presence of Arab Muslim students in New Zealand is new and increasing, and there is limited research dealing with these students' intercultural communication experiences in the country. This study has sought to do two things: to share the voices of these students as they describing their intercultural communication experiences in both learning and social contexts, and to assist both Arabian Gulf and New Zealand educational institutions to understand how these experiences guided and were guided by the participants' cultural and religious identities. The study aimed to answer the following questions:

1. How do New Zealand universities' communication practices influence the negotiation process of Arab Muslim students' identities?
2. What communication practices do Arab Muslim students adopt in managing acceptance or exclusion, and how successful are they?

In order to answer these questions, the research was carried out in three ways: by interviewing 45 male and female Arab Muslim students who came from Arabian Gulf countries and were studying at New Zealand universities; by interviewing eight university administrators; and, by analysing relevant university documents. Thematic analysis, content analysis, and structuration theory were used to analyse the data.

The purpose of this chapter is to offer comprehensive conclusions pertaining to this study. These have been drawn from the chapters discussing the findings (Chapters 5 to 6). The current chapter also points out the study's implications, outlines its limitations, and identifies its contributions. The final section looks forward by offering recommendations and directions for further study.

7.1 Major Conclusions

While living and studying in the New Zealand, Arab Muslim students reconstructed and renegotiated their cultural and religious identities in the intercultural communication context. The following major conclusions emerged

from the study's findings. These findings are presented in two key areas that relate to the study's research questions. In the next section, a model of reconstructing cultural identity is introduced.

7.1.1 Influence of University Policies and Communication Practices

Structuration theory of signification, domination, and legitimation was used to examine how university affects the students' identity. A number of key conclusions can be drawn from answering the question. First, cultural and religious values triggered stress, anxiety, and culture shock for participants, who had to communicate their own views and opinions, and negotiate a new educational system that promotes a mixed-gender environment. Participants had to negotiate between home and host values and norms with regard to mixed-gender and social involvement.

The mixed-gender learning environment presented a new norm for participants, who had to navigate it by establishing interaction guidelines in order to retain their own values and to interact with the opposite sex. This negotiation continued as participants were shocked that university social activities involved the consumption of alcohol, the unavailability of *halal* food, immodesty of dress, physical/bodily exposure, and physical displays of affection, behaviours which contradicted their values and simultaneously restricted their interaction with others. For Arab women, their conspicuous identity created more interaction challenges than for their male counterparts, and compelled them to restyle their dress.

Second, the negotiation of power between participants wanting to retain their own values and universities seeking to pass their norms to the participants was demonstrated through the issues of gender relations, social involvements, and dress code. Universities were able to use their human and nonhuman resources to communicate Western norms to participants. Although universities declared that there were no obligations or sanctions forcing participants to work with the opposite sex, to mix socially with other students or to wear certain clothes, the participants' daily university learning and social activities put significant pressure on them to accept these dominant norms. The negotiation of power was also clear

in the area of food. Although universities respected cultural diversity and encouraged participants to communicate their religious needs, participants wanted universities to acknowledge their needs.

Third, participants varied in their identification and disidentification with their cultural and religious identities. Upon arrival in the country, participants seemed to show strong (“front region”) identification with their cultural and religious values. This strong identification was clear from their refusal to work or socialise with the opposite sex, preferring to work with the same gender, not attending student social activities, and viewing *hijab* as a religious and personal choice. Over time, the influence of university values and norms began to affect Arab Muslim students’ perceptions of their own, as well as the dominant, values. Consequently, participants began accepting working with the opposite sex, but in order to enable them to do so comfortably, created interaction guidelines and established new standards of socialisation and interaction which resulted in redefining the concept of gender relations and producing new structures.

Women reconstructed dress standards and went from being fully covered to leaving the face uncovered and eventually moving to redesigning a new style of dress which combined Western and Islamic styles. Showing disidentification (“back” region) in certain ways with their own values and identification with the dominant values in gender relations and women’s dress enabled participants to strike a balance between the influence of their own and the dominant values. This balance enabled participants to obtain opportunities for interaction that involved integrating, interacting, and communicating with local students and others, and to appear “normal” in the new culture without facing any interaction and socialisation challenges.

By using structuration theory, the study was able to reveal that the issues of agency and structure lie at the heart of the participants’ reconstruction in their new educational settings. This connection between agency and structure leads to a significant understanding of one’s personal identity as a dynamic phenomenon which is constructed and reconstructed in different intercultural communication contexts. Participants acted, behaved, and carried on different daily activities that were based on their own identities and on university norms. The structure of the

New Zealand universities functions as a duality that both enables and constrains participants in their day-to-day activities.

7.1.2 Communication Practices Adapted in Managing Acceptance or Exclusion

In addressing communication practices, the following major findings were noted. First, cultural and religious differences also result in culture shock for participants in the New Zealand community. Participants missed their loved ones and friends, as well as religious and cultural values ordinarily affirmed in social and spiritual gatherings. Experiencing homesickness and culture shock led to the practice of separation among participants, and this resulted in less interaction. This separation was a response to encountering dissimilar, mismatched, and clashing values in the consumption of alcohol, immodesty of dress, and the physical display of affection. By employing the active strategies of speaking out and changing homestays they found uncongenial, participants showed that they preferred to practise a gradual integration in order to retain their own values.

The practice of a gradual integration was obvious by participants who started renegotiating and reinterpreting their own values. Integration, achieved by applying a number of strategies, was a general tendency among participants in New Zealand. Reestablishing social networks with their families and establishing new ties to their own student group are the first tactics that help participants to mitigate homesickness and reinforce ties with their own culture. Moving from active to passive strategies is the second tactic, and it is one which facilitates integration for participants. Applying passive strategies of avoidance and acceptance of dominant norms gives balance to participants, enabling them to retain their own values and integrate with others. Participants started viewing dominant norms, such as consuming alcohol, wearing immodest dress, and displaying affection, as personal freedoms and this new way of thinking resulted in a reconstruction of their own values.

Second, integration is also promoted by the positive attitudes that New Zealanders show towards participants, including being less discriminatory than other national groups, and being friendly and welcoming to other people. These positive

attitudes allowed participants to experience religious freedom to pray freely and to be conspicuous in their clothing. Experiencing religious freedom and feeling comfortable in the country encouraged participants to show good manners to others by giving gifts and greeting people with a smile in order to promote their integration and interaction with others, and to convey a positive impression of Islam. Participants also appreciate the value of accepting and respecting others and want to retain this value and practise it in their home countries.

Finally, participants practised navigation and negotiation between home and host values during their stay in New Zealand. Generally, length of residence was linked to a decline in insistence on their own values and to an increasing acceptance of host norms. The strategy of questioning and critiquing their own values with regard to the interaction of the sexes was the final tactic that enabled participant integration in the New Zealand community. A disconnection between religious values and cultural traditions that insist on strict gender segregation was highlighted. Participants asserted that they wanted to practise Islamic values without any cultural traditions in order to achieve the purification of Islam. A self-chosen definition of modesty characterised participants who departed from traditional Islamic and cultural norms and who took a more relaxed view of the interaction of the sexes while living in New Zealand society.

7.1.3 A Model of Reconstructing Cultural Identity

The following model summarises the process by which Arab Muslim students reconstruct their identities in the New Zealand intercultural communication context. It shows that there are two different cultures: Arabian Gulf culture, and New Zealand culture. Arab Muslim students have their own cultural values and norms. They travel to New Zealand in order to study and encounter new host values and norms. They begin interacting and communicating with others and this exposure results in negotiating between home and host values. To be regarded as “normal,” these students had to renegotiate their own norms and accept new host norms, a process of reconstruction which ultimately results in the creation and acceptance of two cultures within these individuals?

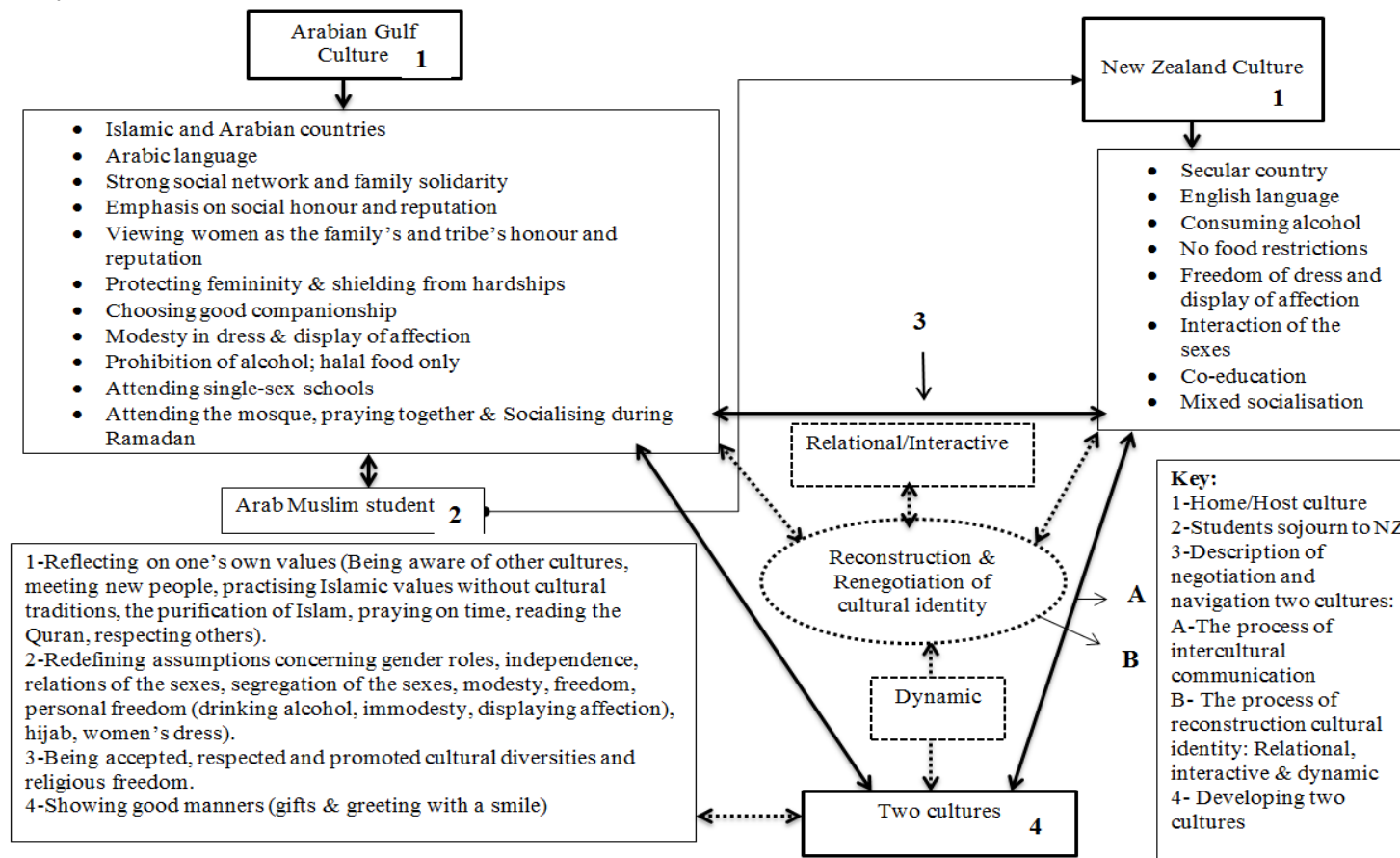


Figure 11: The process of reconstruction and renegotiation of cultural identity adapted from Casimir (1993) and Holmes (2000).

According to Figure 11 above, the process of reconstructing and renegotiating cultural identity in the intercultural communication context follows four main steps. The first step recognises that each society, such as those of Arabian Gulf countries and New Zealand, has its own values and norms which are based on religious beliefs and cultural traditions. Islam and its culture constitute the central components of participants' identities and determine their daily activities through a number of rules. People also move from one society to another for various reasons, such as for educational or economic purposes, as is illustrated in the second step that shows that Arab Muslim students travelled to New Zealand in order to study.

The third step describes the process of negotiation and navigation between home and host values. This step contains two main aspects, and these are shown as A and B in Figure 11. As demonstrates, there are direct connections and mutual influences among the home culture, the host culture, and the box marked "two cultures". The connecting and influencing process occurs in the intercultural communication context. For example, as participants interacted and communicated with others, who had their own values and norms, they encountered different values and norms in both social and learning contexts in terms of the following: gender-relations, modesty/immodesty in dress, the public display of affection, the consumption of alcohol, and a feeling of loss of social and spiritual gatherings. The new, dominant norms separate participants from others and reduce opportunities for interaction.

As mentioned earlier, the practice of a gradual integration was intended as participants began to move from the A to the B aspect, which focuses on negotiating and navigating between home and host values. Neither separation nor assimilation was seen as the main aim for participants. Instead, they wanted to retain their cultural norms and religious values while adopting and adjusting to the norms of the host culture. This aim lends itself to integration. The process of reconstruction and renegotiation of cultural identity is clear in the B aspect, which shows that cultural identity is relational, interactive, and dynamic. Interrelationships and intercultural communication between individuals of different cultures are important components in constructing two cultures,

illustrated in the fourth step. Participants began encountering new values and norms by having relationships and interaction with others in both learning and social contexts, and using a number of strategies to find a balance between retaining their own values and integrating with others.

However, it is important to examine two main issues: natural interactions and relationships, and the rejection of a one culture-only view (Belay, 1993). The first issue is that the interrelationship and interaction argument is not consistent with the separation-segregation theory in which the nondominant culture is isolated or segregated from the dominant culture (Ward et al., 2001). Whereas push factors, such as desiring to maintain and retain cultural identity, influence a minority group to isolate itself from a majority group, pull factors, such as imposing the dominant culture, enforcing assimilation, and insisting on one culture, lead to the segregation of the home culture from the host culture (Berry et al., 2002; Ward et al., 2001).

For the current study, relationships and interactions between participants and New Zealanders varied from separation at the beginning to integration at the end. The process of developing a gradual integration was clear. The relationships and interactions among differing individual cultures are fundamental elements to reconstructing and renegotiating a cultural identity which evolves out of the two original cultures. However, this evolution does not require departing from the original cultures (Belay, 1993). The concept of building two cultures involves symmetrical positive interrelations and intercultural communication that resolve cultural differences in order to achieve mutually beneficial relationships.

This discussion leads to a consideration of the second issue raised by the two cultures' model, and is based on the rejection of one cultural group. A reciprocal relationship emerges only via the concept of "interactive-multicultural building" (Belay, 1993, p. 451), expressed by the terms "cultural integration" (Berns McGown, 1999, p. 43) or "multiculturalism" (Berry et al., 2002, p. 356). These concepts allow individuals, such as this study's participants, from the subordinate culture to live peacefully, to preserve and retain their own cultural identity, and simultaneously to encourage the dominant culture to accommodate new cultures which ultimately create "a plural society" (Berns McGown, 1999, p. 50). This

pluralistic society rejects the notion of “a unicultural society” (Berry et al., 2002, p. 346). The features of a pluralistic society involve accepting cultural groups, recognising different identities, accommodating the needs of minority cultural groups, allowing the maintenance of cultural identities, encouraging positive relationships among culturally different individuals, and reporting a low rate of discrimination (Berry, 2005). Participants acknowledged those positive features while interacting and communicating with others in New Zealand society.

The current study affirms that intergroup relationships and interactions between individuals result in a negotiable identity. Participants began reflecting on and questioning their own values and norms in light of their intercultural communication. The process of reflecting on their own values was based on an awareness of other cultures and meeting people who belong to different backgrounds and cultures. This reflection allowed participants to practise Islamic values free of cultural influences, asserting that they sought the purification of Islam. They emphasised the religious practices of praying and reading the *Qur'an*, and admired and immersed themselves in New Zealand values, such as promoting cultural diversity, and respecting and accepting others. Reflection also prompts participants to redefine and reinterpret assumptions concerning gender relations, segregation of the sexes, modesty, and personal freedom. As participants reinterpret their own values and adopt dominant values, they negotiate a new cultural identity.

Cultural identity is also negotiated while interacting and communicating with others. The desire to promote integration moves participants to establish new interaction rules. These rules involve assigning interaction guidelines and standards for social activities, using the strategy of avoidance, and acknowledging dominant norms in order to reach a balance between retaining their own values and simultaneously achieving integration and socialisation with others in various learning and social activities. Women in particular redefined and reframed the norm assigned by Arab culture concerning gender roles and being alone to allow for their independence, negotiating and carrying out daily activities in the new culture without reliance on men. The concept of freedom was also redefined by

these women to mean retaining their own values, protecting their honour, and not desiring to take advantage of the absence of parental and communal restraints.

The elements of relationship and interaction lead to the third element, the dynamic. The dynamic element is based on reflecting on participants' own values and norms and beginning to navigate and negotiate between home and host values, a process in which ultimately the dynamic of identity is clear. Participants encountered various circumstances in the new culture which required successfully handling unexpected situations in order to integrate and adjust. To manage these unexpected situations, participants reinterpreted cultural and religious values, accepted certain New Zealand values, and conducted an ongoing negotiation between the home and host worlds.

By shifting and modifying their own cultural and religious norms and values, and accepting and adopting dominant norms, participants arrived at a reconstruction and renegotiation of their cultural identity. This reconstruction leads to the fourth step, namely, building two cultures. The new identity amalgamates home and host values without replacing one with the other (Duderija, 2007), and is conceptualised as "multiple identities" (Salvatore, 2004, p. 1024). The two cultures contain certain features, which involve practising Islamic values without cultural traditions, and creating new understandings of the interaction of the sexes, and redefining concepts of gender-roles, independence, modesty, freedom, and *hijab*.

Overall, the study supports the view that cultural identity is negotiable (Collier, 1998; Collier & Thomas, 1988). Individuals who come from different cultures start processing any differences that emerge due to the interaction and communication process and clearly begin to make significant responses to these experiences in order to fulfil their needs and achieve consistency (Casmir, 1993). Arab Muslim students come to New Zealand with their own identities. They interact with people who hold a range of different cultural identities in New Zealand's bi- and multicultural society and experience a new culture. Arab students then begin renegotiating and reconstructing their own values in order to understand and accept the new, dominant values, norms, and people's backgrounds, and to achieve good integration and interaction with others. This

negotiation shows how cultural identity is constructed and reconstructed in an intercultural communication context.

7.2 Research Contributions

The study contributes significantly to existing research on intercultural communication. Specifically, it is a study that uses the qualitative approach to examine the issue of cultural identity for Arab Muslim students in New Zealand and focuses on their experiences in renegotiating and reconstructing their identities. Given the rapidly increasing number of both Arab Muslim and other international students at New Zealand institutions, the research is timely, valuable, and important. Thus, the study adds to the existing body of knowledge about Arabs and Muslims in New Zealand.

The study has helped to shed light on the issue of intercultural communication and has added Arab Muslim students' stories and voices to the question of how Arab Muslim students experience intercultural communication in a Western country. It has also contributed to an understanding of maintaining one's own religious and cultural values and norms, moving into a dominant culture, encountering the new culture's norms that clash with one's own values in the context of intercultural communication, and managing new norms and values through the process of navigation and negotiation between home and host values and norms. The main objective of this process is to achieve adjustment and integration and to enhance interaction and communication with others.

The results have indicated that value differences caused culture shock and constituted a significantly inhibiting factor to integration. The present findings add to our knowledge that missing loved ones and religious values and losing out on times of sharing in social and spiritual gatherings caused homesickness in the new culture and increased reluctance to interact with host people. This reluctance can be significantly deepened by encountering conflicting values, in areas such as gender relations, interaction between the sexes, consuming alcohol, immodesty of dress, and physical displays of affection in public. The process of using a variety of active, passive, and normalising strategies to negotiate between home and dominant norms and values and to enhance the practice of integration forms a

relatively new area of research into being an Arab Muslim in the West. The current results in these areas of establishing adjustment strategies are valuable in emerging areas of inquiry.

As participants preferred integration, they began navigating and negotiating between home and host values, an adjustment which resulted in a double identity. This navigation and negotiation contributes to our knowledge of certain terms and concepts. Significant contribution to theoretical knowledge are the conceptualisation of the gender role, being alone in a Western country, gender relations, segregation of the sexes, modesty, freedom, hijab and women's dress, and personal freedom. In particular, the study showed a link between Arab women going to study abroad alone and reformulating the understanding of gender roles. This exploration has contributed to the literature, as McDermott-Levy (2011) found that the concept is unique to Arab female students.

Since little research has been done in the area of Arab Muslim students' interaction and communication, it is argued that the study's findings constitute a rich source of information about the experience of Arab Muslim students in their intercultural communication in New Zealand. The study provides both Arabian Gulf Ministry of Higher Education and New Zealand academic institutions with an initial view of this issue of intercultural communication. It offers useful information for understanding what cultural and religious challenges Arab students encounter in New Zealand and how students are able to negotiate between home and host values and norms to manage cultural issues and promote integration and interaction with others.

The study also makes a number of distinct theoretical structuration contributions. First, it extends and enriches the extant literature on examining identity from the structuration point of view. The research provided an important new insight into the negotiation process of individual identity. Second, the study mapped the structural dimensions of signification, domination, and legitimation and explained how these three structures influence the negotiation process of identity. Further, the study provided a detailed exposition of structuration theory and indicated a practical way to examine its main concepts by describing the construction and reconstruction of individuals' identities. A significant key attraction of drawing on

this theoretical framework is that it allows discussion of both agency and structure in understanding the negotiation process of students' identity, without giving priority to either structure or agency. Crucially, the study has made an essential contribution to understanding the function of dynamic interaction and communication in the process of identity.

Structuration theory was particularly useful for revealing how Arab Muslim participants exercised their own power in maintaining their cultural and religious identities. It also indicated the role of university practices in influencing and constructing the negotiation process of participants' identities. For example, daily practices and activities enacted by the participants under the dominant pressure of universities gradually influenced the identity of these participants. Being involved and interacting with university practices essentially shaped participants' understandings, and the meanings for them, of their universities. Thus, their involvements and interactions "contribute to the way they symbolically construct their developing organizational identities and relationships" (Zorn & Gregory, 2005, p. 213).

The study reinforces the value of qualitative inquiry for examining the lived experiences of Arab Muslim students in the dominant country, and understanding the process of reconstruction and renegotiation of their Islamic and cultural identities. The study shows the importance and usefulness of in-depth interviews as instruments of rigorous qualitative research that explain the participants' experiences in more detail. In particular, the language of the participants, Arabic, was used to conduct the interviews in order to allow participants to speak freely and clearly about their lived experiences. This approach indicates the importance of the interviewer mastering certain skills while conducting an interview. Speaking the same language as participants is one of these skills because it is advantageous for discussing and expressing ideas (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009; Tatar, 2005).

7.3 Implications

Several useful implications emerged from this study. They might be helpful for home and host institutions, government and policy makers, and for future Arab students. These four areas are now explored.

7.3.1 Implications for Arabian Gulf Institutions

Participants made a great effort to manage educational and social issues that were caused by cultural and religious differences. One way to help students to deal with these issues is by preparing and offering orientation sessions that focus on specific, practical ways to help in dealing with new cultural values and norms. Arab students should be oriented prior to their travel abroad. The content of these orientations should include preparing them to be away from beloved families and friends, training them for study in a Western educational system, providing essential understanding of New Zealand culture and the homestay experience, and providing specific strategies to manage homesickness and culture shock. A multicultural training workshop can also be a good idea to prepare students to understand cultural diversity and to be able to interact with others who are culturally and religiously different (Mehdizadeh & Scott, 2005). Students need to be adequately oriented to study in a mixed context, to work with both genders, to interact with a variety of students, and to socialise with others who have different values and norms.

Arabian Gulf Higher Education Ministries should also provide ongoing orientation sessions for their students while they are in New Zealand. In cooperation with New Zealand universities, these Ministries should provide social training workshops or counselling services to address issues of students feeling the absence of cultural and religious values and missing shared moments of social and spiritual gathering. In this way, they would help students to adjust during the time of cultural transition and reestablish social support networks (Hendrickson et al., 2011; Moores, 2008). These postarrival workshops should invite experienced students to share their learning and social experiences. There should also be two-way communication between Arab students and their government sponsors to manage any new cultural or religious issues that arise for students while living in

the new country. This ongoing communication would help students maintain their identities and integrate into New Zealand culture without compromising any of their own values and norms.

7.3.2 Implications for New Zealand Institutions

New Zealand academic and educational institutions can benefit from this study in many ways. The findings can be understood as a document that contains useful information about the challenges and difficulties facing Arab Muslim students in New Zealand. For participants, the physical structure of classrooms and the universities' ways of arranging social activities which accepted the consumption of alcohol, immodesty of dress, interaction between the sexes, and the physical display of affection were the factors that most contributed to educational culture shock that inhibited Arab Muslim students' integration, interaction, and communication with fellow students. Universities can work together with Arab Muslim students to understand these cultural and religious issues in order to make sense of participants' hesitation about participating in mixed-gender group work and social activities.

One way to create a positive environment can be achieved by recognising diverse needs, and by conducting and promoting activities that bring students together regardless of their different cultural backgrounds. University activity organisers may arrange events that enhance awareness of diverse cultures and students by offering different cultural activities and international food. For example, trying international food is a simple way to recognise others and to increase awareness of different cultures. Organisers might also draw on a variety of students in arranging and organising their activities. By considering all these issues, students would be able to gain understanding and awareness of different cultures and maintain positive attitudes towards others who are culturally different (Ko, 2008). It would also help Arab students to feel a part of a campus community.

The study has shown that there are a number of facilitating and inhibiting factors that influence intercultural interaction and relationships between Arab students and others. Enabling meaningful interaction between host and international students can be an advantage in enhancing their intercultural communication and

relationships (Brown, 2009; Ujitani, 2006). The strategies of facilitating “student-centred activities” (Hellmundt, 1998, p. 342), “friendship networks” (Dunne, 2009, p. 229), the “Operation Friendship” programme (Ward & Masgoret, 2004, p. 61), “The Buddy Project” (Campbell, 2012, p. 208), “the peer-pairing programme” (Beaver & Tuck, 1998, p. 13), and “a productive relationship and dialogue” (Croucher, 2013, p. 59) can be constructive in promoting intercultural communication among students from various groups. Universities should facilitate and build network connections and relationships among international students (Gresham & Walsh, 2008). For example, promoting learning activities such as group assignments and working on the same projects enables intercultural relationships among university students (Ujitani, 2006). Given the number of international students in New Zealand universities, host students should also be prepared and encouraged to accept, interact, and socialise with students who come from other countries and cultures (Mehdizadeh & Scott, 2005; Zhang & Zhou, 2010). This preparation must assist the dominant culture students to accept working with Arab Muslim students in group assignments or presentations and encourage interaction and communication between these cultural groups.

There is “an increasing perception among the Muslim students that it is the faith dimension of their identity which the white community in schools and society has problems accommodating” (Shah, 2009, pp. 179-180). Thus, New Zealand universities should recognise the presence of Muslim students and acknowledge their needs as Muslims (Novera, 2004). This attention would help Arab Muslim students to understand that New Zealand universities do not attack their traditional values and norms, but, rather, that, these universities value and appreciate their contributions to the educational and community contexts and allow them to retain their religious and cultural practices (Sarroub, 2010; Singham, 2006).

Recognising the religious needs of Arab Muslim students leads to minimising the perception that they are the “other” and signifies that universities view students equally (Tyrer & Ahmad, 2006).

As New Zealand places an emphasis on multiculturalism, Arab Muslim students can work together with these institutions in order to meet their needs. Permissive and affirmative inclusion are two approaches that can be used to include

Arab/Muslim students in an academic institution (Ipgrave, 2010, p. 10). Whereas affirmative inclusion focuses on recognition of students' religions in university events and the curriculum, permissive inclusion entails the manifestation of identity (Ipgrave, 2010). New Zealand universities seem to adopt the permissive inclusion approach that includes providing a space for prayers, allowing for Friday prayers, supplying *halal* food, enabling and facilitating student observance of the month of fasting, and allowing students to have time off university for celebrating religious occasions only partially (Ahmad & Szpara, 2003; Ipgrave, 2010; Tyrer & Ahmad, 2006). By accepting and tolerating sojourner cultures and meeting the needs that go with an Arab Muslim identity, New Zealand universities show appreciable consideration of the concept of "cultural pluralism" (Ahmad & Szpara, 2003, p. 296), "cultural responsiveness" (Mansouri & Kamp, 2007, p. 96), and the notion of "multiculturalism" (Alitolppa-Niitamo, 2002, p. 277).

These universities may give an attention to accommodating all the religious and cultural needs of Arab Muslim students, enhancing the quality of services and facilitating a mutual, cultural dialogue in order to embrace both the concepts of "multiculturalism" and "interculturalism" (Jiang, 2005, p. 232). Singham (2006) stresses that it is a strategic imperative to hear, accept, and include diverse people who will benefit New Zealand society as a whole and promote its image as a peaceful nation. Thus, basic changes of procedure are required in New Zealand universities to address international students' expectations and needs. For example, Butcher and McGrath (2004) proposed a programme they call "proactive pastoral care" that attempts to manage any gap that might exist between the expectations and experiences of international students, and offers social support for them while studying in the host country. According to Collet (2007), and to Gresham and Walsh (2008), New Zealand's universities could implement cooperative initiatives with local Islamic leaders to successfully accommodate and address the religious needs of Arab and Muslim students (Collet, 2007; Gresham & Walsh, 2008).

Universities can also work with Gulf countries to extend the idea of the "Saudi Arabian Cultural Mission" (SACM) to include all other Gulf Arab students. The

SACM was officially opened in Auckland in 2010 and is designed to act as a bridge between New Zealand educational institutions, Saudi students in New Zealand, and the Saudi government (Saudi Arabian Cultural Mission in New Zealand, 2012). The main objectives of this initiative include emphasising the provision of both high quality educational and social activities for Saudi students, and addressing their social and academic needs (Saudi Arabian Cultural Mission in New Zealand, 2012). The extension of these initiatives would help universities to work together with all Arabian Gulf governments and organisations to address their students' needs and wants, and this move would make their sojourn in New Zealand successful.

Participants experienced loneliness, isolation, and unease in losing familiar times of social and spiritual gathering. The important value of family and mosque gatherings is another difference between the culture of Arab Muslim students and New Zealand culture (Witteborn, 2004). Value and cultural differences made it difficult for participants to practise and maintain their identity and to conform to their Islamic moral code in a Western context, resulting in an experience of isolation (Bigelow, 2008; Karim-Tessem, 2008; Mohammed-Arif, 2000). However, both universities and homestays might be able to alleviate some of the difficulties caused by these issues by recognising and comprehending *Ramadan* and other religious practices, in order to accommodate, support, and care about Muslim student needs. Establishing a club or support group through an international student office can be a good strategy to help Arab students deal with homesickness and culture shock and to introduce them to local students (McDermott-Levy, 2008). Experiencing a supportive environment with a family also provides a high sense of belonging and facilitates positive intercultural communication (Britto, 2007; Mehdizadeh & Scott, 2005).

Both participants and homestay families need to work together to create a positive environment that allows them to consider issues of identity in a way that results in promoting positive interaction and communication. Ho et al. (2007) suggested that both homestays and international students need much information and better preparation in order to manage any challenges that arise because of cultural differences. Bahiss (2008) found that by communicating an accurate

understanding of their cultural and religious requirements, female Muslim students were able to achieve a good relationship with their teachers and fellow students in New Zealand.

7.3.3 Implications for the New Zealand Government and Policy Makers

New Zealand is recognised as one of the top providers in the international education industry (Campbell, 2012). Over the last decade, however, the country has experienced a decrease in the number of international students (Budde-Sung, 2011). A number of New Zealand studies have investigated this issue and have focused on international students' experiences, needs, and expectations, and how they may affect international students' selection of the country (Bailey, 2009; Baker, Isaac, Li, & Marshall, 2005; Butcher & McGrath, 2004; Deloitte, 2008; Li, Baker, & Marshall, 2002; Skyrme, 2008; Ward & Masgoret, 2004). A campaign has been conducted in New Zealand to market its quality of education and actively attract more international students, and it appears to be working (Budde-Sung, 2011). The New Zealand educational industry needs to pay greater attention to campaigns like the one mentioned to attract more international students, such as those from the Arabian Gulf. There is a need for the presentation to potential students of simple, general information about the country, and the active marketing of New Zealand education in order to compete against other strong, English-speaking competitors.

Participants' social, cultural, and religious expectations of New Zealand universities must be acknowledged. New Zealand is known as a multicultural society that has attracted a significant number of cultural, ethnic, and religious minorities (Kolig, 2006b; Singham, 2006). The country has also become an attractive destination for a diverse range of international students and has paid a considerable amount of attention to the international education sector (Budde-Sung, 2011). The Arabian Gulf region can be a large potential educational market for New Zealand universities and the New Zealand government has recently attempted to attract students from Middle Eastern countries (Martens & Starke, 2008). Arab Muslim students, like other international students, enrich and contribute to the cultural diversity of New Zealand universities. For New Zealand's educational future, dealing with diverse students such as Arab Muslims

is critical and need to be well understood (Bahiss, 2008; Singham, 2006). Much more learning about others is necessary in order to live together (Abukhattala, 2004).

Thus, increasing international students in New Zealand requires explaining the role of multicultural education by establishing policies that deal with international students. For example, New Zealand recognises cultural minorities, and the Arab Muslim community benefits from these policies and practices (Kolig, 2006b). These policies should be more focused to appreciate diverse perspectives by acknowledging diverse students, valuing diversity, and providing equal access to all students (Mansouri, 2004). The country should also work to advocate and acknowledge the concept of multiculturalism with an emphasis on integration rather than assimilation (Kolig, 2006b; Kolig & Kabir, 2008).

For example, in its multiculturalism policy with regard to Muslims, the New Zealand government might need to mention issues Muslims have with adjustment and integration, and their roles in the New Zealand community (Kolig, 2005). In its religious and cultural freedom policy, it should also recognise the increasing diversification of the Muslim community and the main issues that might appear as a result of this diversity (Kolig, 2006a). New Zealanders do recognise the Muslim community by allowing them to build mosques and arrange their Islamic activities and by respecting Muslim women's right to wear their Islamic dress. However, more cooperation between the New Zealand government and the Muslim community can be a good strategy to mitigate any issues. For example, the government might cooperate with the Muslim community to expand the idea of Islamic Awareness Week and interethnic activities, which aim to inform New Zealanders about Muslim values and beliefs and show their religion in a positive way, in order to promote the community and its acceptance among New Zealanders (Islam Awareness Week, 2013).

7.3.4 Implications for Future Arab Muslim Students

This study identified the main challenges that Arab Muslim students encounter in their interaction and communication with others because of their cultural and religious identities. One of the main challenges was to achieve a balance between

maintaining their own values and norms, and simultaneously integrating and interacting with others who hold different values and norms. A number of negotiated strategies were adopted by Arab Muslim students and these seemed to be effective. Future students from Arabian Gulf countries can benefit from this study by understanding difficulties they might experience in the host culture, and by taking advantage of successful strategies developed and identified by this group of participants to manage these difficulties.

7.3.4.1 Maintaining Cultural/Religious Identity

The study revealed strategies that were developed by Arab students to manage any issues caused by cultural and religious differences and to promote opportunities for interaction and communication with others. First, female participants used a number of strategies to negotiate their parents' acceptance of study abroad. These strategies involved choosing good companionship and obtaining advice from close relatives and friends. This advice assured parents that the new country was a safe environment for their children and would allow them to retain their own values and practices. Future Arab Muslim female students who might have to negotiate their parents' acceptance of study abroad can also use these strategies.

Second, developing friendships with host and international students was an expectation for male Arab Muslim students. However, they found that three main factors—lack of English proficiency, socialising with their conational peers, and cultural and religious differences—inhibited them from achieving this expectation. Future Arab students who desire to have cross-cultural friendships must develop their English skills because English proficiency will enable them to communicate effectively and promote opportunities for social interactions and relationships. They should also minimise their interaction with conational students and increase their contact with other students.

However, minimising interaction with in-group students does not mean refusing to be involved in their own social activities, as these also play a significant role in mitigating culture shock and retaining students' own cultural and religious values. Both male and female participants encountered culture shock. They felt homesick because they missed their families and their own social and religious values.

Keeping contact with families and friends and associating with their own group of students were useful strategies to manage homesickness. Importantly, retaining religious identity by praying on time and reading the *Qur'an* was found to be a positive factor that helped participants mitigate cultural differences and obtain a sense of satisfaction. These tactics can be used by future Arab students to mitigate the stress effects of being in a different culture and feeling the loss of social and spiritual communion.

Third, consuming alcohol, displaying affection, and immodesty of dress were the main issues that shocked Arab Muslim students. Although the first two issues were reported by both male and female participants, the issue of immodesty was mostly reported by males. However, participants applied active and passive strategies to manage these issues. Changing homestays or requesting host family members to wear modest dress were two active strategies to manage the issue of drinking alcohol and immodesty. Although reluctance to engage with host people might detract from participants' interaction and communication with others, participants did use the strategy of avoidance. This strategy involved avoiding sitting with those who drank alcohol, but only when they were drinking. These proactive and passive strategies can also be applied by future Arab students when studying in the West.

Finally, being in a multicultural society was an important factor that allowed participants to retain their cultural and religious values and practices. Thus, future Arab students should consider studying in a country that respects cultural diversity, acknowledges other identities, and allows religious freedom. These positive aspects will facilitate their intercultural communication opportunities with others. Along with these features, Arab students are encouraged to promote their interaction with others by implementing the strategy of giving presents and greeting with a smile.

7.3.4.2 Developing Two Identities

The study revealed that working with the opposite sex and participating in university social activities were critical factors that might inhibit or promote Arab students' intercultural communication with others. Future Arab students might

benefit from interaction guidelines that were developed by participants to mediate between their own values and those of the dominant culture with regard to the norm of mixed gender. Interaction guidelines allow Arab students to interact and communicate with the opposite sex but require them to establish a personal space by avoiding physical touch, not sitting too close, and avoiding sitting on the same side of a table or desk.

Arab students listed a number of issues that affected their social contributions and minimised their interaction and communication with others. These include the consumption of alcohol, the unavailability of *halal* food, immodest dress, and physical contact between the sexes. Future Arab students can also use strategies that facilitate their involvement in social activities without compromising their own values. They can benefit from new standards of social interaction that were adopted by participants. These standards allow participating in academic and general discussions, fun and voluntary activities, and taking part in any university activities that do not include touching, dancing, mixing, or immodest behaviour.

For future Arab female students, the purpose of wearing *hijab* might not be fully understood by non-Muslims in the new culture. They might also encounter people who hold negative views of Muslim women and their dress. One good strategy is to interact with those people, inform them and explain one's own values and norms by giving presentations. The strategy of designing a new style of dress might also be a good tactic that future Arab Muslim women can adopt in the new culture in order to be seen as "normal" and to fit in with the new culture. The criteria for this new style must combine Islamic requirements for women's dress and new cultural styles.

The findings also indicated that experienced students seemed to cope better with cultural and religious issues by applying a variety of strategies. This finding may suggest that there was a developmental shift in understanding new cultural norms and values. The main strategies involved searching for new Islamic interpretations, purifying Islamic values from traditional customs, and being aware of Islamic values by practising them in daily life.

7.4 Research Limitations

Several limitations of the study need to be acknowledged in interpreting the results. One important limitation lies in the gender imbalance: the sample consisting of 32 males and 13 females. It is possible that the gender of the researcher as a male was a deterrent restricting potential female students from participating in this study. This issue was also found in previous studies where the researcher's gender restricted access to opposite sex participants (Britto & Amer, 2007; Zine, 1997). Given the dominance of male participants, the findings might be gender-biased as cultural identity is affected by gender influences (Britto & Amer, 2007) and it tends to differ for Arab Muslim men and women (Ajrouch, 2004).

In addition, some female participants did not feel comfortable discussing sensitive questions with me as a male. Two female participants mentioned this concern to my wife and indicated that they had to modify certain responses. Despite the enhanced confidentiality provided, it seemed that women were very concerned and did not feel sufficiently secure to provide any personal answers which they thought might allow them to be identified. Generally, Arabs place high value on their privacy and prefer not to share personal matters with strangers (McDermott-Levy, 2011; Zine, 1997).

The second limitation of this study is brevity of responses. This limitation might be the result of a lack of detailed responses by participants. Phenomenological research is interested in understanding individuals' experiences in a particular context by providing an opportunity for participants to describe these experiences from their own perspectives (Willig, 2001). Participants were encouraged to elaborate to provide as much detail about their experience as possible. However, they were free to give short answers and that possibility may have significantly affected the quality of the research. For example, there were certain complicated situations regarding the experiences of both male and female participants in interacting with non-Muslims in New Zealand. These situations involved restyling their clothes while staying in New Zealand, attending social parties or other events where there might be alcohol, and having friends from the opposite sex.

These issues may affect participants' faith and that might be a reason for refusing to answer particular questions or for giving short responses.

The third and final possible limitation of this study is connected with my position as an insider. I too am an Arab Muslim international student who has encountered a number of issues in studying and living in New Zealand. In addition, I have both a bachelor's and master's degree in Islamic Education. This background, together with my understanding of Islamic and cultural views in responding to specific issues, may lead me to interpret the data in a certain way. While it is difficult to eliminate my own subjectivity in interpreting data, I have tried to maintain sufficient critical awareness to assist me in avoiding pathologising or mythologising these interpretations, and also in limiting my interpretation of participants' stories in a mainstream context. Each study may contain the possibility of alternative interpretations (Janesick, 2000; Willig, 2001).

7.5 Future Study

The study suggests a number of potentially rich areas and avenues for future research. First, anxiety, stress, and culture shock were associated with limitations of intercultural contact which is a crucial topic that needs to be further examined to understand in depth how culture shock might shape and frame the cultural identity of Arab Muslim students. Participants also mentioned that host students tended to isolate themselves from them and preferred to work with students from their own culture. It is advisable to investigate this issue by capturing the perceptions, experiences, and attitudes of New Zealand students to Arab Muslim students at universities, and understanding the difficulties that the host students face while interacting and communicating with Arab students. Such research may complement the findings of this research, and be used to carry out further investigation and provide insight into this phenomenon among host-culture students.

Second, one of the study's limitations is the lack of detailed and probing responses on the part of female participants because the researcher is a man. Although the ethics committee allowed for the interviews with women to be conducted by a female interviewer, female participants did not request one.

Accordingly, conducting a study to investigate the intercultural communication of Arab Muslim female students by an Arab Muslim woman would be appropriate for discussing any sensitive issues that Arab women face while studying and interacting in the dominant culture. As there were only 13 female participants in the study, it would also be valuable to see if gender plays a role in the construction of identity in an intercultural communication context. These women seemed to experience a process of negotiation and navigation between home and host values which resulted in redefining concepts of gender roles, being alone, segregation of the sexes, freedom, *hijab*, and dress. It would be valuable to carry out a phenomenological study of women's reentry experiences after they return to their home countries. Research needs to focus on whether these women are willing to implement new understandings of these concepts and whether changes in these concepts cause tension among Arab women when they return and interact with their families and surroundings in the home environment.

Third, the role of the length of residency can be another avenue for future research. Over time, participants began showing a tendency to renegotiate and reconstruct their cultural identity in order to adjust to the dominant culture and to promote their integration with others. The tendency to question and critique their own norms was explained by the desire to promote the purification of Islam. Since all the participants had been in New Zealand for less than 7 years, it would be interesting to carry out a study among those who have spent longer periods of time there, to understand their experience of renegotiation and reconstruction of cultural identity, how they would view their cultural identity in the host culture, and how they would experience their new cultural identity in the home culture.

Fourth, structural dimensions of signification, domination, and legitimation operate through Arab Muslim students and New Zealand universities, and these three dimensions play a critical role in the identity negotiation process. This integrative framework encourages communication researchers to rethink identity research along the lines of the structurational approach. This study does not claim to have provided a full empirical exemplification of the theory; rather, it is an attempt to apply some concepts drawn from structuration theory to examine a

particular phenomenon. Healey (2006) indicated that researchers have not widely used the theory in empirical exemplification research.

By applying structuration theory to understanding the university's influences on student identities, it is "hoped that individual and group agency would be enabled to challenge and change existing structures of domination and legitimation in schools so that learning benefits all students rather than a select few" (Naidoo, 2009, p. 49). A particular question that needs to be asked is how "actors draw upon the institutional contexts in which they are embedded to effect change in those contexts" (Jarzabkowski, 2008, p. 642).

7.6 Conclusion Summary

The study set out to examine the intercultural communication experiences of Arab Muslim students in New Zealand and how these experiences affected and were affected by their cultural and religious identities. Forty five male and female participants were interviewed in depth to relate in their own voices the stories of their interaction and communication experiences. Cultural and religious identities shaped participants who intended to study overseas and moulded their expectations. The negotiation of power between participants wanting to retain their own values and universities seeking to pass on their norms indicated that organisations play a critical role in influencing individuals' identities. Using both human and nonhuman resources advantaged universities in exercising power over participants and constraining them to renegotiate and reconstruct their own values to obtain social inclusion.

Encountering a new culture that holds contradictory norms and values can lead to culture shock and isolation for some participants. In order to mitigate culture shock and to achieve integration, participants had to reconsider and reinterpret their own norms and values. This reflection helped participants to modify some of their own values and to adopt dominant norms, which ultimately resulted in constructing a new identity. In general, the experience of Arab Muslim students in interacting and communicating with others indicates that participants' cultural and religious identities were reconstructed in the New Zealand intercultural

communication context in order to manage daily activities in this dominant culture.

Conducting an in-depth phenomenological study that examined Arab Muslim students in their intercultural communication experiences led me to some personal reflections. First, recruiting and accessing participants required much time and effort. Being from the same country or culture is not always an advantage for the researcher to recruit participants, as I had a difficulty recruiting female participants. Second, I did expect that being in a Western country would influence student identities, but I had not expected that students would also make a significant contribution to this influence by taking action on certain occasions to communicate their religious and cultural needs.

Third, the computer software, NVivo, was used as a management tool to analyse interviews. The software was very useful in dealing with the large amount of data that emerged from students' and administrative participants' transcriptions and university documents. It was an invaluable tool that allowed for reading and rereading texts in order to create nodes, allocating these nodes into codes, creating categories, and then establishing themes. An important shortcoming of the software was its inability to show full Arabic texts when importing the texts from codes in order to interpret participants' stories. This issue was managed by copying texts and then pasting them into a Word document.

Fourth, reporting qualitative findings was a major issue I struggled with as it was my first experience in conducting a qualitative study. A qualitative study accepts a variety of interpretations and organisational structures. By reading books describing qualitative research, examining previous studies, and seeking advice from my supervisors, I was able to manage this issue. I tried to provide an adequate description of the phenomena and attempted to give quotations that represented the gist of participants' experiences.

Finally, reflecting on this study, it was a good decision to interview newly-arrived Arab students twice in order to understand and document how their experiences changed over time. To discover their perspectives regarding religious and cultural issues, I wish I had been able to include all participants for a second interview and

also some Arab students who had finished their studies and returned home. However, that opportunity may still arise as I could include them in future studies research. Each time I read my study's findings, two main issues come to mind. First, being Arab Muslim students in a Western country means encountering cultural differences that limit their intercultural communication opportunities and minimise integration. Second, there is a need for a religious advisor to help Arab Muslim students deal with any religious and cultural issues they might encounter in a Western country.

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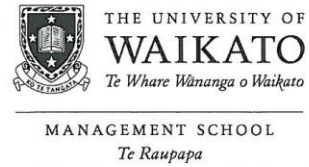
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List of Appendices

Appendix 1: Ethical Approval

Research Office
Waikato Management School
The University of Waikato
Private Bag 3105
Hamilton 3240
New Zealand

Amanda Sircombe
Research Manager
Phone +64 7 838 4376
Fax +64 7 838 4063
Email amandas@waikato.ac.nz
www.management.ac.nz



19th May 2010

Mohammed Al Kharusi
17/46 Peachgrove Road
Hamilton

Dear Mohammed

*Ethical Application WMS 10/55
The Intercultural Communication Experiences of Arab Muslims students in a New Zealand
University*

As per Professor McIntosh's earlier email the above research project, as outlined in your application, has been granted Ethical Approval for Research, by the Waikato Management School Ethics Committee.

Please note: should you make changes to the project outlined in the approved ethics application, you may need to reapply for ethics approval.

Best wishes for your research

Regards,



Amanda Sircombe
Research Manager

Waikato Management School

Te Raupapa



- **The purpose of the research**

For my doctoral study, I aim to investigate the intercultural communication experiences of Arab Muslim students in New Zealand. The main objectives of this study involve:

- To explore the extent to which cultural and Islamic identities, and religious belief impact everyday communication with non-Muslims in both the university and community contexts; and
- To investigate the extent to which Arab Muslim students (re)construct and (re) negotiate their religious, cultural (and other) identities.
- To explore the extent to which Arab Muslim students adopt communication practices in their everyday interactions that may lead to acceptance or exclusion.
- To reveal the influence of Arab Muslim students' identification with New Zealand universities in constructing these students' experiences;
- To explore the extent to which New Zealand universities' structures and communication practices (processes) influence the negotiation process of Arab Muslim students' cultural and religious identities; and
- To investigate the New Zealand universities' role in meeting and managing Arab Muslim students' expectations in academic and social contexts.

- **Who is associated with the research:**

I am Mohammed Alkharusi, a doctoral research student in the Management School at Waikato University, and my supervisors, Nittaya Campbell, Ted Zorn and Michele Orgad are associated within this study.

You can contact me through:

My office phone 07 8384 957 or my mobile phone 0212129634

My email mjma1@students.waikato.ac.nz or mohdjm22@yahoo.com

You can also contact either of my supervisors:

Dr Nittaya Campbell	07-838-6281	nittaya@waikato.ac.nz
Prof. Ted Zorn	07-838-4776	tzorn@waikato.ac.nz
Dr Michele Orgad	07-838-6117	morgad@mngt.waikato.ac.nz

- **What will you have to do in this study and how long will it take?**

Participants in this study can participate if they are from different Gulf States, speak Arabic as a native language and are Muslim students. Two groups of participants will be interviewed by the researcher on the topic outlined above. The first group is students who have more experience in living and studying in NZ and they will be interviewed once. The second group is new students who just arrive in NZ and they will be interviewed twice. The first around when they arrive and the second one is in 8-10 months. Arabic Language will be used in all these three rounds. Each interview will be recorded and each will take approximately one and a half hours.

- **What will happen to material collected from you?**

The data collected from the interviews will be used for the purpose of writing my PhD thesis. It will also be used in preparing presentations for national and international conferences, in writing articles for publication in relevant journals, and in writing books. No one will listen to the interviews and read the transcripts except my supervisors and me.

No participants, their nationalities and universities will be named in any research output. Instead, participants will be allowed to select anonymous names (pseudonyms) and these names will be used in all publications. Any third parties will also be asked to keep the information confidential and to sign up a confidential statement. The interviews tapes and transcripts will be kept secure in

my office and on my laptop computer, which both required passwords to access. Interview tapes, notes, transcripts and other confidential material will be disposed of carefully five years after the study. I will need to keep these in case I need to refer to them in subsequent publications after the study has been completed.

- **How to opt out (name a specific date for participants to opt out)**

Participants have the right to withdraw from the study within 30 days of the interviews taking place.

- **How to get more information**

Participants will have the right to ask any further questions about the study any time, during their participation or after, to be given access to the data analysis and interpretation which concern them and to be given access to a summary of the research findings when it is concluded.

- **Declaration to participants**

If you take part in this study, your rights will be:

1. To refuse to answer any particular question.
2. To contact me or my supervisors about any issue regarding the interview process or research.

Appendix 3: Consent Form

Waikato Management School

Te Raupapa



THE UNIVERSITY OF
WAIKATO
Te Whare Wānanga o Waikato

The intercultural communication experiences of Arab Muslim students in New Zealand

Consent Form for Participants

I have read the Information Sheet for Participants for this study and have had the details of the study explained to me. My questions about the study have been answered to my satisfaction, and I understand that I may ask further questions at any time.

I also understand that I am free to withdraw from the study at any time during the interview process, or to decline to answer any particular questions in the study. I agree to provide information to the researchers under the conditions of confidentiality set out on the Information Sheet.

I agree to participate in this study and have my interviews recorded under the conditions set out in the Information Sheet form.

Signed: _____

Name: _____

Date: _____

Researcher's Name and contact information:

Mohammed Alkharusi, Department of Management Communication, the
Management School, at University Waikato, Hamilton, New Zealand.

Phone: office: 07- 838-4957 and mobile: 0212129634

My email mjma1@students.waikato.ac.nz or mohdjm22@yahoo.com

Supervisor's Name and contact information:

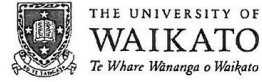
Dr Nittaya Campbell	07-838-6281	nittaya@waikato.ac.nz
Prof. Ted Zorn	07-838-4776	tzorn@waikato.ac.nz
Dr Michele Orgad	07-838-6117	morgad@mngt.waikato.ac.nz

All my supervisors work in the Department of Management Communication,
Waikato Management School, University of Waikato, Hamilton, New Zealand.

Appendix 4: Confidentiality Agreement

Confidentiality agreement

Waikato Management School
Te Raupapa



I am a third party transcribing interviews for the research project "Intercultural Communication Experiences of Arab Muslim Students in New Zealand Universities" conducted by Mohammed Al Kharusi. I understand that the information I will have access to is confidential and I undertake to ensure that it remains so. Therefore, I will listen to these interviews and transcribe them but will not disclose any of the information to anyone else or discuss it with anyone other than the researcher. I also understand that this confidentiality agreement applies not only while I am transcribing but also after the transcription process has been completed.

I confirm that I agree to adhere to the above confidentiality statement.

Name: *Leuna K. Millar*

Contact details: *06-3482122 / 027 789 4928*

Signature: *L.K. Millar*

Date: *26.5.11*

Appendix 5: Email to the Presidents and the Invitation Form

Waikato Management School

Te Raupapa



THE UNIVERSITY OF
WAIKATO
Te Whare Wānanga o Waikato

المحترم

بمدينة

الفاضل رئيس جمعية الطلبة

السلام عليكم ورحمة الله وبركاته

الموضوع/ التسهيل للقيام بالبحث

فأنا محمد الخروصي طالب دكتوراة في تخصص الإتصال الإداري بجامعة وكتاتوا. أقوم حاليا بإجراء دراسة عن خبرات التواصل الثقافي للطلاب العرب المسلمين في نيوزلندا. ولأجل تحقيق هدف الدراسة سأقوم بمقابلة الطلاب والطالبات من الدول العربية والذين يدرسون في الجامعات النيوزلندية سواء حاليا في مرحلة دراسة اللغة أو في دراسة التخصص بالجامعة. أتقدم بطلبي هذا تكريما منكم بالقيام بتسهيل مهمتي البحثية من خلال إرسال دعوة المشاركة في الدراسة لجميع الطلاب والطالبات الأعضاء في ناديكم الكريم.

بالرجاء التكرم بإبلاغ الأعضاء في حالة رغبتهم بالمشاركة، بالتواصل معي مباشرة من خلال إيميلي أو الهاتف كما هو موضح في الرسالة المرفقه.

ملاحظة/ يوجد دعوة خاصة للطلاب، ودعوة أخرى للطالبات والتي بها وسائل الإتصال بزوجتي في حالة رغبة الطالبة التواصل معها مباشرة. أرجو التنبيه لهذا الأمر عند إرسال الدعوة.

وتقبلوا فائق الإحترام والتقدير

محمد الخروصي

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Waikato Management School

Te Raupapa



THE UNIVERSITY OF
WAIKATO
Te Whare Wānanga o Waikato

أعزكم الله

أختي الطالبة/

السلام عليكم ورحمة الله وبركاته

فأنا محمد الخروصي طالب دكتوراة في تخصص الإتصال الإداري بجامعة ويكاتوا، وأقوم حاليا بإجراء بحث عن خبرات التواصل الثقافي للطلاب الخليجين (الذكور، والإناث) في نيوزلندا. إن الهدف الأساسي لهذا البحث هو معرفة الخبرات والصعوبات التي يواجهها الطلاب (الذكور، والإناث) من خلال تفاعلهم وتواصلهم مع غير المسلمين في نيوزلند (سواء داخل الجامعات، أو في المجتمع المحلي)، ومعرفة مدى تأثير ، وتأثير هذه الخبرات بالهوية الإسلامية والثقافية. مشاركتك الثمينة والقيمة في هذا البحث ستكون محل تقدير وإعتراف بالغ من قبلي لأنها سوف تسهم بشكل فاعل في معرفة الخبرات التي تواجهها الطالبات العربيات المسلمات في المجتمع النيوزلندي، وستساعدك أيضا في معرفة خبراتك الذاتية التي تواجهك في تفاعل مع غير المسلمين.

سأكون بالغ الإمتنان لمشاركتك في هذا البحث، ولذا بالرجاء التكرم في حالة موافقتكم بالمشاركة بالتواصل مع زوجتي ، ليتم تزويدكم - سواء عن طريق الإيميل أو مقابلتكم شخصيا حسب الطريقة التي تفضلونها - بصورة تفصيلية عن موضوع الدراسة وأهدافها، وطريقة التعامل مع المعلومات التي ستدلون بها، والإجراءات المتبعة التي تحفظ لكم خصوصية عدم التعرف عليكم، و الحفاظ على المعلومات التي ستدلون بها. مع العلم بأنه سوف يتم مقابلتكم من قبل زوجتي مرة واحدة للطالبات اللاتي لديهن خبرة في نيوزلند ومرتين الآن وبعد ثمانية أشهر للطالبات الجدد اللاتي وصلن نيوزلند قريبا ، مع ملاحظة أن المقابلة ستكون باللغة العربية وفي حدود الأربعين دقيقة .

وتقبلوا فانق الإجلال والإحترام

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Appendix 6: Pilot Study Questions

The intercultural communication experiences of Arab Muslim students

in New Zealand

A pilot study (interview)

Basic information:

1. Interview name:.....
2. The interview date:.....
3. The length time of interview:.....
4. The interviewee's gender male female
5. Other people attend the interview:

Notes:

This pilot study contains three main parts: introduction, interview questions and closing the interview.

Introduction:

In this pre-interview stage, I will aim to:

- Introduce myself as an interviewer and present my name and my role.
- Explain why I chose the participant to participate in this study.
- Explain the goals of this study (information sheet).
- Assure confidentiality.
- Assure participants that I will not judge their answers
- Inform the participant that the interview will be recorded
- Discuss the consent form and have the participants sign it.
- Thank participant.
- Then, we turn on the tape recorder and test it together

Interview questions:

The interview contains four main parts with subtopics:

1. Demographic questions:

- Where do you come from?
- What is your highest educational qualification before coming to New Zealand?
- How old are you?
 < 20 20 – 24 25 – 29 30 – 34 35 – 40 > 40
- Are you married?
- Can you tell me your story about coming to NZ?
- Are you here alone or with your family? If with family, which family members do you have living with you?
- Did you have any information about New Zealand before coming? What kind of information did you have? Where did you get this information from?
- Where do you live in New Zealand? E.g. In a homestay, hall of residence, a house with your family, a flat with friends or other?
- How long have you been in New Zealand?
- How long have you been at your university?
- What are you studying?

2. Communication and interaction with non-Muslims in a community context:

2.1 Living with non-Muslims:

As you said that you live with

1. How would you describe yourself here?
2. Do you think that your identity as an Arab Muslim and your gender affect your interaction and communication with others? How? Any difficulties? How did you manage these difficulties? Did you feel successful? Why/why not?
3. Tell me about the most significant experience you have had since living in NZ (e.g. with a home stay family, flatting with non-Muslims, meeting with/talking to non-Muslims etc.) Why was it significant? What effect did it have on how you felt about yourself and how you felt about interacting with other non-Muslims in NZ? Have you changed anything about your way of communicating/behaving as a result of this experience?
4. If you do not have any experience of living with non-Muslims, why not? What are reasons for choosing not to live with non-Muslims? Do you think that your Islamic, cultural and gender identities determine your decision to live with others? In what way?

2.2 Socialising with non-Muslims (people) in the community

1. Do you try to improve your English? How? (E.g. having friends, attending night clubs or social events)? Are you concerned about your gender, and Islamic identity and cultural identity in preferring ways of improving your English? Why? How can you manage that? Are there some behaviours, ways of communicating or values that you need to change to achieve this goal? How have these situations helped (if at all)? Have they influenced how you communicate/interact with other Muslims? What about with non-Muslims?
2. Are you keen to make friends with other people in NZ (e.g., non-Muslims from other countries, and NZ people)? Why/why not? How easy is it to make new friends? What friends have you made since living in NZ? How did you make these friends? What happened? Who said what? How did you respond? Have these friendships made you feel any different about yourself?

3. More specifically, if you have opposite sex-friends, is it easy to build these friendship? Why/ why not? How do you describe these relationships in terms of your Islamic values? Are there some behaviours, ways of communicating, values that you need to change or compromise to accommodate these friendships? What things, if any, have you changed? Do you think it is good or bad to have to make these accommodations? (Explain, if possible.)

2.3 Integrating with NZ culture

1. Have you ever attended NZ national or religious celebrations or other social activities either alone or with others? What are these activities? What happened? How did you feel? Do you think that your gender affects how you behave and interact where attending these activities? How would you describe these activities in terms of your Islamic and cultural values? Are there any differences? If yes, how did you manage these situations? Have these activities influenced your communication and interaction with others? In what ways?
2. Have you joined any social and cultural clubs? How easy is this? What difference does it make to your life/to how you see yourself/to how you see non-Muslims/to how you see your fellow Muslims? Have these situations/events changed how you communicate/interact?
3. Do you read NZ newspapers or watch NZ TV? Why or why not? What impact have these things had on you (if at all)? What do you think about what you read or see in the media? Explain why you feel the way you do.

3. Studying in NZ universities:

3.1 The expectations of Arab Muslim students of NZ universities

1. What messages did you receive that attract you to study in NZ universities? Do you think that these messages particularly target Arab Muslim students?
2. What were your expectations before coming to NZ universities? What were the main sources of these expectations?
3. Have these expectations been met? If yes, give examples. If, not, why not? Did that affect your perceptions about these organisations? How?
4. Have you tried to inform your faculty or university about your expectations, which have not been matched? How? What happened? Any

change? Did that affect your perceptions about these organisations? How? Please give examples.

5. To what extent do you think that the educational system differences play a significant influence in achieving your expectations in NZ universities?
6. To what extent do you think that your Islamic and cultural identities play a significant influence in achieving your expectations in NZ universities?

3.2 Communication and interaction with non-Muslims in an academic context

1. Can you remember your first significant experience since coming to university to study? What happened? Why was it significant? How did you deal with it? What impact did it have on how you feel/felt about yourself?
2. How do you find the learning environment here where you are studying? What things do you enjoy? What things do you find challenging? What changes – if any- have you had to make in the ways you communicate? In the ways you behave? Interact? What would you like to see changed? Why? Do you think that this environment enhances your interaction and communication with others? In what ways? Please give examples. If not, why not?
3. Can you think of a positive communication experience you have had on campus (e.g., with an academic staff member, an administrator, a fellow student, etc.)? What happened? What was the outcome? Did it somehow make you think differently about how you communicate and/or behave with people like that/with people generally? Why? Do you now communicate/ behave differently in similar contexts? (Why? why not?)
4. What about a negative experience? Explain.

3.3 Arab Muslim students' identification with NZ universities

1. How do you think that your university manages the presence of Arab Muslim students? (E.g. respecting Islamic values and beliefs, understanding these students' identities, allowing them to maintain and sustain their religious and cultural identity and meeting their Islamic needs? Can you give examples? Did that affect your perceptions about these organisations? How? Why?
2. Do you think that academic and administrative staff behave/ react/ communicate/interact differently towards you because you are an Arab

Muslim? Why? Can you give me examples? Did that affect your perceptions about these organisations? How? Why?

3. Do your lecturers attempt to encourage students from different nationalities to work together? How? Have you participated in these activities? Why? Why not? How would you describe your participation in terms of your Islamic and cultural identities? How do you think that these activities influence your identities, and interaction and communication with non-Muslims? In which ways? What would like to see changed? Why?
4. Tell me a story about your experiences in working with mixed students, working with the opposite sex, communicating with the opposite sex. In what ways, if at all, do you find these situations challenging? How did you manage them? To what extent do you think that these activities affect and are affected by your communication and interaction with others, and your own identities. How? What strategies do you adopt to manage these types of situations?
5. Tell me how the university's activities attract students and others on campus to come together? Have you participated in these activities? (Why? Why not?) How would you describe your participation in terms of your gender identity, and Islamic and cultural values? How do you think that these activities influence and are influenced by your cultural and religious identity, and your interaction and communication with others? In which ways? What would like to see changed? Why?
6. How would you describe your involvement to social or academic activities? What does involvement mean to you? Are you able to choose among social and learning activities that you think is consistent with your identities? What kind of activities are you interested in? Why?
7. Do you think that universities should consider Arab Muslim students when conducting learning and social activities? Why? Why not? How would you view your university when adopting these activities?
8. To what extent do you think that daily life interaction, and learning and social activities in universities affect your identities as an Arab Muslim student? How may these activities may hide certain identities and signify others?

9. Have you experienced any challenge/clash with NZ universities' practices because of your Islamic identity? What happened? To what extent do you think that these challenges affect your identity? How did you manage these situations? Did that influence your perceptions about these organisations? If yes? In what way?
10. Specifically, describe your participation in parties, social events or places in universities that certain behaviours or activities are prohibited according to your Islamic religion and cultural values. How would you accommodate that? How do Islamic values and ethics encourage or discourage your participation? To what extent do you think that these practices affect your Islamic and culture identity? Did that affect your perceptions about these organisations? How? Why?
11. Do you find that being Muslim influences how you communicate with non-Muslims? Give an example (or two). Can you think of some situations that made you feel good about yourself? Were there any situations that made you lose confidence in how you communicate or act? Did you change your communication or behaviour as a consequence? (Why/why not?). **(this 11 and 12 questions answer second question)**
12. Have you adopted new practices (e.g. how to dress/communicate and speak/ behave) in any way since studying in NZ universities? If yes, explain, with examples. What are the main motivations behind this? Have you achieved these motivations? If no, why not? To what extent do you think that NZ universities influence you to adopt these practices? Did that affect your own Islamic and cultural identities? If yes, explain? If no, why not? Are you concern about you Islamic and cultural identity when conducting these practices?
13. How would you respond/react if someone talked positively or negatively about your university?

4. Communication and interaction with non-Muslims with regard to Islamic and cultural identities:

4.1 How Arab Muslims are treated by others

1. Do you feel that it is challenging to be a Muslim (to retain your Muslim identity) living here in NZ? Explain and give examples. Have you tried to

manage that? What were the results? How did that affect your interaction and communication with people in NZ?

2. Do you think that people behave/ communicate/react differently towards you because you are a Muslim? Why? Can you give me examples? How does that affect your interaction and communication with them or with others?

4.2 Maintaining and retaining Islamic and cultural identities

1. Thinking about when you are in a situation with other people from different backgrounds and religions, does your identity as a Muslim guide your interaction and communication with others? How? Is it easy to be Muslim in these situations? Why/why not?
2. Have there been times when you have needed to adjust your Muslim identity/beliefs? Why? How did you feel about that? Have those reconstructions remained, or not?
3. Are there times when you ignore or negate your Islamic and cultural values and identity? Why do you do this? How do you evaluate this situation?
4. Have you re-styled your clothing or appearance in any way since living here? If yes, how? What are the main motivations behind this? Have you achieved these motivations? If no, why not?
5. Do you preserve and maintain your Islamic morality, principles and ethics while living in NZ? If yes, what are the main reasons? If no, why not? To what extent do you think that living here affects your views regarding these things? In what ways?
6. Has your time in NZ influenced your perceptions about your Islamic and cultural Identity? Explain, with examples? Does that affect the way you communicate and interact with non-Muslims? In what ways.
7. Are there some things about being Muslim that you have noticed now that you hadn't noticed in the past? What are these? Why did they come to your attention? Are these things that you value and want to keep? Or would you like to change them?

Closing the interview

- Is there anything else you would like to add about your experiences of living and studying in New Zealand?

- Is there anything you would like to ask (about the interview/the questions/the process)?

Thank you for participating in this interview. I will contact you again when I've transcribed the interviews and ask you to check over my transcription and translation. I will follow up with a second interview in about four months at your convenience.

Appendix 7: Students' Interview Questions

The intercultural communication experiences of Arab Muslim students in New Zealand (English version)

Basic information:

6. Interviewee's name:.....
7. The interviewee's gender male female
8. The interview date:.....
9. The interview's location.....
10. The interview's length of time:.....
11. Other people attended the interview:

This interview contains three main parts: introduction, interview questions and closing the interview.

Introduction:

In this pre-interview stage, I will aim to:

- Introduce myself as an interviewer and present my name and my role.
- Explain why I chose the participant to participate in this study.
- Explain the goals of this study (information sheet).
- Assure confidentiality.
- Assure participants that I will not judge them through their answers.
- Inform the participant that the interview will be recorded.
- Discuss the consent form and have the participants sign it.
- Thank participant.
- Then, we turn on the tape recorder and test it together.

Interview questions:

The interview contains four main parts with subtopics:

1. Demographic questions:

1. Where do you come from?
2. How old are you?
 - a. < 20 20 – 24 25 – 29 30 – 34 35 – 40 > 40
3. Are you married?
4. What is your highest educational qualification before coming to

New Zealand?

5. What kind of information did you have about New Zealand before coming?
Where did you get this information from?
6. Are you here alone or with your family? If with family, which family members do you have living with you?
7. Where do you live in New Zealand? E.g. In a homestay, hall of residence, a house with your family, a flat with friends or other?
8. Tell me the story of your coming to New Zealand?
9. How long have you been in New Zealand?
10. How long have you been at your university?
11. What are you studying?

2. Students' communication and interaction experiences

2.1 On campus experiences

2.2 .1 Learning and teaching experiences

1. Describe your experience in the learning environment while attending classes.

Probe as needed by asking:

- What things did you like?
 - What challenges did you have?
 - How did you accommodate these situations?
1. Tell me your experience in working with different nationalities and genders.

Probe as needed by asking:

- What circumstances led to the interaction?
- What things did you like?
- What challenges did you face?
- How did you cope with these challenges?
- What were your feelings in these situations?

2.2.2 Socialising experiences

1. Tell me about your experience in socialising with others on campus.

Probe as needed by asking:

- What circumstances led to the socialisation?
- Who involved in these events?
- What kind of activities did you do?
- What things did you like?
- What challenges did you have?
- How did you cope with these challenges?
- To what extent do you think that your participation in these activities affects how you see yourself/ how you behave and how you communicate with others?
- (For female I should consider this question: if there is a social event that involves both sexes, what would you do?)

2.2 Off campus experiences

2.2.1 Living arrangement

1. Tell me your experience in finding a place to live in NZ.
2. Tell me your experience in living with NZ people or others.

Probe as needed by asking:

- What things did you like?
- What challenges did you have?
- How did you cope with these challenges?
- To what extent do you think that your experience in living with these people affects how you see yourself/ how you behave and how you communicate with others?

2.2.2 Socialising with the community

1. Tell me your experience in socialising with others in the community?

Probe as needed by asking:

- What were your main objectives?
- What kind of activities did you do?
- Who involved in these activities?
- How easy is it to participate in these activities?

- Have you established a friendship relation? Tell me about this experience.
- What were your feelings in these activities?
- What difference does this experience make to your life/to how you see yourself/to how you see non-Muslims/to how you see your fellow Muslims/ to how you communicate/interact with others?

2.2.3 Consumption of NZ media

1. Tell me about your experience in reading NZ newspapers and watch NZ TV?

Probe as needed by asking:

- What do you think about what you read or see in the media?
Explain
- What impact have these things had on you (if at all)?

3. Students' perception of NZ universities

3.1 Students' expectations of NZ universities

1. What messages did you receive that attract you to study in NZ universities?
How do you think that these messages particularly target Arab Muslim students?
2. What were your expectations before coming to NZ universities? What were the main sources of these expectations?
3. Have these expectations been met? If yes, give examples. If, not, why not?
How did you feel about that?
4. Have you tried to inform your faculty or university about your expectations, which have not been matched? How? Any change? How did you feel about that?
5. What factors do you think that that play a significant influence in achieving your expectations in NZ universities? How did you manage that?

3.2 Students' identification with NZ universities

1. Tell me how your university manages the presence of Arab Muslim students?

Probe as needed by asking:

- Have you experienced any challenge/clash while studying in your university?
 - What reasons led to this clash?
 - How did you manage these situations?
 - What were your feelings in these situations?
2. Explain to me how daily life interaction, learning and social activities in your university affect you as an Arab Muslim student?
 3. Can you think of a positive communication and interaction experience you have had on campus (e.g., with an academic staff member, an administrator)?
 4. What about a negative experience? Explain.
 5. How would you respond/react if someone talked positively about your university? What about negatively?

4. Maintaining and changing identities

1. Tell me your experience as a Muslim in New Zealand?

Probe as needed by asking:

- How do you preserve and maintain your Islamic values and practices?
 - What challenges do you face?
 - What reasons led to these challenges?
 - How do you cope with these situations?
 - How do these challenges affect you?
2. How have you adjusted your dress style if at all? (for female students)
 3. Has your time in NZ influenced your perceptions about your Islamic and cultural values? Explain, with examples? Does that affect the way you communicate, interact and behave with non-Muslims? In what ways.
 4. Are there some things about being Muslim that you have noticed now that you hadn't noticed in the past? What are these? Are these things that you value and want to keep? Or would you like to change them?

Closing the interview

- Is there anything else you would like to add about your experiences of living and studying in New Zealand?
- Is there anything you would like to ask (about the interview/the questions/the process)?

Thank you for participating in this interview. I will contact you again when I've transcribed the interviews and ask you to check over my transcription and translation. I will follow up with a second interview in about eight months at your convenience.

**The intercultural communication experiences of Arab Muslim students
in New Zealand (Arabic version)**

خبرات التواصل الثقافي للطلاب العرب المسلمين في نيوزلندا

أسئلة المقابلة

معلومات أساسية:

1. اسم المُقابل
2. جنس المُقابل □ ذكر □ أنثى
3. تاريخ المقابلة
4. مكان المقابلة
5. المدة الزمنية للمقابلة
6. أشخاص آخرون حضروا المقابلة

تتضمن هذه الدراسة الإستطلاعية على ثلاثة أجزاء رئيسية: مقدمة، أسئلة المقابلة، والخاتمة.

المقدمة:

أهدف من المقدمة إلى:

- أقدم نفسي كمقابل، أعرف باسمي والدور الذي سأقوم به.
- أوضح السبب من اختيار المُقابل للمشاركة في هذه الدراسة.
- أوضح أهداف الدراسة.
- التأكيد على الثقة.
- التأكيد على أن الهدف ليس الحكم عليهم من خلال إجاباتهم.
- أعلم المُقابل أن المقابلة سوف يتم تسجيلها.
- مناقشة استمارة الموافقة للمشاركة في الدراسة، والتوقيع عليها.
- شكر المُقابل.
- بعد ذلك ستم تشغيل جهاز التسجيل، والتأكد من صلاحيته معاً.

أسئلة المقابلة:

تتضمن أسئلة المقابلة أربعة أجزاء رئيسية والتي تتضمن جزئيات:

1. أسئلة ديمغرافية:

1. من أين أتيت؟
2. كم عمرك؟
□ < 20 □ 20 – 24 □ 25 – 29 □ 30 – 34 □ 35 – 40 □ > 40
3. هل أنت متزوج؟
4. ما أعلى شهادة علمية لديك قبل مجيئك لنيوزلند؟
5. ما نوعية المعلومات التي لديك عن نيوزلند قبل المجيء إليها؟ من أين حصلت عليها؟

6. هل أنت هنا بنفسك أو مع عائلتك؟ إذا كنت مع عائلتك، أي عضو من أعضاء العائلة يعيشون معك هنا؟
7. أين تعيش في نيوزلند؟ على سبيل المثال: مع عائلة نيوزلندية، في سكن الطلاب، في بيت مع عائلتك، في شقة مع أصدقائك، أو في مكان آخر؟
8. تحدث لي عن قصة مجيئك إلى نيوزلند؟
9. كم المدة الزمنية التي قضيتها في نيوزلند؟
10. كم المدة الزمنية التي قضيتها في جامعتك؟
11. ما التخصص الذي تدرسه؟

2. خبرات الطلاب في التواصل والتفاعل

2.1 في داخل الجامعة

2.1.1 الخبرات التعليمية والتدريسية

1. صف لي خبرتك في البيئة التعليمية التي تدرس فيها.
توجيه أسئلة إستكشافية عند الحاجة:

- ما الأشياء التي تحبها؟
 - ما التحديات التي تواجهك؟
 - كيف تتغلب على هذه التحديات؟
2. تحدث لي عن خبرتك في العمل مع طلاب وطالبات من جنسيات مختلفة.
توجيه أسئلة إستكشافية عند الحاجة:

- ما الظروف التي أدت لمثل هذا التفاعل مع الآخرين؟
- ما الأشياء التي تعجبك؟
- ما التحديات التي تواجهها في مثل هذه المواقف؟
- كيف تصرفت في مثل هذه المواقف؟
- ما شعورك في مثل هذه الظروف؟

2.1.2 الخبرات الاجتماعية:

1. تحدث لي عن خبرتك في تفاعلك الإجتماعي مع الآخرين داخل الجامعة.
توجيه أسئلة إستكشافية عند الحاجة:

- ما الظروف التي أدت لمثل هذا التفاعل؟
- من شارك في هذه التجمعات؟
- ما نوعية الأنشطة التي قمت بها؟
- ما شعورك في مثل هذه المواقف؟
- ما الأشياء التي أعجبتك؟
- ما الأشياء التي واجهتك؟

- كيف تمكنت من التغلب على هذه التحديات؟
- إلى أي حد تجد أن مشاركتك في مثل هذه المواقف تؤثر على نظرتك نحو نفسك، سلوكك، وكذلك تواصلك مع الآخرين؟
- إذا كان هناك تظاهرات وأنشطة طلابية الحضور بها مختلط فكيف يكون تفاعلك فيها؟

2.2 الخبرات خارج الجامعة

2.2.1 تنسيق أمور السكن

1. تحدث لي عن خبرتك في إيجاد سكن في نيوزلند.
 2. تحدث لي عن خبرتك في العيش مع النيوزلنديين أو أشخاص غير مسلمين. توجية أسئلة إستكشافية عند الحاجة:
- ما الأشياء التي تعجبك؟
 - ما التحديات التي تواجهك؟
 - كيف تمكنت من التغلب عليها؟
 - إلى أي حد تجد أن خبرتك في العيش مع هؤلاء الناس أثرت في نظرتك نحو نفسك، سلوكك، وكذلك تواصلك مع الآخرين؟

2.2.2 التفاعل الإجتماعي مع المجتمع

1. تحدث عن خبرتك في التفاعل الإجتماعي مع الآخرين في المجتمع. توجية أسئلة إستكشافية عند الحاجة:
- ما أهدافك الأساسية من وراء ذلك؟
 - ما نوعية الأنشطة التي قمت بها؟
 - من يشارك في هذه الأنشطة؟
 - هل من السهولة المشاركة في هذه الفعاليات؟
 - هل تمكنت من إنشاء صداقات؟ تحدث لي عن هذه الخبرة
 - ما شعورك نحو المشاركة في مثل هذه الفعاليات؟
 - ما الاختلافات التي أحدثتها مشاركتك في مثل هذه الفعاليات نحو حياتك، حول نظرتك لنفسك، نظرتك نحو غير المسلمين، نظرتك نحو المسلمين، نحو تفاعلك وتواصلك مع الآخرين؟

2.2.3 متابعة الإعلام النيوزلندي

1. تحدث لي عن خبرتك في قراءة الجرائد أو مشاهدة القنوات النيوزلندية. توجية أسئلة إستكشافية عند الحاجة:
- ما نظرتك حول ما تقرأه أو تشاهده في الإعلام النيوزلندي؟ وضح.
 - ما التأثير التي أحدثته على نفسك؟

3. نظرة الطلاب نحو الجامعات النيوزلندية

3.1 توقعات الطلاب نحو الجامعات النيوزلندية:

1. ما الرسائل التي استقبلتها، والتي أثرت فيك للمجيء للدراسة في نيوزلندا؟ كيف تعتقد أن هذه الرسائل موجهة للطلاب العرب المسلمين؟
2. ما توقعاتك نحو الجامعات النيوزلندية قبل المجيء إليها؟ ما المصادر الأساسية لهذه التوقعات؟
3. هل تحقق تلك التوقعات؟ إذا كانت الإجابة بنعم، إعط أمثلة. إذا كانت الإجابة بلا، فلماذا؟ كيف شعورك نحو ذلك؟
4. هل حاولت إبلاغ كليتك أو جامعتك عن توقعاتك التي لم يتم تحقيقها؟ كيف؟ ما التغييرات التي حصلت؟ كيف تشعر حول هذا الموضوع؟
5. ما العوامل التي تعتقد أن لها دور مباشر في التأثير على توقعاتك نحو هذه الجامعات؟ كيف تتعامل مع هذه العوامل؟

3.2 هوية الطلاب مع الجامعات النيوزلندية

1. تحدث لي عن نظرة جامعتك في تعاملها مع وجود الطلاب العرب المسلمين. توجيهية أسئلة إستكشافية عند الحاجة:
 - هل واجهك تحدي أو تصادم أثناء دراستك بالجامعة؟
 - ما الأسباب الرئيسية المؤدية لذلك؟
 - كيف تصرفت في مثل هذه المواقف؟
 - ما شعورك في مثل هذه المواقف؟
2. وضح كيف أن التفاعل اليومي، والأنشطة التعليمية والاجتماعية تؤثر عليك كطالب عربي مسلم؟
3. هل تستطيع أن تفكر في مواقف إيجابية أو موقف إيجابي حدث لك في تفاعلك وتواصلك داخل الجامعة مع المحاضرين، الإداريين، أو الطلاب؟ ما التأثير الذي أحدثه حول نفسك، حول تواصلك أو تعاملك مع مثل هذا النوع من الناس أو مع الآخرين بصفة عامة.
4. ماذا عن المواقف السلبية التي مررت بها؟
5. كيف يكون ردة فعلك أو شعورك نحو أي شخص يتحدث بصورة إيجابية عن جامعتك؟ أو بصورة سلبية؟

4. المحافظة أو التغيير في الهويات

1. تحدث لي عن خبرتك كمسلم في نيوزلندا. توجيهية أسئلة إستكشافية عند الحاجة:

- كيف تحافظ وتمارس قيمك وعباداتك الإسلامية؟
- ما التحديات التي تواجهك؟
- ما أسباب هذه التحديات؟
- كيف تتعامل مع التحديات؟
- كيف تؤثر هذه التحديات عليك؟

1. إلى أي مدى قمت بتغيير من طريقة أو أسلوب لباسك في نيوزلند.
2. هل المدة الزمنية التي قضيتها في نيوزلند أثرت حول نظرتك ورؤيتك للقيم الإسلامية والقيم الثقافية؟ وضح مع الأمثلة. هل يلعب ذلك دورا في الطريقة التي تتعامل، ووتفاعل أو تتواصل مع غير المسلمين في أي اتجاه.
3. هل هناك بعض الأمور حول كونك مسلما لم تلاحظها من قبل ولاحظتها الآن؟ ما هي؟ هل تعترض بهذه الأشياء وترغب باستمرارها؟ أو تتمنى أن تغيرهم؟

غلق المقابلة:

- هل هناك أشياء أخرى تحب إضافتها عن خبراتك في العيش والتواصل والدراسة مع غير المسلمين، ولم يتم التطرق لها؟
 - هل هناك أي تساؤلات تحب أن تطرحها تتعلق بطريقة المقابلة أو أسئلتها؟
- أشكرك جدا على مشاركتك في هذه المقابلة. سوف أتواصل معك مرة أخرى بعد أن أقوم بكتابة المقابلة لتقوم بمراجعتها. كما أنه سيكون هناك مقابلة أخرى بعد ثمانية أشهر.

Appendix 8: Matching Research Questions with Interview Questions

Research questions:

1. How do New Zealand universities' communication practices influence the negotiation process of Arab Muslim students' identities?
2. What communication practices do Arab Muslim students adopt in managing acceptance or exclusion and how successful are they?

Matching research questions with interview questions:

1. Background information:

- What kind of information did you have about New Zealand before coming? Where did you get this information from?
- Tell me the story of your coming to New Zealand?
- How long have you been in New Zealand?
- How long have you been at your university?
- What messages did you receive that attract you to study in NZ universities? How do you think that these messages particularly target Arab Muslim students?
- What were your expectations before coming to NZ universities? What were the main sources of these expectations?
- Have these expectations been met? If yes, give examples. If, not, why not? How did you feel about that?
- Have you tried to inform your faculty or university about your expectations, which have not been matched? How? Any change? How did you feel about that?
- What factors do you think that that play a significant influence in achieving your expectations in NZ universities? How did you manage that?

2. How do New Zealand universities' communication practices influence the negotiation process of Arab Muslim students' identities?

This first research question will be answered by these interview questions:

1. Describe your experience in the learning environment while attending classes.

Probe as needed by asking:

- What things did you like?
- What challenges did you have?
- How did you accommodate these situations?

2. Tell me your experience in working with different nationalities and genders.

Probe as needed by asking:

- What circumstances led to the interaction?
- What things did you like?
- What challenges did you face?
- How did you cope with these challenges?
- What were your feelings in these situations?
- Have you established a friendship relation? Tell me about this experience.

3. Tell me about your experience in socialising with others on campus.

Probe as needed by asking:

- What circumstances led to the socialisation?
- Who involved in these events?
- What kind of activities did you do?
- What things did you like?
- What challenges did you have?
- How did you cope with these challenges?
- To what extent do you think that your participation in these activities affects how you see yourself/ how you behave and how you communicate with others?
- (For female I should consider this question: if there is a social event that involves both sexes, what would you do?)

4. Tell me how your university manages the presence of Arab Muslim students?

Probe as needed by asking:

- Have you experienced any challenge/clash while studying in your university?
 - What reasons led to this clash?
 - How did you manage these situations?
 - What were your feelings in these situations?
5. Explain to me how daily life interaction, learning and social activities in your university affect you as an Arab Muslim student?
 6. Can you think of a positive communication and interaction experience you have had on campus (e.g., with an academic staff member, an administrator)?
 7. What about a negative experience? Explain.
 8. How would you respond/react if someone talked positively about your university? What about negatively?
- 3. What communication practices do Arab Muslim students adopt in managing acceptance or exclusion and how successful are they?**

This second research question will be answered by these interview questions:

3. Tell me your experience in finding a place to live in NZ.
4. Tell me your experience in living with NZ people or others.

Probe as needed by asking:

- What things did you like?
 - What challenges did you have?
 - How did you cope with these challenges?
 - To what extent do you think that your experience in living with these people affects how you see yourself/ how you behave and how you communicate with others?
5. Tell me your experience in socialising with others in the community?

Probe as needed by asking:

- What were your main objectives?
- What kind of activities did you do?
- Who involved in these activities?
- How easy is it to participate in these activities?

- Have you established a friendship relation? Tell me about this experience.
- What were your feelings in these activities?
- What difference does this experience make to your life/to how you see yourself/to how you see non-Muslims/to how you see your fellow Muslims/ to how you communicate/interact with others?

Interview questions that answer the first and second research questions:

- 1. How do New Zealand universities' communication practices influence the negotiation process of Arab Muslim students' identities?**
- 2. What communication practices do Arab Muslim students adopt in managing acceptance or exclusion and how successful are they?**

5. Tell me your experience as a Muslim in New Zealand?

Probe as needed by asking:

- How do preserve and maintain your Islamic values and practices?
 - What challenges do you face?
 - What reasons led to these challenges?
 - How do you cope with these situations?
 - How do these challenges affect you?
6. How have you adjusted your dress style if at all? (for female students)
 7. Has your time in NZ influenced your perceptions about your Islamic and cultural values? Explain, with examples? Does that affect the way you communicate, interact and behave with non-Muslims? In what ways.
 8. Are there some things about being Muslim that you have noticed now that you hadn't noticed in the past? What are these? Are these things that you value and want to keep? Or would you like to change them?

Appendix 9: Administrators' Interview Questions

The intercultural communication experiences of Arab Muslim students in New Zealand

Basic information:

12. Name
13. Gender
14. Work place
15. Position
16. Department
17. Length of time in job
18. The interview date
19. The interview's location
20. The interview's length

This interview contains three main parts: introduction, interview questions and conclusion.

Introduction:

In this pre-interview stage, I will aim to:

- Introduce myself as an interviewer and present my name and my role.
- Explain why I chose each participant to participate in this study.
- Explain the goals of this study (information sheet).
- Assure confidentiality.
- Assure participants that I will not judge them through their answers.
- Inform the participants that the interviews will be recorded.
- Discuss the consent form and have the participants sign it.
- Thank participants.

Then, we turn on the tape recorder and test it together.

Interview questions:

1. What policies and messages, if any, are used to attract and retain Arab Muslim students to come and study in your university?

2. What, if anything, does your university do to adjust to the presence of Arab Muslim students?

Probe as needed by asking:

- Describe your communication with academic and administrative staff, students and host families about Arab Muslim students?
- Does your university provide special facilities for Arab Muslim students? If so, what are they?
- What types of support, if any, does your university provide for Arab Muslim students who come here with their spouses and children?
- Have you changed any policies or procedures to deal with and accommodate Arab Muslim students and their expectations? If so, what are they?

3. How do you perceive Arab Muslim students' integration with others?

Probe as needed by asking:

- Tell me about your experiences interacting and communicating with Arab Muslim students?
- What are some of the major issues, if any, that Arab Muslim students face in their integration?
- What factors and conditions might encourage Arab Muslim students' integration with other students especially with domestic students?
- What activities might assist Arab Muslim students' integration with the NZ community?

Closing the interview

4. Is there anything that else you can add that you think would be beneficial, that I have not already asked you?

Thank you for participating in this interview. I will contact you again when I've transcribed the interviews and ask if you would like to check over my transcription.

Appendix 10: Second Interview of Student Participants

The intercultural communication experiences of Arab Muslim students
in New Zealand

(The second round of interview: English version)

Basic information:

Interviewee's name:.....

The interviewee's gender male female

The interview date:.....

The interview's location.....

The interview's length of time:.....

Other people attended the interview:.....

Interview questions:

1. Students' communication and interaction experiences

1.1 On campus experiences

1. You have been at the university for some time now, tell me about your experience in interacting and communicating with:

- Classmate, in general, and students of the opposite sex, in particular.
- Arab Muslim students/ International students/ Kiwi students
- Teachers; and
- Administrative staff

Probe as needed by asking:

- What changes have you noticed since the last interview? Why do you think these changes happen?

2. Tell me about your experience in socialising with non-Muslims on campus.

Probe as needed by asking:

- What changes have you noticed since the last interview? Why do you think these changes happen?
- Tell me about the social relationships you have developed since the last interview?

3. Since the last interview, do your expectations in social and academic contexts at the university have been changed? If yes, give examples. If, not, why not? How did you feel about that?

1.2 Off campus experiences

1. Tell me about your experience in socialising and communicating in the community with:
 - Your host family.
 - The general community.

Probe as needed by asking:

- What changes have you noticed since the last interview? Why do you think these changes happen?
- How does this experience affect your perception of the interaction with non-Muslim?

2. Maintain your Islamic and cultural values.

1. How do you view your experience as a Muslim since you have arrived NZ?

Probe as needed by asking:

- What challenges do you face?
 - What reasons led to these challenges?
 - How do you cope with these situations?
 - What NZ practices, way of thinking, attitudes that have you adopted? Why? How?
 - Has your time in NZ influenced your perceptions about your Islamic and cultural values, such as the dress code and sitting with people of the opposite sex, or other values? Explain, with examples?
 - Have you noticed any change in your (religious and cultural identities) attitude, when interacting and communicating with others since arriving NZ? Can you tell me a story that explains this issue? Have your family, friends or other people commented on the issue?
2. Are there some things about being Muslim that you have noticed now that you hadn't noticed in the past? What are these? Are these things that you value and want to keep? Or would you like to change them? Why?

3. Tell me what you are going to tell your family, friends and newly-arrived Arab Muslim students about your experience in interacting and communicating with non-Muslims in NZ?
4. What are NZ traditional and cultural values, customs and norms you are going to take back with you when returning home? Why these exactly?

The intercultural communication experiences of Arab Muslim students
in New Zealand

(The second round of interview: Arabic version)

أسئلة المقابلة الثانية

1. خبرات تواصل الطلاب وتفاعلهم

1.1 في داخل الجامعة

1. بعد المدة التي قضيتها بالجامعة ، حدثني عن خبرتك في تفاعلك وتواصلك مع:

- زملائك في الصف بصفة عامة، والجنس الآخر على وجه الخصوص
- الطلاب العرب المسلمين
- الطلاب من جنسيات أخرى
- الطلاب النيوزلنديين
- أساتذتك
- الإداريين

توجيه أسئلة إستكشافية عند الحاجة:

- ما التغييرات التي لاحظتها في تعاملك مع هذه الفئات مقارنة بالمقابلة الأولى حتى الآن؟ ومن وجهة نظرك لماذا حدثت هذه التغييرات؟

2. حدثني عن خبرتك في التعامل الاجتماعي مع غير المسلمين في داخل الجامعة؟

توجيه أسئلة إستكشافية عند الحاجة:

- ما التغييرات التي لاحظتها في تعاملك مع هذه الفئة مقارنة بالمقابلة الأولى حتى الآن؟ لماذا بإعتقادك حدثت هذه التغييرات؟
- حدثني عن العلاقات الاجتماعية التي قمت بتطويرها مع الآخرين بعد إجراء المقابلة الأولى؟
- بعد إجراء المقابلة معك في المرة الأولى، هل تغيرت توقعاتك الاجتماعية والأكاديمية في الجامعة؟ إذا كانت الإجابة بنعم، فما الأمثلة على ذلك؟ وإذا كانت إجابتك بلا، فلماذا؟ ما شعورك نحو ذلك؟

1.2 في خارج الجامعة:

1. حدثني عن خبرتك في التعامل والتواصل في المجتمع النيوزلندي مع:

- الأسرة التي عشت معها
- المجتمع عموماً

توجيه أسئلة إستكشافية عند الحاجة:

- ما التغييرات التي لاحظتها في تعاملك مع هذه الفئة مقارنة بالمقابلة الأولى حتى الآن؟ لماذا بإعتقادك حدثت هذه التغييرات؟
- كيف أثرت هذه الخبرة على وجهة نظرك في طريقة التعامل مع غير المسلمين في المجتمع النيوزلندي؟

2. المحافظة على قيمك الإسلامية والثقافية:

1 كيف تنظر لتجربتك كمسلم من لحظة وصلك لنيوزلند حتى اللحظة؟

توجيه أسئلة إستكشافية عند الحاجة:

- ما التحديات التي تواجهك؟
- ما أسباب التي أدت لظهور هذه التحديات؟
- كيف تتعامل مع هذه التحديات؟
- ما الممارسات وطرق التفكير والإتجاهات التي تبنيها من نيوزلند؟ لماذا؟ وكيف؟
- هل أثرت المدة الزمنية التي قضيتها في نيوزلند حول نظرتك ورؤيتك لقيمك الإسلامية الثقافية؟ مثل نظرتك نحو لباسك، وتعاملك مع الجنس الآخر. وضح مع ذكر أمثلة على ذلك.
- هل لاحظت أي تغييرات على هويتك الإسلامية والثقافية في تفاعلك وتواصلك مع الآخرين من لحظة وصولك لنيوزلند حتى الآن؟ هل بالإمكان أن تذكر لي قصة توضح هذه القضية؟ هل علق أحد من أفراد عائلتك أو أصدقائك أو أناس آخرين على القضية التي ذكرتها؟
- 2 هل هناك بعض الأمور حول كونك مسلماً لاحظتها الآن أثناء تواجدهم بنيوزلند ولم تلاحظها من قبل مجيئك إلى هنا؟ ما هي؟ هل تعترض بهذه الأشياء وترغب باستمرارها؟ أو تتمنى أن تغيرهم؟ لماذا؟
- 3 ما الأشياء التي سوف تخبر بها عائلتك، أصدقائك، أو الطلاب العرب المسلمين الجدد عن خبرتك في التفاعل والتواصل مع غير المسلمين في نيوزلند؟
- 4 ما العادات والممارسات والقيم النيوزلندية التي سوف ترغب بأخذها عند عودتك إلى بلدك؟ لماذا هذه بالضبط؟