>lsc

Engaging Young Muslims in Learning

Research findings

November 2007

Of interest to the post-16 education, learning and skills sector

ⓘ For information

Contents

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Executive Summary

As part of its overall commitment to equality and diversity, the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) has highlighted a need to understand more about the perspectives of young Muslim learners in education. The LSC is now addressing some important questions: How well is the Further Education (FE) system responding to the needs of Muslim learners? What more can be done to support these learners to stay within education and to succeed?

With these questions in mind, the LSC commissioned the consultancy firm SHM to carry out a programme of research into the perspectives of young Muslim learners, and to find out how these differ from the attitudes of non-Muslim learners. This programme comprised two distinct pieces of research, conducted 15 months apart. In Phase 1, we undertook a qualitative study of Muslim learner perspectives. In Phase 2, we conducted a quantitative survey of learner perspectives (both Muslim and non-Muslim) and a qualitative study of parent perspectives.

This report brings together the findings from both phases of research. This body of evidence will guide the LSC in determining how well the FE system is meeting the needs of Muslim learners, where the gaps are, and where there is room for innovation.

Does faith make a difference?

One of the challenges we encountered in the design of the questionnaire for the quantitative study was how to ask people about their faith. We used two strategies to address this challenge. The first was to allow respondents to tell us which aspects of their identity were most important to them, using a mixture of closed-response items and open questions. The second was to construct a set of six items that explored the extent to which an individual's faith impacted on such things as their religious observance, behaviour and outlook, their choices in life and their view of themselves with respect to others.

Analysis of the entire sample yielded the following interesting finding. Irrespective of the faith an individual subscribes to, two broad mindsets are apparent, at least within this sample.

- On the one hand, religious identity is significantly **positively associated** with: a belief that faith is a guiding framework in life; a desire to stay true to one's cultural and ethnic roots; a belief that growing up is about finding one's place in the family and community; aspirations to have, and to provide for, one's own family, and to enjoy material status and family and community respect; and a tendency to seek formal advice.

- On the other hand, religious identity is significantly **negatively associated** with a belief that growing up is about finding oneself as an individual and finding one's own way in life, even if that means making mistakes.

While larger theories about faith mindsets remain unproven, one thing the current study has demonstrated is that **faith really does make a difference**. In particular, it is the Muslim faith (and especially a strong religious identity), **rather than ethnicity**, that is the overriding factor in accounting for the difference between Muslim and non-Muslim students. This is an important finding, given that ethnicity is frequently used as a proxy for faith in other studies or where measurement is required. This study suggests that using ethnicity as a proxy is, at best, highly unreliable. It also offers some interesting pointers towards ways in which we might better understand not only Muslim learners, but the whole area of faith.

What difference does being Muslim make?

One right route in life

Young Muslim learners have a particular moral clarity in the stories they tell about life. For these young people, there is 'one right route' in life: you either go right, or you go wrong. With a harmonious family and a strong faith, you can stay on the right route (and avoid wrong turns).

From the perspective of Muslim learners, any deviation from the right path may be a sign of the weakness of the family. This means that Muslim learners have a stronger incentive to avoid mistakes and to get things right first time. When mistakes do happen, these learners may well avoid discussing them with other people.

In the eyes of these learners, a mistake is a wrong turn – not a step on the way to going right. They are unlikely to buy into the notion that people learn from their own mistakes. Compared to other young people, Muslim learners are much less likely to value 'trial and error' as a key part of their development.

In the context of education, young Muslim learners who believe that there is 'one right route' in life could be at risk of disengagement, especially at key moments of choice. If these learners do not make the grade that will allow them to follow their chosen path, the experience might well destabilise them or even cause them to drop out.

One of the challenges is that Muslim learners with this perspective may not show the obvious outward signs of being at risk. For these young people, raising such difficulties openly with other people could be uncomfortable, particularly if their family is implicated in the discussion.

Within the FE sector, there is a need to think seriously about how we can encourage these young people to raise issues and difficulties in an environment that feels safe and that they find comfortable. This could have implications for the way in which a tutor delivers feedback to a student, or for the provision of pastoral support services.

There is a sensitive balance to be struck here. Should we focus on stabilising these learners when we detect disengagement? Or should we seek to challenge the notion that there is 'one right route', in order to prevent disengagement from occurring?

A different view of growing up

For young Muslim learners, growing up is about fulfilling their destiny by taking their place in the family. These learners feel they can forge their personal identity within the context of the family and parental authority. Unlike many other young people, Muslim learners do not see it as essential to break away from the family and challenge parental authority in order to 'find themselves'.

When Muslim learners make choices about the future, they are making these choices not merely as individuals, but as part of a family. When they make these decisions, Muslim learners have a different set of priorities from other young people. They are likely to choose options that will enable them to provide for their own families, and to secure respect from the family or community.

This family-oriented approach to decision-making may not fit well with the way the education system is organised. Muslim parents told us that they found institutions unapproachable: just as wider society, institutions appear to focus heavily on individuals, and to overlook the importance of the family.

The key challenge for education is how to respond to the central role of the Muslim family in decisions about education and careers. This challenge could be tackled at many different levels. We could provide careers information to Muslim families, or invite them to attend key events. We could develop proactive and tailored approaches to outreach within these communities, and make use of community ambassadors and positive role models to engage Muslim families.

In order to determine the best way forward, we need to consider what role FE should play in relation to family engagement. Is our role to raise the aspirations of families as well as of learners? What is the right balance between meeting the needs of families and meeting the needs of the individual?

Responding to disagreements within the family

It is not unusual for young Muslim learners in education to experience a tension between their personal aspirations and the wishes of their parents. When such disagreements arise, Muslim learners respond very differently to other young people.

Muslim learners are much less likely than other young people to pursue their personal goals over their parents' wishes.

Instead, Muslim learners are more likely to adopt strategies that allow them to preserve the harmony and order of the family. The findings show three strategies that are particularly prevalent among Muslim learners.

1. They discuss the issue within the family in order to reach an agreement, even if that involves a compromise or personal sacrifice.

2. They seek advice from a respected authority.

3. They avoid talking about the issue and internalising the tension, even at immense emotional cost.

Muslim learners facing disagreements within the family are clearly at risk of becoming disengaged from education. This is even more of a challenge in situations where their response strategies result in compromise, sacrifice or internalised tension.

In the context of FE, we need to think carefully about how we provide support for Muslim learners facing these kinds of disagreements within the family. How do we raise the issues in a safe and discreet way? Should we attempt to provide mediation between learners and their families? This is a sensitive area, and the FE system must avoid 'overstepping the mark'. Above all, the sector must be mindful of the risk of disrupting the family unit, which could be extremely costly both for the individual involved and for the family.

Identification with Islam
The sections above highlight a number of ways in which being Muslim makes a difference to learners. To interpret these patterns, however, we also need to know whether young Muslim people themselves would relate these differences to their faith.

The evidence shows clearly that young Muslim learners do identify their Islamic faith with the sort of patterns and differences that this report has outlined. Much

more than other young people, Muslim learners seek to identify themselves through their faith. And these learners are clear that the Islamic faith is more than just a set of religious practices. It guides their decisions in life and helps them to deal with mistakes. They describe the Islamic faith as a 'complete way of life'.

These findings show that there is a need to understand the meaning of faith in the lives of Muslim learners. Educational institutions may unwittingly be creating a distance between themselves and Muslim learners by focusing too much on religious practices, and not enough on the meaning of the Islamic faith. Muslim learners (and parents) feel that institutions should try to understand more about the meaning of faith in their lives.

Although some providers and local areas have developed strategies to address faith, there is no consistency across the sector as a whole. Some believe that faith has no part to play in the education system, while others go to great lengths to celebrate the different faiths. Some support Islamic societies and other faith societies, whereas others are very resistant to the idea of any single-faith activity.

People working in the sector have certain questions about the right response to faith in general, and to Islam in particular. Some people are concerned that making space for faith in FE may jeopardise community cohesion by encouraging separatism. Others wonder whether it would be right to treat faith groups differently from other group, given the sector's commitment to equality and secularity.

Implications

This research has given us a clearer understanding of how faith can make a difference to learners in the education system. The question is: how should the FE system respond to these differences? When we talked to people working in the sector, we found that there was no consistency in the way the sector currently responds to faith. This is, at least in part, a result of there being many unanswered questions in people's minds. Our conversations with people working in FE raised some challenging policy questions for the system to

address. If these questions are not addressed, the action taken by people within the sector will continue to be inconsistent and disjointed.

1. Can we meet the differing needs of Muslim learners and still maintain our commitment to equal treatment?

The FE system is committed to the values of equality and diversity. But there are tensions between the duty to promote equal opportunities on the one hand, and the need to recognise the diversity of learners in the system on the other. Many people in the sector are dedicated to the notion of treating all learners equally, in order to give everyone an equal chance. Does this mean we cannot treat people differently, even if we know that they have different mindsets?

2. How should we interpret the role of further education in relation to community cohesion?

In light of the concerns about the radicalisation of Muslim young people and the threat of domestic terrorism, the challenge of integration and community cohesion is high on the government's agenda. But does this mean that FE should be acting to prevent the separation of Muslim learners at all costs? What does this mean for Islamic societies within FE colleges?

3. How can we balance the needs of the individual learner and the needs of the family?

Many people who work in the sector feel it is their first duty to support the individual to succeed in learning. But what does this mean for Muslim learners, who emphasise the harmony of family over the primacy of the individual?

4. To what extent should we challenge the perspectives of Muslim learners and their families?

For the education system and other public services, showing respect for diversity is a key part of delivering a service that does not discriminate against certain groups. This ethos requires staff to show equal respect for cultural viewpoints that differ from their own. But what if the viewpoints of some groups

are at odds with the mission of the system? Is it acceptable to challenge their perspectives in order to stay true to the mission?

Of course, there is a danger that we could become paralysed by these philosophical questions about policy. It is important to remember that there is a difference between resolving policy questions and actually doing things. Many of the providers we spoke to have found their own answers to these questions. They are already taking differentiated action to support and include Muslim learners. They are building dialogue and relationships with the Muslim communities. They are using their own judgement and intuition to balance the needs of individual learners and their families. They are mediating between young people and their families and communities in tense and difficult situations.

Despite the sensitivities and challenges, in the process of conducting this research we discovered a widespread appetite for more dialogue and understanding about faith. On the basis of our experience, we would recommend that providers openly raise questions about faith with young Muslim people themselves, and engage them in developing the local answers.

Introduction

1   As part of its overall commitment to equality and diversity, the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) has highlighted a need to understand more about the perspectives of young Muslim learners in education. The LSC is now addressing some important questions: How well is the Further Education (FE) system responding to the needs of Muslim learners? What more can be done to support these learners to stay within education and to succeed?

2   In a climate of widespread concern about the terrorist threat at home and abroad, these questions assume a particular urgency. There has been no shortage of commentary and speculation about the 'problem' of young Muslim people in Britain. But how does this atmosphere affect the lives of young Muslims living in Britain? There is a risk of a growing divide between Muslim communities and other sections of society. The education sector as a whole, and the FE sector in particular, have a key role to play in the effective inclusion and integration of our Muslim communities.

3   With these things in mind, the LSC commissioned SHM – a research, strategy and innovation consultancy with extensive experience in the FE sector – to carry out a programme of research into the perspectives of young Muslim learners, and to find out how these differ from the attitudes of non-Muslim learners. This body of evidence will guide the LSC in determining how well the FE system is meeting the needs of Muslim learners, where the gaps are, and where there is room for innovation.

4   The research is, in part, an attempt to move away from the dominant discourse about the 'problem' of young Muslims in Britain, and to engage Muslim learners and parents in developing some of the potential solutions. The starting point for this piece of work was a desire to develop an understanding of how young Muslim learners perceive both the world

and their own future. In particular, the research aimed to find out more about their faith, and about the difference this makes to their lives.

5   SHM's past work for the LSC has shown time and again that the starting point for greater engagement has to be a deep understanding of the people we want to engage. This research is a step towards achieving such a deeper understanding. And during the fieldwork, we discovered a great appetite for mutual understanding and awareness – among Muslim learners, parents and learning providers alike.

6   Unsurprisingly, though, the research process also raised difficult questions and uncovered sensitivities. Many of the Muslims learners and parents we met were keen to rectify some of the prevalent misconceptions about Islam. And when we talked to learning providers, the research findings caused them to ask searching and challenging questions about the role of FE in our society.

7   This document is not a strategy or a manifesto for change. It does, however, identify a range of practical courses of action that might be taken if we want to address the issues identified by Muslim learners. It also poses a series of deeper policy questions at the end of each section, and these are discussed in more detail at the end of the document.

Methodology

8   This report brings together the findings from two distinct pieces of research, conducted 15 months apart. We have named them Phase 1 (qualitative learner study) and Phase 2 (quantitative learner and qualitative parent study).

9   In 2005, the LSC commissioned SHM to undertake Phase 1, a qualitative study to explore the perspectives of young Muslim learners.

10   The Phase 1 qualitative learner study used participatory research techniques previously developed by SHM to engage with a wide range of learner groups on behalf of the LSC. SHM worked with three groups of

Muslim learners, in different educational settings, getting them to tell us how they see the world by using as a medium stories and characters they themselves created. Each group of learners participated in three consecutive workshops.

11   In the Phase 1 qualitative learner study, we chose to speak to a relatively small number of learners, in order to achieve a real depth of understanding. We believe it is better to attempt a deeper understanding of these young people than to risk skimming over this important topic and failing to grasp some of its subtleties. Phase 1 generated a series of key hypotheses about how Muslim learners see the world, and how their perspectives may be different from those of other people in our society.

12   In 2007, SHM was commissioned by the LSC to carry out Phase 2, a quantitative learner and qualitative parent study, to validate the findings of the Phase 1 qualitative learner study and place them in context.

13   In Phase 2, we developed a quantitative learner survey in order to test and validate the Phase 1 hypotheses. With the support of 13 learning providers across the country, we distributed this survey to Muslim and non-Muslim learners. In total, 805 valid surveys were returned and analysed; of these, Muslim learners completed 41 per cent. For more detail on the survey sample, see the Annex to this report, paragraphs 1–6.

14   In addition to the quantitative learner study in Phase 2, we carried out a qualitative parent study. We designed and facilitated a series of three workshops, involving a diverse range of Muslim parents in Manchester and London. This work was conducted using the same participatory techniques that were used to engage the young Muslim learners in Phase 1 – that is, an approach based on characters and narratives.

15   In the final phase of fieldwork, we engaged with six learning providers and four LSC staff members to share our emerging findings and discuss the potential implications for the FE system.

Does Faith Make a Difference?

16   One of the basic challenges encountered in the design of the questionnaire for the quantitative study was how actually to ask people about their faith. In fact, we faced two different problems in this area.

17   The first problem is not unique to a study of faith. In order to be able to conduct any meaningful statistical analysis, one has to find a way of sorting the richness and variety of human thought and belief into statistically manipulable categories. Doing so inevitably means collapsing the diversity that exists within those categories – for instance, between different branches of the same religion.

18   In the current study, we opted for high-level descriptors of faith (Muslim, Christian, Hindu and so forth), on the grounds that so little work had previously been done in this area. There is a need, we believe, to improve our understanding of the big differences between major religions, before we can hope to analyse the nuances within them. We recognise that the result may smooth out some very important differences, and hope that further research will shed light on these.

19   The second problem is much more closely connected with the subject matter of this study – and was rather harder to resolve. From the beginning, we recognised that the mere act of ticking one box or another tells us little about faith. For one respondent, that box may signify a fairly unimportant aspect of their life; for another, it may represent the centre of their whole outlook. Arguably, indeed, tick boxes for different faiths miss the whole point of faith.

20   This is, of course, a challenge with which the FE system – and other public services – have already wrestled, in considering the appropriateness and value of asking questions about faith as a part of equality and diversity practice.

21   In order to address this challenge, we used two strategies. The first was to allow respondents to tell us which aspects of their identity were most important to them, using a mixture of closed-response items and open questions. The second was to construct a set of six items that explored the extent to which an individual's faith impacted on such things as their religious observance, behaviour and outlook, their choices in life, and their view of themselves with respect to others. These items were constructed to work across different religions. In the analysis, the items were very strongly associated, and were therefore summed and averaged to form a single-scale score pertaining to 'religious identity'. Religious identity signals an emotional investment, as well as a set of beliefs about one's faith, and provides a framework for behaviour.

22   Taken together, these strategies enabled us to conduct a rather more significant analysis than one based purely on which faith box an individual ticked. In particular, analysis of the entire sample yielded the following interesting finding. Irrespective of the faith an individual subscribes to, two broad mindsets are apparent, at least within this sample.

- On the one hand, religious identity is significantly **positively associated** with: a belief that faith is a guiding framework in life; a desire to stay true to one's cultural and ethnic roots; a belief that growing up is about finding one's place in the family and community; aspirations to have, and provide for, one's own family, and to enjoy material status, and family and community respect; and a tendency to seek formal advice.

- On the other hand, religious identity is significantly **negatively associated** with a belief that growing up is about finding oneself as an individual and finding one's own way in life, even if that means making mistakes.

23   At first sight, this may appear to suggest that the study has revealed a
      deeper difference – not between different faiths, but between, as we
      might put it, the **faithful** (of any religion) and the **faithless**. We believe
      this possibility is worthy of further study. However, no firm conclusions
      can be drawn on the basis of the current study, for the following reasons.

- The survey was designed on the basis of qualitative work with Muslim
  learners, specifically to investigate hypotheses about Muslim learners
  – and not to test out more general theories about faith.

- The sample was purposely constructed to include a large proportion
  (40 per cent) of Muslim learners, in order to allow meaningful
  comparison between Muslim and non-Muslim learners. A differently
  constructed sample would be needed to test out more general theories
  about faith.

24   In line with our research design, the findings set out in the rest of this
      report relate entirely to the differences between Muslim learners and non-
      Muslim learners.

25   However, while larger theories about faith mindsets remain unproven (if
      tantalisingly so), one thing the current study has demonstrated is that
      faith really does make a difference. In particular, we note that, **rather
      than ethnicity**, it is the Muslim faith (and especially a strong religious
      identity) that is the overriding factor in accounting for the difference
      between Muslim and non-Muslim students.

26   For the White, Asian and Other ethnic samples, the mere fact of being
      Muslim overrides the effect of ethnicity in accounting for the differences
      between Muslim and non-Muslim students across all factors. However,
      for the Black sample (a very small sample relative to the others), it is
      ethnicity – rather than the fact of being Muslim/non-Muslim – that has the
      stronger effect on religious identity, belief in the importance of staying
      true to one's ethnic and cultural roots, and belief that growing up is about
      finding one's place in the family. For the Black sample, ethnicity also

overrides the difference between Muslim and non-Muslim students when it comes to using externalising strategies to deal with conflict between parental wishes and personal goals, or seeking formal advice to deal with this conflict. For more details, see the Annex, paragraphs 88 and 101.

27   This is an important finding, given that ethnicity is frequently used as a proxy for faith in other studies and where measurement is required. While we recognise the challenges associated with measuring and tracking faith (having wrestled with them ourselves), this study suggests that using ethnicity as a proxy is, at best, highly unreliable. It also offers some interesting pointers towards ways in which we might better understand not only Muslim learners, but the whole area of faith.

What Difference Does Being Muslim Make?

One right route in life

The young Muslim learner perspective

28   Young Muslim learners have a strong sense that there is 'one right route' in life. From their perspective, it is possible to find and to follow the right route if one has a strong faith and a harmonious family.

29   Compared to other young people, Muslim learners see the world with a remarkable moral clarity. These young people have a strong belief that there are clear moral rules in life which tell you what is right and what is wrong (Annex, 64–69). When we spoke to Muslim learners in our fieldwork, they showed no signs of 'adolescent questioning' of the moral values they held. The stories they told us suggested that there are no shades of grey about the future: you either go right in life, or you go wrong.

30   For these young learners, the key to staying on the right route lies in the harmony and order of the family. In order to lead a good life, it is very important to these young people to follow closely the example set by their parents and elders (Annex, 98–104). Furthermore, they believe that the family has a crucial role to play in teaching children about the meaning

and values of their faith (Annex, 25–30). A young Muslim who has been brought up well by his or her family, and been taught about their faith, will have the strength to make the right choices in life, and to avoid making the wrong ones.

> If the family was right and strong then everything would be OK because the family would make arguments against these [extreme] groups.
>
> Muslim learner

31   This way of looking at the world has a reverse side of equal significance. Just as the harmony of the family makes it possible for Muslim learners to follow the right route, the reverse if also true: any deviation from the right route is potentially a sign of weakness in the family.

> A lot of Muslims are confused about their religion. They are growing up and their parents don't tell them what Islam is.
>
> Muslim learner

32   Muslim learners also value the guidance of religious leaders to help them avoid making mistakes (Annex, 105–107).

33   Young Muslim learners have a powerful sense that they should avoid mistakes in life. In their eyes, it is much better to get things right first time around. When we spoke to Muslim learners, they were clear that mistakes in life are a sign of going wrong, and definitely not a step on the way to going right. Their way of thinking about mistakes contrasts with that of other young people. Young Muslim learners are much less inclined than other young people to believe that life involves trial and error (Annex, 70–73).

> She thinks about life after death, creating a space in heaven for herself. If she made a mistake in life, she might feel she had no chance to redeem herself.
>
> Muslim learner

34 This perspective is very different from the way the wider society talks about mistakes, and from the patterns of survey results among non-Muslim learners (Annex, 70–73). In popular discourse, it is commonly accepted that mistakes can be a valuable part of the process of personal development. It is quite usual for people to say 'let him learn from his own mistakes'. The value of developing ideas through 'trial and error' is embedded in the way we talk about education, innovation and creativity. In all of this, mistakes are a key element of progress in the dominant social discourse.

35 In the eyes of Muslim learners, mistakes are not so much good opportunities for learning as undesirable deviations from the 'right' route. However, these findings should not be interpreted as meaning that Muslim learners have a fatalistic take on mistakes. Muslim learners do not believe that one cannot recover from mistakes, or that there are no second chances. They are the same as non-Muslim learners in this aspect of their perspective (Annex, 74–78).

The further education sector perspective

36 What does this mean for FE? Young Muslim learners are making educational choices in the context of their belief that essentially there is 'one right route' in life. The array of options and choices open to young people could be disengaging for Muslim learners who hold this point of view. There is a particular risk of disengagement in instances where Muslim learners do not make the grade they need to follow their chosen path. These young people could be at risk of dropping out, even if they have attained a high enough level to follow a number of other educational routes.

37 The way providers respond to mistakes and 'failures' on the part of their students is also significant here. Young Muslim learners have a strong incentive to avoid drawing attention to their mistakes or talking about them. In some instances, they may even try to cover up their mistakes. In the case of Muslim learners who do not believe that mistakes are a

valuable part of the learning process, there is a need for us to consider how we can encourage them to learn lessons within a 'safe' environment that does not cause them discomfort.

38   Providers identified the following possible courses of action to address the issues and needs raised by Muslim learners (and Muslim parents).

- **Provide information and guidance about choices.** Providers could provide information and guidance to raise awareness of the idea that there are many different routes to success that could be 'right' for a learner.

- **Provide learning support.** Providers could review the way in which learning support is marketed to and accessed by learners, to ensure that learning support is not perceived to be for 'weak' students. Providers could take a proactive approach to offering learning support to all students.

- **Provide pastoral support.** Providers could tailor pastoral support mechanisms to the needs of Muslim learners, by offering more discreet and anonymous channels for these learners to raise issues, especially with staff and peers from the same community.

39   However, providers suggested that, before we can determine which of these possible courses of action to pursue, there are some broader policy questions that need to be addressed.

- Is the notion of 'one right route' at odds with our commitment to choice and the idea that there can be many paths to success?

- Should we seek to challenge the belief in 'one right route' if it presents a risk to a Muslim learner's chance of success? Where are the limits?

40   For a further discussion of the policy questions, please see paragraphs 111–119 of this report.

Summary

41   Young Muslim learners have a particular moral clarity in the stories they tell about life. For these young people, there is 'one right route' in life: you either go right, or you go wrong. With a harmonious family and a strong faith, you can stay on the right route (and avoid wrong turns).

42   From the perspective of Muslim learners, any deviation from the right path may be a sign of the weakness of the family. This means that Muslim learners have a stronger incentive to avoid mistakes and to get things right first time. When mistakes do occur, these learners may well avoid discussing them with other people.

43   In the eyes of these learners, a mistake is a wrong turn and not a step on the way to going right. They are unlikely to 'buy into' the notion that people learn from their own mistakes. Compared to other young people, Muslim learners are much less likely to value 'trial and error' as a key part of their development.

44   In the context of education, young Muslim learners who believe that there is 'one right route' in life could be at risk of disengagement, especially at key moments of choice. If these learners do not make the grade that will allow them to follow their chosen path, the experience might well destabilise them or even cause them to drop out.

45   One particular challenge is that Muslim learners with this perspective may not show the obvious outward signs of being at risk. For these young people, raising such difficulties openly with other people could be uncomfortable, particularly if the family is implicated in the discussion.

46   Within the FE sector, there is a need to think seriously about how we can encourage these young people to raise issues and difficulties in an environment that they find safe and comfortable. This could have implications for the way in which a tutor delivers feedback to a student, or for the provision of pastoral support services.

47 There is a sensitive balance to be struck here. Should we focus on stabilising these learners when we detect disengagement, or should we seek to challenge the notion that there is 'one right route', in order to prevent disengagement from taking place?

A different view of growing up

The Muslim learner perspective

48 As we have seen, young Muslim learners value the harmony of the family as the key to taking the right route in life. In this section, we will show that, for these learners, the family is also a crucial element of **where they are going and what they will become in the future***.*

49 Young Muslim learners have a concept of growing up that differs from that of many other young people in our society. From their perspective, growing up is about taking one's place in the family and fulfilling one's destiny. Therefore, Muslim learners seek to forge a personal identity within the framework of the family. They are much more likely than non-Muslim learners to hold this point of view (Annex, 25–30).

50 This concept of what growing up means contrasts with the perspectives of other young people, who feel they have to break away from the family in order to discover themselves as individuals. The common idea of 'teenage rebellion' accepts, and even encourages, such deviation as a natural part of growing up, and is reflected in the survey responses of non-Muslim learners. For Muslim learners, by contrast, this idea is irrelevant to their overall trajectory. (It is not necessarily the case that rebellion is not important to Muslim learners at all. Some of the providers we spoke to made the observation that Muslim learners are experimenting and rebelling within certain parameters. These providers pointed out that many Muslim learners may view college as the only space they have for experimentation and rebellion, and this may cause them to 'test the limits' in this environment to an even greater extent than other learners.)

51   For many young people in our society, challenging the parental authority
      is an essential part of the process by which one becomes an
      independent and liberated adult. For Muslim learners, this does not hold
      true. Unlike their non-Muslim peers, they do not have a strong belief that
      their personal identity depends fundamentally on breaking away from the
      family (Annex, 31–36). Indeed, Muslim learners are more likely than
      other young people to say that arguments in the family are 'never a good
      thing' (Annex, 31–36).

52   For young Muslim people, personal goals can be achieved by respecting
      the wishes of one's parents. When we spoke to Muslim learners, some of
      them told us that the best way to become a fulfilled person is to have
      respect for parental authority and to follow the wishes of one's parents.

              All her ambitions depend on the same thing: following what her
              family is telling her.

                                                                    Muslim learner

53   These findings should not be interpreted as an indication that Muslim
      learners do not value personal control and choice. The evidence shows
      that this is absolutely not the case. Young Muslim learners are no
      different from non-Muslim learners in their desire for personal happiness,
      a sense of control, or personal and social growth (Annex, 53–58). When
      we spoke to Muslim learners, they emphasised that they exercised
      choice and control within the family, rather than simply doing what they
      were told. In their view, a truly harmonious family is one in which
      everyone chooses freely to do the right thing.

              Her upbringing allows her the choice to decide. She thinks she
              has choices and she feels like a normal person.

                                                                    Muslim learner

54   Thus, Muslim learners have a concept of growing up that allows for
      personal control within a strong family framework. It is within this

framework that they form their decisions about the future. This means that Muslim learners make choices in a different way to other young people: they place a higher priority on providing for their families, and on securing respect and status for their families (Annex, 43–52 and 59–62).

55   For Muslim learners, therefore, career choices are not just a matter for the individual, but also for the family. The Muslim parents we spoke to explained why this is important to them. They told us that career decisions have a huge bearing on the family, especially in terms of status and respect in the wider Muslim community. For some Muslim families, this will be about material status; for others it will be more about professional standing. In most cases, Muslim learners will be forming their decisions about the future in close dialogue with their parents and even their extended families.

> Career is not an individual choice, it's a family thing.
>
> Muslim parent

> Whatever he or she does will come back to reflect on the family.
>
> Muslim parent

> Even extended family will get involved.
>
> Muslim parent

56   This family-oriented approach to decision-making may not fit well with the way our society and its systems are organised. Some of the Muslim parents we met felt that society was much too individualised. From their point of view, the values of the family and the community are not accorded a high enough priority. These parents felt the same way about the education system. They told us that they found schools unapproachable, and that they felt these institutions should be doing more to reach out to parents like them.

This society doesn't give value to the whole family unit.

Muslim parent

The system is set up for individuals rather than families.

Muslim parent

School doesn't approach parents.

Muslim parent

The further education sector perspective

57   What does all this mean for FE? Above all, the evidence raises the challenge of engaging Muslim parents and families in the decision-making process. It is not enough to talk just to individual learners about their educational aspirations and choices; we need to recognise the crucial role of the family, and even the wider community, as key stakeholders in these decisions.

58   Many people working in the FE sector are passionately committed to raising the aspirations of individual young people. But we may need to consider the potential for FE to raise the aspirations of parents and communities, as well as of individuals. This could be addressed by providing careers information for Muslim families, in order to plug the information gaps. However, we could do much more than this. If the sector felt there was a role for FE in challenging some of the assumptions that are embedded in Muslim families and communities, we would need to develop more proactive and tailored forms of outreach within those communities.

59   Providers identified the following possible elements to address the issues and needs raised by Muslim learners (and Muslim parents).

- **Careers guidance.** Providers could encourage parents to participate in careers fairs, careers interviews and 'careers taster sessions'.

- **Mentoring schemes.** Providers could establish peer mentoring programmes to link Muslim learners with other learners who come from a similar background and who have similar experiences.

- **Marketing and positioning options.** Providers could develop prospectuses and marketing campaigns with the Muslim family audience in mind. These could appeal to the motivation of Muslim learners to secure respect from their families and communities, and to provide for their own families.

- **Community ambassadors.** Providers could employ staff or ambassadors from within Muslim communities to talk to Muslim families about the careers and educational choices that are open to their children.

- **Community role models.** Providers could promote role models from the Muslim community who have built successful careers while staying true to the values of their faith and their family. For further information on this, see the account of research workshops with young Islamic women in *Unlocking Learner Motivation: Report on the LSC Learner Engagement Programme* (SHM 2005).

60   However, providers suggested that, before we can determine which of these possible courses of action to pursue, there are some broader policy questions that need to be addressed.

- What is the right balance between meeting the needs of individuals and the needs of families?

- Is it the role of FE to raise the aspirations of families as well as individuals?

- Is it the role of FE to reach out to parents and families? Where are the limits?

61   For a further discussion of the policy questions, please see paragraphs 111–119 of this report.

Summary

62   For young Muslim learners, growing up is about fulfilling one's destiny by taking one's place in the family. These learners feel they can forge their personal identity within the context of the family and parental authority. Unlike many other young people, Muslim learners do not see it as essential to break away from the family and challenge parental authority in order to 'find themselves'.

63   When Muslim learners make choices about the future, they are making these choices not just as individuals, but also as part of a family. Muslim learners have a different set of priorities from other young people when they make these decisions. They are likely to choose options that will enable them to provide for their own families and to secure respect from the family or community.

64   This family-oriented approach to decision-making may not fit well with the way the education system is organised. Muslim parents told us that they found institutions unapproachable; just as with wider society, institutions appear to focus heavily on individuals, and to overlook the importance of the family.

65   The key challenge for education is how to respond to the central role of the Muslim family in decisions about education and careers. This challenge could be tackled at many different levels. We could provide careers information to Muslim families, or invite them to attend key events. We could develop proactive and tailored approaches to outreach within these communities, and make use of community ambassadors and positive role models to engage Muslim families.

66   In order to determine the best way forward, we need to consider what role FE should play in relation to family engagement. Is our role to raise the aspirations of families, as well as of learners? What is the right

balance between meeting the needs of families and meeting the needs of the individual?

Responding to disagreements within the family

The young Muslim learner perspective

67   We have seen that Muslim learners put family harmony first – as a foundation, a guiding framework, and a future aspiration. But what happens when Muslim learners have personal aspirations or goals that run counter to what their families want for them?

68   When we spoke to Muslim learners, they told us some powerful and emotional stories about young Muslim characters who had personal ambitions that clashed with their parents' wishes. These clashes and tensions occurred in very different ways for different characters. One respondent told a story of a young woman who had a dream of becoming a singer on the stage, while her parents wanted her to become a doctor. Another respondent told the story of a gifted and ambitious young woman who had grown up in a family that had no interest in her education whatsoever, and felt that she should give it up in order to get married.

69   When tensions like these occur, how do young Muslims respond? Young Muslim learners have response strategies that are very different from those adopted by other young people. Muslim learners are much less likely to pursue their own personal goals, regardless of their parents' wishes. Unlike other young people, they are more likely to try to avoid conflict with their parents if their personal goals clash with their parents' wishes (Annex, 91–97).

70   As a result of their desire to avoid conflict, Muslim learners adopt strategies that will allow them to preserve the essential harmony of the family, even if that means they have to compromise or make a personal sacrifice of some kind.

71   One strategy adopted by Muslim learners is to discuss the issue within the family in order to reach an agreement. This approach is underpinned

by a belief that the interests of the individual and the interests of the family are fundamentally connected and can be aligned. When compared to their non-Muslim peers, Muslim learners are much more likely to attempt to negotiate constructively with their parents, assuming that their parents have their best interests at heart (Annex, 86–90).

72   Muslim learners and parents gave us some examples of this type of negotiation within Muslim families. One of the parents told us that it is possible for young people to persuade their parents to change their minds. However, many other respondents told us that negotiation frequently results in the young person accepting a compromise solution of some kind. For instance, a young man who dreams of becoming a sportsman may agree to train to become a physiotherapist instead.

> His burning ambition is to be a sportsman but his parents want him to do something more academic. He does not wish to go against their wishes so he is half-heartedly at university doing something related to sport like physiotherapy. He sees their view.
>
> Muslim parent

73   Beyond this kind of open negotiation, Muslim learners have a second response strategy – one that is potentially more concerning. Muslim learners are more likely than other learners to avoid talking about the disagreement, and to do nothing to resolve it (Annex, 80–85). The young people we met told us that the process of internalisation sometimes comes at an emotional cost. In their stories, some of the learners described the feeling of having a 'little broken heart' or 'being caged in'.

> One of her hearts is broken, because she wants to sing while her family wants something else.
>
> Muslim learner

74   In addition to this strategy of internalisation, a third response strategy is also in evidence. When Muslim learners face tensions or disagreements

with their parents, they may also look for some advice from another source. Compared to other young people, Muslim learners are more likely to seek advice from a respected authority about how to deal with the misalignment (Annex, 105–112). When we spoke to Muslim learners, they told us that religious teachers have a particularly important role in providing young people with guidance and counsel.

75   What is less clear from the research is the extent to which Muslim learners would go to teachers in secular schools for this type of advice. When we spoke to young Muslim learners, they were unsure how schoolteachers could make these situations better. However, when we spoke to Muslim parents, they told us that they would view schoolteachers as a credible source of advice and guidance in these matters. They felt that teachers should discuss these issues with families and provide them with reliable information about the choices.

> School should play a big role. They know the students and the family; they can clarify the tensions and explain the effect that this might have on the student to the parents. Many parents trust and listen to teachers. If the teacher tells them, it will carry more weight than if it comes from the child themselves.

> Muslim parent

The further education sector perspective

76   What does this mean for FE? What role should the FE system play in supporting young Muslim people who may be facing disagreements or tensions with their families about their future aspirations?

77   Muslim learners in these situations are clearly at risk of disengagement. But there is a danger that efforts to prevent disengagement from education will be focused on those whose disengagement is the most visible – apparent, for instance, in low achievement or poor behaviour. When Muslim learners do face some kind of tension, their response

strategies mean that they are less likely than other learners to bring this tension into the open.

78   For people working in FE, this means that there is a need to think carefully about how we provide support for Muslim learners in these situations. How do we raise the issues in a safe and discreet way? Should we attempt to provide mediation between learners and their families? This is a sensitive area, and the FE system must avoid 'overstepping the mark'. Above all, the sector must be mindful of the risk of disrupting the family unit, which could be extremely costly both for the individual involved and for the family.

79   Providers identified the following possible courses of action to address the issues and needs raised by Muslim learners (and Muslim parents).

- **Equipping and supporting learners.** Providers could talk to learners about the issues they face at home and the possibility of negotiating with their parents. They could provide learners with information about their desired career, which learners could take home and share with their parents to help convince them.

- **Mediating between learners and families.** Providers could recruit and train staff to mediate between Muslim learners and their families, or work with third-party organisations to this end.

- **Encouraging peer mentoring and advice.** Providers could establish peer support networks for Muslim learners, such as an anonymous helpline run by Muslim students.

- **Reviewing disciplinary procedures and policies.** These processes could be reviewed, bearing in mind the preferences of Muslim learners. For instance, there may be a need to provide an anonymous channel for reporting harassment. Providers should be mindful that these learners fear repercussions in such cases, whether from outside or from within the Muslim community.

80   However, providers suggested that, before we can determine which of these possible courses of action to pursue, there are some broader policy questions that need to be addressed.

- How should we interpret our duty to the individual learner in situations where they are internalising a disagreement with their parents?

- How far should we be encouraging individual learners to challenge their parents' views?

- Is it the role of FE to mediate in disputes within the family? What are the limits?

81   For a further discussion of the policy questions, please see paragraphs 111–119 of this report.

Summary

82   It is not unusual for young Muslim learners in education to experience a tension between their personal aspirations and the wishes of their parents. When these disagreements arise, Muslim learners respond very differently from other young people.

83   Muslim learners are much less likely than other young people to pursue their personal goals, regardless of their parents' wishes.

84   Instead, Muslim learners are more likely to adopt strategies that allow them to preserve the harmony and order of the family. The findings show three strategies that are particularly prevalent among Muslim learners.

- They discuss the issue within the family, in order to reach an agreement – even if that involves a compromise or personal sacrifice.

- They seek advice from a respected authority.

- They avoid talking about the issue and instead internalise the tension, even at immense emotional cost.

85   Muslim learners facing disagreements within the family are clearly at risk of becoming disengaged from education. This is even more of a challenge in situations where their response strategies result in compromise, sacrifice or internalised tension.

86   In the context of FE, we need to think carefully about how we provide support for Muslim learners facing these kinds of disagreements within the family. How do we raise the issues in a safe and discreet way? Should we attempt to provide mediation between learners and their families? This is a sensitive area, and the FE system must avoid 'overstepping the mark'. Above all, the sector must be mindful of the risk of disrupting the family unit, which could be extremely costly both for the individual involved and for the family.

Identification with Islam

The young Muslim learner perspective

87   In this report, we have highlighted a number of ways in which being Muslim makes a difference to young people in education. Being a Muslim correlates with the belief that there is 'one right route' in life; it changes the way in which young people think about growing up; and it changes the way young people handle disagreements within the family.

88   To interpret these correlations effectively, we need to understand whether young Muslim people **themselves** would relate these differences to their faith or religion. To what extent do young Muslims view these differences as a key part of what it means to be Muslim?

89   The evidence shows clearly that young Muslim learners **do** identify their Islamic faith with the sort of patterns and differences that this report has outlined. For these learners, the Islamic faith signifies who they are and the direction they take, and not just what they do. It is clear from the evidence that religious identity is a central part of how Muslim learners identify themselves; and that religious identity is more important to young Muslim learners than to non-Muslim learners, including Christian learners. (In the quantitative survey, Muslim learners were significantly

more likely than non-Muslim learners to say that their faith was an inextricable part of who they were. This even held true when we compared the responses of Muslim learners and Christian learners. Comparisons with other faith groups were not possible, given the sample size. For more details, see Annex, paragraphs 17–23.

90   Compared to other young people, Muslim learners portray a strong 'religious mindset'. For Muslim learners with this religious mindset, faith signifies much more than the practices of the religion, such as prayer, food and dress. Faith also provides a guiding framework for the decisions they make in their lives, and it helps them to deal with mistakes (Annex, 63–73).

91   When we spoke to Muslim learners (and parents) in person, they frequently told us that their faith was a complete 'way of life'. One young respondent summed it up by making the point that Islam is 'more than just a religion'.

> Islam is not just a religion but a way of life. It teaches you how to dress, how to act, how to behave.

> Muslim learner

> Islam as a way of life helps because it not only gives grounding but reciting the Koran is a discipline and helps mentally. That focus on dedication transfers to other areas.

> Muslim parent

92   These explanations may not sound contentious or problematic. But in the context of education, they can put a distance between Muslim learners and providers. From a provider perspective, taking steps to address the faith of your students often means meeting the requirements of their religious practice, for instance by providing prayer facilities. This is completely understandable and a very important step forward. On the other hand, from the Muslim learner perspective, faith is much more than

a set of practices. Faith represents a complete way of life for these young people, and they feel frustrated when institutions do not understand this distinction.

> If I tell the teacher I want to pray, they sometimes make a big deal about it because it interferes with class. They need to understand more about why we do it.
>
> Muslim learner

93   Given the widespread popular speculation about Islam, Muslim learners (and parents) felt a particular sense of urgency about the need for greater understanding of the Islamic faith. They told us that institutions have a role to play in tackling misapprehensions about the meaning of Islam, and in reinstating a more balanced understanding of the faith.

> The education system must re-educate those within the industry to understand what Islam truly is rather than believing the media hype. They need to do workshops with lecturers and teachers so that they can understand the proper definition of a Muslim and of Islam.
>
> Muslim parent

94   However, these Muslim parents and learners were not asking for the Muslim community to be treated as a special or separate case. They emphasised the need for mutual understanding between people across all faith groups. And they were very clear that Muslim learners should not be separated from other learners in the institution.

> The issue is not only about Muslim students, there should be a setting where all faith students can come together to understand one another. Do not separate Muslims from the rest of the community.
>
> Muslim parent

The further education sector perspective

95   What does this mean for FE? The clearest challenge raised by this research is to engage with the **meaning** of faith in the lives of Muslim learners. Accommodating religious practices is not the only answer. There is a real need to understand how the world looks from the perspective of Muslim learners. Productive negotiation will be hindered until such time as colleges demonstrate their understanding not just of the religious practices, but also of the faith and the values behind them.

96   When we spoke to people working in the FE sector about the challenge of responding to faith, we found little consistency across respondents. Although some providers and local areas have strategies in place, there is no clear overarching framework for the approaches they are taking – and this leads to a striking lack of consistency across further education as a whole. Some people we spoke to believed that faith has no part to play in the education system, while others went to great lengths to celebrate the different faiths. Some providers support Islamic societies and other faith societies, whereas other providers are very resistant to the idea of any single-faith activity.

97   There are clearly a number of sensitivities among people working in the sector about faith in general, and Islam in particular. Some providers we spoke to expressed a concern that making space for faith in FE could jeopardise community cohesion by encouraging separatism, and could even make learners vulnerable to the influence of extremist groups. Other people questioned whether it would be right to treat faith groups differently from other groups, given the FE sector's commitment to equality and secularity. Several respondents felt that it would be difficult for the sector to build faith into its standardised systems, because people can interpret their faiths in so many different ways.

98   Providers identified the following possible courses of action to address the issues and needs raised by Muslim learners (and Muslim parents).

- **Raising awareness of the Islamic faith among staff.** Providers could embed discussions about Islam and other faiths into the ongoing process of continuing professional development for staff, or host seminars and workshops for staff to sign up to. Providers could develop sessions with the active involvement of Muslim learners and those from other faith groups.

- **Facilitating discussions about Islam and other faiths among students.** Providers could hold faith discussions and debates as a part of the student induction and enrichment process.

- **Supporting the establishment of Islamic societies.** Providers could help students to set up and develop their own Islamic societies, and provide them with ongoing support.

- **Working with inter-faith forums.** In some areas, there are local or regional inter-faith forums that are promoting greater understanding of faith issues. Providers could work with these forums to host talks and seminars.

- **Embedding faith in the curriculum.** Providers could identify opportunities to build faith education into core programmes of study and enrichment. Staff and students could be encouraged to visit places of worship or hear religious speakers.

99   However, providers suggested that, before we can determine which of these possible courses of action to pursue, there are some broader policy questions that need to be addressed.

- In view of our commitment to equality, is it right to make a 'special case' for faith groups?

- How far should we be making space for faith groups within a secular education system?

- In the context of the community cohesion and integration agenda, would it be right for us to allow for separate faith communities within education?

100 For a further discussion of the policy questions, please see paragraphs 111–119 of this report.

Summary

101 In this report, we have highlighted a number of ways in which being Muslim makes a difference to learners. To interpret these patterns, we need to know whether young Muslim people **themselves** would relate these differences to their faith.

102 The evidence shows clearly that young Muslim learners **do** identify their Islamic faith with the sort of patterns and differences that this report has outlined.

103 Much more than other young people, Muslim learners seek to identify themselves through their faith. And these learners are clear that the Islamic faith is more than just a set of religious practices. It guides their decisions in life and helps them to deal with mistakes. They describe the Islamic faith as a 'complete way of life'.

104 These findings show that there is a need to understand the meaning of faith in the lives of Muslim learners. Educational institutions may unwittingly be creating a distance between themselves and Muslim learners by focusing too much on religious practices, and not enough on the meaning of the Islamic faith. Muslim learners (and parents) feel that institutions should try to understand more about the meaning of faith in their lives.

105 Although some providers and local areas have developed strategies to address faith, there is no consistency across the sector as a whole. Some believe that faith has no part to play in the education system, while others go to great lengths to celebrate the different faiths. Some support

Islamic societies and other faith societies, whereas others are very resistant to the idea of any single-faith activity.

106 People working in the sector have some questions about the right response to faith in general, and to Islam in particular. Some people are concerned that making space for faith in FE may jeopardise community cohesion by encouraging separatism. Others question whether it would be right to treat faith groups differently from other groups, given the sector's commitment to equality and secularity.

Responding to Faith in Education

Resolving policy questions

107 This research has given us a clearer understanding of how faith can make a difference to learners in the education system. For Muslim learners, the difference is profound. Faith is central to who they are. But more than that, faith shapes their concept of what they want to become in the future, and the path that they must take to get there.

108 The question is, how should the FE system respond to these differences? When we talked to people working in the sector, we found that their opinions were frequently divided, and often polarised. It is clear that there is no consistency in the way the sector is currently responding to faith.

109 This is, at least in part, a result of there being many unanswered questions in people's minds. Our conversations with people working in FE raised some challenging policy questions that the system must address. These questions demand that we reflect on the very purpose of the FE system, its core values and its social responsibilities. If these questions are not addressed, the action taken by people within the sector will continue to be inconsistent and disjointed.

110 Through our conversations with people working in the sector, we have identified four key policy questions for the FE system to address.

Can we meet the differing needs of Muslim learners and still maintain our commitment to equal treatment?

111   The FE system is committed to the values of equality and diversity. But there are tensions between, on the one hand, the duty to promote equal opportunities and, on the other, the need to recognise the diversity of learners in the system. Many people in the sector are dedicated to the notion of treating all learners equally, in order to give everyone an equal chance. Does this mean we cannot treat people differently, even if we know that they have different mindsets? Is it wrong to differentiate our approaches for Muslim learners, or other faith groups?

112   Our research shows that the mindsets of Muslim learners differ from those of other young people in some significant areas. They feel differently about their identity; they experience their path in life in a different way; and they feel differently about their futures. All these differences have implications for the way FE is delivered. To what extent do we have a responsibility to tailor our services to meet their particular needs?

113   The responses from people working in the sector have been wide-ranging. Some respondents told us that education should not be 'making space for faith' at all, as that might jeopardise the ethos of equality and the secular mission of the system. Some people recognised the need to respond to faith, but emphasised that we must set firm parameters and keep faith under control, so that it does not disrupt the core mission. On the other hand, for other people, faith is a difference that should be celebrated, and they are keen to do everything they can to celebrate it within their institutions.

How should we interpret the role of further education in relation to community cohesion?

114   In light of the concerns about the radicalisation of Muslim young people and the threat of domestic terrorism, the challenge of integration and community cohesion is high on the government's agenda. Yet we talk more about what these things are not, than about what they are. Above

all, we tend to believe that separation and segregation are the opposites of integration and cohesion. If this is true, should FE be acting to prevent the separation of Muslim learners at all costs?

115　For people working within provider bodies, these are sensitive and live debates. Should we allow the establishment of Islamic societies in colleges? Some providers are extremely wary about the potential risks of such activity, and they can cite real examples of college Islamic societies being infiltrated by radical groups. On the other hand, many colleges are successfully supporting Islamic societies and are working closely with the student body to keep an eye on their development. For these providers, having Islamic societies is a key part of maintaining a trusting and honest relationship with the Muslim community in their areas. These questions will need to be addressed in a way that is sensitive to the local context. For instance, a provider with a historical relationship with a long-established Muslim community may take one approach, whereas another provider, in an area where the Muslim community is more recent and the relationship less well developed, may adopt a different approach.

How can we balance the needs of the individual learner and the needs of the family?

116　Many people who work in the sector feel it is their first duty to support the individual to succeed in learning. But what does this mean for Muslim learners, who emphasise the harmony of family over the primacy of the individual? There are some uncertainties for providers about whether and how the duty of FE relates to the wider context of the family and community.

117　Many providers are interested in exploring ways of raising the aspirations of families, as well as of individuals. However, when we spoke to providers, they were very uncertain about how far FE should try to intervene in instances where the needs of the individual may be at odds with the wishes of the family. For some people, it was critical that the sector did not disrupt the family harmony of Muslim learners by 'siding

with the young person' against the parents. On the other hand, some providers felt that it was right for them to be encouraging Muslim learners to move away from their families when they go to university, and to discover the world.

To what extent should we challenge the perspectives of Muslim learners and their families?

118 For the education system and other public services, showing respect for diversity is a key part of delivering a service that does not discriminate against certain groups. This ethos requires staff to show equal respect for cultural viewpoints that are different from their own. But what if the viewpoints of some groups are at odds with the mission of the system? Is it acceptable to challenge their perspectives, in order to stay true to the mission? How do we know where the limits are?

119 In order to respond confidently to these important questions about the role and values of the FE system, we need to be clear about how policy is made in this area. Who should set the policy direction? Who should determine particular policies? The LSC should think carefully about the role it should be playing in this area. Should there be questions that are handled at LSC level? Or should the LSC set broad parameters? How much flexibility should providers have to determine the best courses of action, and how much diversity/inconsistency of approach within the sector is acceptable – or even desirable?

Practical ways forward

120 Of course, there is a danger that we could become paralysed by these philosophical questions about policy. It would be easy to get involved in debating the true values and role of education, instead of actually taking any action. It is important to remember that there is a difference between resolving policy questions and actually doing things.

121 Many of the providers we spoke to have found their own answers to these questions. They are already taking differentiated action to support and include Muslim learners. They are building dialogue and

relationships with the Muslim communities. They are using their own judgement and intuition to balance the needs of individual learners and their families. They are mediating between young people and their families and communities in tense and difficult situations.

122 Despite the sensitivities and challenges, in the process of conducting this research we discovered a widespread appetite for more dialogue and understanding about faith. Providers welcomed the opportunity to discuss the issues, and to share their own experiences of responding to the issues in their local context. Likewise, Muslim learners and parents were keen to tell us what faith means to them in their lives.

123 Taking the time to listen to the stories of young Muslim people and their parents has provided us with a much better understanding of their faith and how they see the world. Our conversations with young Muslims and their families have demonstrated that this type of engagement works. On the basis of our experience, we would recommend that providers openly raise questions about faith with young Muslim people themselves, and engage them in developing the local answers.

124 Muslim learners and their parents have told us that there is an urgent need for providers to engage with the meaning of Islam and other faiths. This is a priority for Muslim learners and parents caught up in a climate of suspicion, which has had a negative impact on their lives in the UK. These learners and parents are determined to stress that this is not about separate treatment. For them, emphasising commonality is every bit as important as celebrating difference. They want to see a greater understanding of the common values and beliefs that are shared by people from different faiths.

125 If providers want to raise the awareness of their staff and students about faith, the most powerful conduit would be the learners themselves. Faith seminars and training sessions could be developed, and could be led by the students themselves. On the basis of our experience, we believe that young people are in the best position to tell us what faith means in their

lives and how it affects the choices they make. It is only by listening to the meaning behind their faith that we will really be able to work in partnership with them to move the debate on.

Annex

Findings from the Quantitative Learner Survey

Sample

1   In all, 805 valid cases were included in the analysis. The sample comprised 385 males (48 per cent) and 416 females (52 per cent). The mean age of the sample was 17 years (n = 295), but the age range was 14 to 26, with the bulk of the sample (78 per cent) aged between 16 and 18. The majority of the sample described themselves as White (n = 437; 55 per cent) or Asian (n = 293; 37 per cent); 52 (7 per cent) described themselves as Black and 13 (2 per cent) as Other ethnic group. Ten of the sample did not provide information on their ethnic category. Table 1 below provides a breakdown of all response options for ethnic category given to participants in the current sample.

Table 1: Ethnicity of learners.

Ethnic category	Frequency (valid %)
White British	352 (44%)
White Irish	2 (0.3%)
White Other	10 (1%
White/Black African	6 (0.8%)
White/Asian	8 (1%)
White/Black Caribbean	14 (2%)
Other White mixed	5 (0.6%)
Indian	43 (5%)
Pakistani	195 (25%)
Bangladeshi	52 (7%)
Other Asian	19 (2%)
Black Caribbean	22 (3%)
African	45 (6%)
Other Black	5 (0.6%)
Chinese	4 (0.5%)
Other	8 (1%)
Missing	10 (1%)

2   Table 2 provides details of faith. The Muslim faith is the most strongly represented in our sample (n = 322; 41 per cent) relative to other faiths.

Table 2: Faith of learners.

Faith	Frequency (valid %)
Buddhist	5 (0.6%)
Jewish	3 (0.4%)
Christian	228 (29%)
Muslim	322 (41%)
Sikh	18 (2%)
Hindu	16 (2%)
Atheist	96 (12%)
Unsure	62 (8%)
Other	36 (5%)
Missing	18 (2%)

3   For purposes of further analysis, additional faith variables were constructed as follows.

Muslim = 322 (41 per cent)

Non-Muslim = 463 (59 per cent)

(19 Missing)

Muslim = 322 (41 per cent)

Christian = 228 (28 per cent)

Neither = 253 (31 per cent)

4   The results of the Muslim/non-Muslim comparison are provided in Appendix 1 to this annex. Since the comparison across Muslim and Christian students was identical in all respects, the findings are not repeated here. This is because by far the majority of the non-Muslim sample were Christians. Analysis of the differences between Muslims and Christians yielded nothing that varied from the findings for the differences between Muslims and non-Muslims.

5   Nor was it possible to look at the interaction between ethnicity (Pakistani, Bangladeshi, Indian and other) and faith (Muslim/non-Muslim), because the number of non-Muslims was too small to make any comparative sense (Table 3). Moreover, because the majority of Asians sampled here

were Muslim, it was impossible to control completely for the impact of
ethnicity as such.

Table 3: Pakistani * Muslim cross tabulation.

		Faith		Total
		Muslim	**Non-Muslim**	
Pakistani	Pakistani	50	2	52
	Bangladeshi	16	3	19
	Indian & Other Asian	191	23	214
Total		257	28	285

6   A more meaningful investigation of the interaction between ethnicity and
     faith was afforded by collapsing ethnicity into White, Asian, Black and
     Other, and then crossing these membership categories with faith
     (Muslim/Non-Muslim).

Table 4: Ethnic category * Muslim cross tabulation.

		Faith		Total
		Muslim	**Non-Muslim**	
Ethnic category	White	31	389	420
	Asian	259	33	292
	Black	19	33	52
	Other	8	5	13
Total		317	460	777

Strategy of analysis

Item and factor analysis

Item analysis

7   Responses to all items were investigated using item analysis techniques
     to ensure that the items discriminated well across individuals, consistent
     with the normal distribution (that is, a bell-shaped curve). Any items with
     ceiling effects (that is, all responses skewed at the upper or lower end)
     should be eliminated from further analysis. However, no abnormal skews
     were evident, so all items were then entered into Phase 2 of the analysis.
     It is usual to distil item responses by investigating patterns of responding

across item sets. The survey was designed with particular constructs in mind, with a view to testing hypotheses about Muslim versus non-Muslim student mindsets comprising certain constellations of value, belief and behaviour. Accordingly, each section of the survey (designed to tap into particular value, belief or behavioural constructs) was entered into factor analysis.

Factor analysis

8   Factor analysis identifies statistically all the items that cluster together in some way, and where each cluster of items can also be differentiated from the others. Items that correlate strongly with each other (because they have generated similar patterns of responding) are called factors. These factors are also distinct from each other, in that they differentiate between patterns of responding across items.

9   Five sets of factor analysis were computed, using principal components exploratory analysis with oblimin rotation to simple structure, absolute value cut-offs of 0.40 and Eigenvalues over 1. Scree plots were used to identify key components or factors in the data. Factor analysis yielded coherent factor structures in all cases, with only four items eliminated from the analysis. This suggests that responses could be coherently organised both in statistical and conceptual terms, as the factors 'made sense' against the original hypothesised conceptual structure.

10   The factors are discussed under headings as follows.

- Religious identity.

- Beliefs about growing up: 1) Finding one's place in family and community; 2) Finding oneself as an individual.

- Foundations of a good life: 1) Staying true to one's roots; 2) Having/providing for one's own family; 3) Securing parental and community respect; 4) Securing personal and social growth; 5)

Securing personal happiness and a sense of control; and 6) Securing material status.

- Moral and religious beliefs: 1) Faith as a guiding framework in life; 2) Finding one's own way in life even if that means making mistakes.

- Strategies of responding to conflict between parental wishes and personal goals: 1) Internalisation strategy; 2) Externalisation strategy; 3) Pursuing personal goals regardless; and 4) Seeking formal advice.

11   Seeking peer advice was entered into subsequent analysis as a single item. Also, items pertaining to the importance of study and qualifications before having a family, and the belief that one can always return to college later if necessary, were entered into the analysis as single items.

Tests of difference

12   Differences between Muslim and non-Muslim students and between Muslim and Christian students were analysed using independent t-tests to ascertain whether mean differences could have occurred by chance alone (descriptive statistics are provided in Appendix 1 to this annex). A significant finding demonstrates that the difference is systematic – that is, the likelihood of its being a chance or random effect is minimal. A strong effect means that the difference could only have occurred once in a 1,000 times by chance alone ($p<.01$). A moderate effect means that the difference could only have occurred once in 500 times by chance alone ($p<.05$). In the current analysis, the effect sizes are so large that the probabilities are $p<.000$ – that is, they could only have occurred once in a million times by chance alone.

13   The effects of gender, and also of ethnicity along with faith, were investigated using two-factor univariate analysis of variance. In one set of analyses, gender was investigated alongside faith; and in another, ethnicity was investigated alongside faith. The focus here was to look at whether the effects of faith could be explained by other factors like

gender or ethnicity or both, or whether all these factors need to be taken into consideration.

Tests of association

14 Pearson correlation analysis was used to investigate associations between factors. This analysis enables us to look at patterns of responding across beliefs, values and behaviours to ascertain whether there are any coherent overarching mindsets guiding responses to the items. The same probability tests are applied to this data as above to eliminate chance effects. A positive correlation means that, as the value of one construct increases, so does the other; conversely, a negative correlation means that, as the value of one construct decreases, the value of the other also decreases. Regression analysis (predictive testing) was also used to investigate whether each construct or factor arising from the findings is driven more by faith, or whether ethnicity in particular might be the overriding explanatory factor.

Discriminant function analysis

15 This analysis (Appendix 2 to this annex) enables identification of clusters of factors that discriminate significantly (beyond chance) between Muslim and non-Muslim students. Through this analysis, we can ask questions like 'which of several value, belief and behavioural factors are the most important in understanding the Muslim student's mindset?'

Results

16 In what follows, the results (tests of difference and association) are presented under each of the key factorial themes arising from the factor analysis.

Religious identity

17 Analysis produced one coherent factor describing responses to items about religious beliefs, as follows.

- I set aside time for prayer and worship as my faith/religion requires.

- My faith/religion makes me different from people outside my faith/religion.

- My faith/religion helps me to deal with problems.

- My faith/religion guides the decisions I make in life.

- I listen carefully to the leaders of my faith/religion.

- My faith/religion influences what I wear and eat.

18   These six items were summed and averaged to form a single-scale score for 'religious identity'. Religious identity signals an emotional investment, as well as a set of beliefs about one's faith, and provides a framework for behaviour.

19   Muslim students scored significantly higher on religious identity than non-Muslim students. Muslim students are also much more likely than non-Muslim students to see their **faith, family, cultural roots and ethnicity** as an inextricable part of who they are.

20   Overall, there is also a small but significant gender difference on religious identity, with males more strongly identified (mean = 1.9) than females (mean = 1.8), irrespective of faith (F Sex = 5.120, df = 1,759, $p<.024$). There is, however, no interaction between gender and faith on religious identification (F Sex x Muslim = 1.33, $p<.248$); that is, the difference between males and females on religious identification is the same for both the Muslim and the non-Muslim population. Both Muslim males and Muslim females otherwise endorse a significantly stronger religious identification than non-Muslim males and females.

Table 5: Gender and religious identity.

Sex	Muslim	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Male	Muslim	2.5	.47	169
	Non-Muslim	1.4	.60	193
Female	Muslim	2.3	.44	139
	Non-Muslim	1.4	.55	259

21   Ethnicity has a strong association with religious identity (F Ethnicity = 6.89, p<.000) but there is also a strong interaction between ethnicity and faith (F Ethnicity x Muslim = 8.2, p<.000). White students are lowest on religious identity (mean = 1.4), relative to Asian (mean = 2.3), Black (mean = 2.2) and Other ethnic group (mean = 2.3). However, being Muslim overrides this ethnic effect for all except Black students: in all cases, Muslim students score significantly higher than non-Muslim students on religious identity. White Muslims (mean = 2.5), Asian Muslims (mean = 2.4) and Other Muslims (mean = 2.6) score significantly higher on religious identity than White non-Muslims (mean = 1.3), Asian non-Muslims (mean = 1.4) and Other ethnic group non-Muslims (mean = 1.8). Black Muslims and Black non-Muslims score equally highly on religious identity.

22   Religious identity is significantly positively associated with:

- belief in faith as a guiding framework in life (r = .805, p<.000);

- belief in staying true to one's cultural and ethnic roots (r = .80, p<.000);

- belief that growing up is about finding one's place in the family and community (r = .68, p<.00);

- aspirations to have, and to provide for, one's own family (r = .29, p<.00), to enjoy material status (r = .19, p<.00) and to secure respect from family and community (r = .52, p<.00); and

- seeking formal advice (r = .49, p<.00).

23 And it is negatively correlated with a belief that growing up is about finding oneself as an individual (r = -.37, p<.00) and about finding one's own way in life, even if that involves making mistakes (r = -.35, p<.00).

Beliefs about growing up

24 Two distinct bundles of items were discernible in responses to items pertaining to beliefs about growing up. One of these bundles is about finding one's place in the family and community (Where have I come from?), while the other is more about finding oneself as an individual (Where am I going?).

Finding one's place in the family and community

25 The five items comprising this bundle all imply that growing up is about becoming grounded in the family, mindful of one's religious and cultural roots.

- It's important for parents to give children a real understanding of their religion.

- It's important for parents to give children a sense of their cultural roots.

- You learn more about yourself when you are with your family.

- Children should respect their parents' wishes.

- A person who breaks from their family will never really know who they are.

26 Muslim students are significantly more likely than non-Muslim students to say that growing up is about becoming mindful of their religious and cultural roots and taking their place in the family.

27   Males (mean = 3.0) and females (mean = 3.0) did not differ on this belief
       (F Sex = .903, p<.342); nor was there any significant interaction between
       gender and faith (F Sex x Muslim = 3.528, p<.061).

28   Looking at the impact of ethnicity, it would appear that Asian students
       (mean = 3.3), Black (mean = 3.1) and members of Other ethnic group
       (mean = 3.2) are significantly more likely than White students (mean =
       2.7), to say that growing up is about taking one's place in the family (F
       Ethnicity = 3.25, p<.021). Being Muslim, however, eliminates the ethnic
       difference for all except Black students: Muslim students are more likely
       than non-Muslim students to see growing up as being about finding one's
       place in the family (F Ethnicity x Muslim = 2.4, p<.05). For Black
       students, there is no difference between Muslim (mean = 3.2) and non-
       Muslim students (mean = 3.2) in their endorsement of this belief. Both
       White and Asian non-Muslims score lowest (mean = 2.6 for both) on this
       'family' factor.

29   Belief that growing up is about finding one's place in the family and
       community is positively correlated with:

       • belief in the importance of staying true to one's cultural and ethnic
         roots (r = .71, p<.00) and in faith as a guiding framework in life (r =.72,
         p<.00);

       • religious identity (r = .68, p<.00);

       • aspirations to have, and to provide for, one's own family (r = .32,
         p<.00), to enjoy material status (r = .23, p<.01), and to secure respect
         from family and community (r = .59, p<.00); and

       • seeking formal advice in the event of conflict between parental wishes
         and personal goals (r = .46, p<.00), especially from a religious leader (r
         = .31, p<.00) and family member (r = .49, p<.00).

30   And it is negatively correlated with belief that growing up is about finding
       oneself as an individual (r = -.33, p<.00).

Finding oneself as an individual

31   The five items comprising this bundle all imply that growing up is about finding oneself as a unique individual, both inside and outside the family.

- Children have a right to disagree with their parents.

- It's important for parents to let children form their own beliefs and values.

- Some children need to break away from their family life to find themselves.

- You learn about yourself when you're with your friends.

- Sometimes arguments in the family are important to clear the air.

32   Muslim students are significantly less likely than non-Muslim students to say that growing up is about finding oneself as an individual, both inside and outside the family.

33   Males (mean = 2.9) and females (mean = 3.0) differ significantly on the importance of finding oneself as an individual (F Sex = 7.78, p<.005), with females scoring higher overall. However, there is an interaction between gender and faith (F Sex x Muslim = 4.78, p<.029), showing that it is only Muslim males and females who demonstrate this difference. That is, Muslim females score significantly higher than Muslim males on the importance of finding themselves as individuals; non-Muslim males and females do not differ significantly.

Table 6: Finding oneself as individual * sex * faith.

Sex	Muslim	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Male	Muslim	2.6	.64	166
	Non-Muslim	3.2	.71	190
Female	Muslim	2.8	.52	137
	Non-Muslim	3.2	.43	257

34   There is a significant association between ethnicity and finding oneself as an individual (F Ethnicity = 27.2, p<.000); White students (mean = 3.2) are more likely than (especially) Asian students (mean = 2.8) to say that growing up is about finding oneself as an individual. However, faith strongly overrides this effect: across all ethnic categories, Muslim students are significantly less likely than non-Muslim students to endorse this belief about growing up – White (Muslim mean = 2.7; non-Muslim mean = 3.2), Asian (Muslim mean = 2.7; non-Muslim mean = 3.2), Black (Muslim mean = 2.4; non-Muslim mean = 3.2) and Other (Muslim mean = 2.7; non-Muslim mean = 3.4).

35   Belief that growing up is about finding oneself as an individual is significantly positively correlated with:

- a moral belief in the importance of finding one's own way in life, even if that involves making mistakes (r = .38, p<.000);

- aspirations to personal and social growth (r = .16, p<.01);

- aspirations to personal happiness and a sense of control (r = .13, p<.01);

- seeking peer advice in the event of conflict between parental wishes and personal goals (r = .20, p<.000); and

- a strategy of pursuing personal goals, regardless of parental wishes (r = .33, p<.00).

36   This belief about finding oneself is also significantly negatively correlated with:

- staying true to one's faith as the foundation of a good life (r = -.365, p<.000);

- using faith as a guiding framework in life (r = -.354, p<.000);

- the importance of finding one's place in the family and the community (r = -.326, p<.000);

- religious identity (r= -.367, p<.000);

- aspiring to have, and to provide for, one's own family (r = -.104, p<.05);

- aspiring to secure respect from the family and community (r = -.248, p<.01); and

- seeking advice from a religious leader (r = -.32, p<.00).

Foundations of a good future life

37   Six bundles of items were generated from factor analysis, three pertaining to family foundations (staying true to one's roots, having one's own family, securing family and community respect) and three pertaining to more personal considerations (personal and social growth, personal control and happiness, and material status).

Staying true to one's roots

38   The five items comprising this bundle all pertain to sticking to one's religious, ethnic and cultural roots as key to a good future.

- Following the practices of my religion.

- Staying true to the values of my faith.

- Staying true to my ethnic roots.

- Being part of a religious community.

- Staying true to my cultural roots.

39   Muslim students are significantly more likely than non-Muslim students to say that the foundation of a good future life is to stay true to one's religious and cultural roots. Males (mean = 2.1) and females (mean =

2.1) did not differ on this belief (F Sex = .444, p<.505) whether Muslim or non-Muslim (F Sex x Muslim = 1.29, p<.256).

40 Ethnicity is associated with inclination to stay true to one's cultural and family roots (F Ethnicity = 160.0, p<.000) with White students being least inclined (mean = 1.6), relative to students from other ethnic categories (means of 2.5). However, faith overrides this effect: Muslim students are consistent in scoring significantly higher on staying true to their roots than non-Muslim students within all except the Black sample (F Ethnicity x Muslim = 6.4, p<.00). Black students achieve comparably high scores on staying true to one's roots across both Muslim and non-Muslim faiths. White non-Muslims score the lowest on this (mean = 1.5).

41 Belief in staying true to one's roots as the foundation of a good future is positively correlated with:

- religious identity (r = .80, p<.00);

- belief in faith as a guiding framework in life (r = .74, p<.00);

- belief that growing up is about finding one's place in the family and community (r = .71, p<.00);

- securing respect from family and community (r = .58, p<.00);

- seeking formal advice as one means of managing conflict between parental wishes and personal goals (r = .46, p<.00), especially advice from a religious leader (r = .58, p<.00) and from a family member (r = .25, p<.00);

- belief that growing up is about finding oneself as an individual (r = .37, p<.00); and

- aspirations to have, and to provide for, one's own family (r = .34, p<.00), to enjoy material status (r = .23, p<.01), and to secure personal and social growth (r = .14, p<.05).

42   Belief in staying true to one's roots as the foundation for a good future is negatively correlated with belief in the importance of finding one's own way in life (r = -.19, p<.05).

Having one's own family

43   Items pertaining to having and providing for one's own family through marriage, as a foundation for a good future life, are as follows.

- Having my own family.

- Creating a good home for my family.

- Being able to provide for my family.

- Getting married.

- Spending time with my family.

44   Muslim students are significantly more likely than non-Muslim students to say that having, and providing for, their own family is important to their future. Males (mean = 2.7) and females (mean = 2.7) did not differ on their aspirations to have and/or provide for their own family (F Sex = .000, p<.994), whether they were Muslim or non-Muslim (F Sex x Muslim = 2.72, p<.09).

45   There is no effect of ethnicity on the aspiration to have, or to provide for, one's own family (F Ethnicity = 1.54, p<.202) and no interaction between ethnicity and faith (F Ethnicity x Muslim = .691, p<.556).

46   Aspirations to have, and to provide for, one's own family are positively correlated with:

- religious identity (r = .29, p<.00);

- belief in faith as a guiding framework in life (r = .30, p<.00);

- belief that growing up is about finding one's place in the family and community (r = .32, p<.00);

- belief in staying true to one's roots as the foundation for a good life (r = .34, p<.00);

- securing respect from the family and community (r = .37, p<.00);

- seeking formal advice as one means of managing conflict between parental wishes and personal goals (r = .25, p<.00), especially advice from a religious leader (r = .22, p<.00) and from a family member (r = .18, p<.00); and

- aspirations to material status (r = .22, p<.00), personal and social growth (r = .24, p<.00) and happiness and control (r = .27, p<.00).

Securing parental and community respect

47   Three items were about securing parental approval and community respect as foundations for a good life.

- My parents' approval of the life I am leading.

- Making my parents happy.

- Being respected in my community.

48   Muslim students are significantly more likely than non-Muslim students to say that it will be important to them to secure parental and community respect.

49   There is no significant difference between males (mean = 2.4) and females (mean = 2.4) on this aspiration (F Sex = 2.36, p<.124). There is, however, a significant interaction between gender and faith (F Sex x Muslim = 4.88, p<.027), attributable to the fact that it is only male Muslims who are **more likely** than female Muslims to seek respect from family and community.

Table 7: Securing approval and respect * gender * faith.

Sex	Muslim	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Male	Muslim	2.7	.38	169
	Non-Muslim	2.2	.55	193
Female	Muslim	2.7	.39	142
	Non-Muslim	2.3	.44	257

50   There is no significant effect of ethnicity on the aspiration to secure parental and community respect (F Ethnicity = .927, p<.427).

51   Aspirations to secure family and community respect are positively correlated with:

- belief in the importance of staying true to one's roots as the foundation of a good life (r = .58, p<.00);

- belief in the importance of faith as a guiding framework in life (r = .60, p<.00);

- aspirations to have, and to provide for, one's own family (r = .37, p<.00), to enjoy material status (r = .38, p<.00) and to secure personal and social growth (r = .23, p<.00);

- seeking formal advice (r = .38, p<.00) to address conflict between personal goals and parental wishes, especially advice from a religious leader (r = .25, p<.01) and from a family member (r = .37, p<.00);

- belief that growing up is about finding one's place in the family and community (r = .59, p<.00); and

- religious identity (r = .52, p<.00).

52   They are negatively correlated with the belief that growing up is about finding oneself as an individual (r = -.25, p<.00).

Securing personal and social growth

53   Five items converge on a theme of personal and social growth as the
     foundation for a good life.

   - Having lots of experiences.

   - Doing something different and creative.

   - Keeping in touch with friends.

   - Being really good at something.

   - Having a chance to help other people.

54   There is no difference between Muslim and non-Muslim students in the
     importance of personal and social growth to how they live their future.
     Males (mean = 2.6) and females (mean = 2.6) did not differ in this
     aspiration (F Sex = 3.07, $p<.08$), whether Muslim or non-Muslim (F Sex x
     Muslim = .430, $p<.161$). There is, however, a significant effect of ethnicity
     on securing personal and social growth (F Ethnicity = 3.95, $p<.013$).
     White students (mean = 2.6) and students from other ethnic groups
     (mean = 2.7) show the strongest scores on the importance of personal
     and social growth.

55   Aspiration to personal and social growth is significantly positively
     correlated with:

   - aspiration to personal happiness and control ($r = .350$, $p<.00$);

   - aspiration to have, and to provide for, one's own family ($r = .24$, $p<.00$);

   - aspiration to material status ($r = .23$, $p<.00$);

   - finding one's own way in life ($r = .28$, $p<.00$);

   - finding oneself as an individual ($r = .16$, $p<.05$);

   - seeking formal advice ($r = .16$, $p<.05$);

- seeking peer advice (r = .20, p<.00);

- the belief that one can return to college later if one has to stop for some reason (r = .17, p<.05); and

- staying true to one's faith (r = .14, p<.05).

Securing personal happiness and a sense of control

56   Four items pertain to a theme of individual happiness, security and control, as the foundation for a good life.

- Having control of my own life.

- Being happy with myself.

- Doing what I want, not what other people want.

- Feeling secure.

57   There is no difference between Muslim and non-Muslim students in the importance of attaining personal happiness and a sense of control to how they live their future. However, females (mean = 2.7) are more likely than males (mean = 2.7) to aspire to achieve personal happiness and a sense of control (F Sex = 5.55, p<.019), irrespective of faith (F Sex x Muslim = .002, p<.960). There is no effect of ethnicity on the desire to seek personal happiness and control (F Ethnicity = .443, p<.722).

58   Aspirations to personal happiness and a sense of control are positively correlated with:

- aspirations to personal and social growth (r = .35, p<.00), material status (r = .19, p<00) and to have and provide for one's own family (r = .22, p<.00); and

- the importance of finding one's own way in life, even if that involves making mistakes (r = .25, p<.00).

Securing material status

59   Two items converged on earnings and status as the foundation for a good future life.

- How much I earn.

- The status of my job in society.

60   Muslim students are significantly more likely than non-Muslim students to say that securing material status is important to their future. Males (mean = 2.3) and females (mean = 2.3) did not differ on this aspiration (F Sex = 1.42, p<.234), whether Muslim or non-Muslim (F Sex x Muslim = .457, p<.499).

61   There is no impact of ethnicity on the aspiration to secure material status (F Ethnicity = 1.1, p<.328) and no interaction between ethnicity and faith (F Ethnicity x Muslim = 1.87, p<.13).

62   Aspirations to material status as a foundation to a good life are positively correlated with:

- aspirations to personal and social growth (r = .23, p<.00), personal happiness and sense of control (r = .19, p<.00), having and providing for one's own family (r = .22, p<.00) and securing family and community respect (r = .19, p<.00);

- belief that growing up is about finding one's place in the family and community (r = .23, p<.00); and

- religious identity (r = .19, p<.00).

Moral and religious beliefs

63   Two overarching life orientations were discernible in responses to belief items. These hinged on the idea of living life either **with** or **without** a clear framework. One life orientation signals the importance of living one's life within a clear framework: this assumes that there is a right way to proceed. The other life orientation denotes the completely opposite

way of proceeding in life – involving trial and error, the risk of disapproval and 'going wrong'.

Faith as a framework/guiding force in life

64   Five items converged on the belief in faith as a guiding framework in life, mapping out what is right and what is wrong.

- People who have had some religious education (for example, Mosque school, Sunday school) have a real advantage in life.

- Religious leaders can help you avoid making mistakes when you're growing up.

- There are clear moral rules in life which tell you what is right and wrong.

- People who have a good life will be rewarded in the afterlife.

- To lead a good life, you should closely follow the example set by others.

65   Muslim students are significantly more likely than non-Muslim students to believe that their faith provides a guiding framework for them, with prescriptions for the way they should live their life.

66   Males (mean = 2.9) are more likely than females (mean = 2.8) to believe in faith as a guiding framework (F Sex = 13.01, p<.000), irrespective of faith (F Sex x Muslim = 1.081, p<.299).

67   There is no significant variation across ethnic categories in strength of this belief (F Ethnicity = 2.4, p<.10).

68   Belief in the importance of faith as a guiding framework in life is positively correlated with:

- aspiration to have, and to provide for, one's own family (r = .30, p<.00);

- aspiration to material status (r = .27, p<.00);

- seeking peer advice (r = .47, p<.00);

- staying true to one's faith (r = .74, p<.00);

- religious identity (r = .75, p<.00);

- belief that growing up is about finding one's place in the family and community (r = .72, p<.00);

- securing respect from the family and community (r = .57, p<.00);

- seeking formal advice as one means of managing conflict between parental wishes and personal goals (r = .57, p<.00), especially advice from a religious leader (r = .58, p<.00) and from a family member (r = .25, p<.00); and

- aspirations to have, and to provide for, one's own family (r = .30, p<.00) and to enjoy material status (r = .27, p<.01).

69   It is negatively correlated with:

- finding one's own way in life (r = -.18, p<.00); and

- finding oneself as an individual (r = -.35, p<.00).

Finding one's own way to live life

70   Five items converged on the belief that matters of right and wrong are relative, and that finding one's own way in life is important to one's identity. This can be a risky business, involving mistakes and sometimes also the disapproval of others.

- It's important to find your own way in life even if it means you might go wrong.

- To find out who you really are, you have to try things out for yourself.

- Whether things are right or wrong is just a matter of opinion.

- It's normal for people to make big mistakes when they're growing up.

- Sometimes you need to try things out for yourself, even if your family disapproves.

71   Muslim students are significantly less likely than non-Muslim students to believe that living is about finding one's own way and learning from one's mistakes. There are no significant variations across ethnic categories in this belief (F Ethnicity = 2.3, p<.13).

72   Belief in the importance of finding one's own way in life is positively correlated with:

- finding oneself as an individual (r = .37, p<.00);

- aspirations to personal and social growth (r = .28, p<.00) and happiness/control (r = .25, p<.00);

- seeking peer advice (r = .19, p<.01); and

- belief that one can return to college later if it is necessary to stop for some reason (r = .21, p<.00).

73   It is negatively correlated with:

- religious identity (r = -.24, p<.00);

- belief that growing up is about finding one's place in the family and community (r = -.21, p<.00);

- belief in faith as a guiding framework in life (r = -.17, p<.05);

- belief that staying true to one's roots is a foundation for a good life (r = -.19, p<.05); and

- the likelihood of seeking advice from a religious leader (r = -.21, p<.00) in the event of conflict between parental wishes and personal goals.

74   The two single items below did not correlate meaningfully with either of the two basic life orientations (faith as a framework/guiding force in life; finding one's own way to live life).

- Item 4.3: You can always go back to college later in life if you have to stop for some reason.

- Item 4.10: It's really important to study and get qualifications before you start a family.

75   Muslim students were more likely than non-Muslim students to agree with the idea that one can return to college later, if necessary. Overall, females (mean = 3.2) were more likely than males to agree that one can stop college and return later if necessary (F Sex = 17.1, p<.000), irrespective of faith (F Sex x Muslim = .000, p<. 996). There was no effect of ethnicity on this belief (F Ethnicity = 1.8, p<.144).

76   Muslim students were also more likely than non-Muslim students to agree that it is important to study and get qualifications before starting a family. There were, however, no gender differences (F Sex = .712, p<.399) and no interaction between gender and faith (F Sex x Muslim = .505, p<.478). There was no effect of ethnicity on this belief (F Ethnicity = .364, p<.779).

77   The belief in being able to return to college if necessary is positively correlated only with the belief that life involves finding one's own way, even if that means making mistakes.

78   The belief in the importance of study is not correlated significantly with any other variable in the data set.

Dealing with conflict between parental wishes and personal goals

79   Factor analysis generated four distinct parcels of responses to the items. Each distinct bundle is labelled by looking at the content of the items it comprises. Here, each item bundle pertained to a distinct strategy for

dealing with conflict between parental wishes and personal goals: internalisation, externalisation, pursuing personal goals regardless, and seeking advice from authority.

Internalisation strategy

80   The four items comprising this factor all converged on a strategy of internalising conflict between parental wishes and personal goals, and going along with parental wishes. In order of importance to understanding this factor, the four items are as follows.

- I would avoid talking to my parents about the disagreement.

- I would not let anyone else know about the disagreement.

- I would follow my parents' wishes, even if it made me unhappy.

- I would not let my parents know what I thought.

81   Overall, males (mean = 2.2) are more likely to report using an internalisation strategy to deal with conflict than are females (mean = 2.0) (F Sex = 9.8, p<.002), irrespective of their faith (F Sex x Muslim = .14, p<.705).

82   There is no effect of ethnicity on the endorsement of an internalisation strategy (F Ethnicity = .210, p<.889) and no interaction between ethnicity and faith (F Ethnicity x Muslim = 1.45, p<.227).

83   Use of an internalisation strategy to deal with conflict between parental wishes and personal goals is positively correlated with:

- belief that growing up is about finding one's place in the family and community (r = .34, p<.00);

- religious identity (r = .31, p<.00);

- aspirations to secure family and community respect (r = .22, p<.00);

- belief in the importance of staying true to one's cultural and ethnic roots as a foundation for a good life (r = .31, p<.00) and in faith as providing a guiding framework in life (r = .35, p<.00); and

- seeking formal advice to deal with the conflict (r = .17, p<.00).

84   Regression analysis shows that the overriding positive predictors of using an internalisation strategy are as follows.

- Belief that growing up is about finding one's place in the family and community.

- Belief in the importance of faith as a guiding force in life.

- Aspirations to have, and to provide for, one's own family and also to enjoy material status.

85   The overriding negative predictor is aspiration to secure personal happiness and control.

Externalisation strategy

86   The five items comprising this factor all converged on a strategy of externalising conflict with a view to negotiating a compromise solution. In order of importance to understanding this factor, the five items are as follows.

- I would assume my parents had my best interests at heart.

- I would negotiate with my parents.

- I would expect my parents to ask me what I wanted.

- I would clearly express my point of view to my parents.

- I would try to persuade my parents to see things my way.

87   Overall, females (mean = 3.4) are more likely than males (mean = 3.2) to report using an externalisation strategy to deal with conflict with their

parents (F Sex = 21.38, p<.000), irrespective of faith (F Sex x Muslim = .013, p<.911). That is, the female/male difference is replicated across Muslim and non-Muslim faiths.

Table 8: Externalisation strategy * gender * faith.

Sex	Muslim	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Male	Muslim	3.3	.44	172
	Non-Muslim	3.2	.45	188
Female	Muslim	3.4	.36	140
	Non-Muslim	3.3	.43	256

88   There is no effect of ethnicity on the endorsement of an externalisation strategy (F Ethnicity = 2.48, p<.11), but there is an interaction between ethnicity and faith (F Ethnicity x Muslim = 3.08, p<.027). This interaction is explained by the fact that, for all except Black students, Muslims score significantly higher on externalisation than do non-Muslims. Black Muslims, on the other hand, score the same as Black non-Muslims on externalisation (that is, both groups score highly).

89   Externalisation strategy is positively correlated with:

- belief in the importance of faith as a guiding force in life (r = .20, p<.00);

- seeking formal advice (r = .22, p<.00);

- seeking peer advice (r = .19, p<.00);

- finding one's place in the family and community (r = .28, p<.00);

- religious identity (r = .18, p<.01);

- aspiring to have, and to provide for, one's own family (r = .22, p<.00);

- aspiring to secure respect from the family and community (r = .27, p<.00); and

- aspiring to secure personal happiness and a sense of control (r = .22, p<.00).

90 Regression analysis shows that the overriding predictors of using an externalisation strategy are as follows.

- Aspirations to secure family and community respect and to have, and to provide for, one's own family.

- Aspirations to seek personal happiness and a sense of control.

- Belief in the importance of **both** finding one's place in family and community **and** finding oneself as an individual as the foundation for a good life.

- Belief in the importance of staying true to one's cultural and ethnic roots.

Pursuing personal goals regardless

91 The two items comprising this factor both reflect a strategy of pursuing personal goals, regardless of parental wishes. These two items are as follows.

- I would insist on doing what I want to do.

- I would be angry with my parents for not accepting my ideas.

92 Females (mean = 2.9) are more likely than males (mean = 2.7) to report that they would pursue their own personal goals, regardless of parental wishes (F Sex = 8.605, p<.000); there is also a significant interaction between Sex and Faith (F Sex x Muslim = 3.5, p<.05). This can be explained by the fact that the gender difference is only pertinent to the Muslim sample.

Table 9: Pursuing personal goals * gender * faith.

Sex	Muslim	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Male	Muslim	2.5	.73	170
	Non-Muslim	3.0	.68	193
Female	Muslim	2.7	.69	140
	Non-Muslim	3.0	.59	260

93   Ethnic membership was not significantly associated with differentials in inclination to pursue personal goals (F Ethnicity = .481, p<.695); non-Muslims **across all ethnic categories** were significantly more likely than Muslims to say that they would pursue their own personal goals, regardless of parental wishes (F Ethnicity x Muslim = 2.28, p<.17).

94   Pursuing personal goals irrespective of parental wishes is positively correlated with a belief that growing up is about finding oneself as an individual (r = .33, p<.00) and about finding one's own way in life, even if that involves making mistakes (r = .34, p<.00).

95   It is negatively correlated with:

- belief that growing up is about finding one's place in the family and community (r = -.25, p<.00), staying true to one's cultural and ethnic roots as the foundation for a good life (r = -.26, p<.00) and faith as a guiding framework in life (r = -.25, p<.00);

- religious identity (r = -.25, p<.00); and

- securing respect from family and community (r = -.23, p<.00).

96   Regression analysis shows that the overriding predictors of pursuing personal goals regardless of parental wishes are as follows.

- Belief in the importance of finding one's own way in life even if that involves making mistakes.

- Belief in growing up as being about finding oneself as a unique individual.

- Aspirations to seek personal happiness and a sense of control.

- Aspirations to seek material status.

97   The overriding negative predictors of this are as follows.

- Less belief that growing up is about finding one's place in the family and community.

- Low aspirations to have, and to provide for, one's own family.

- Low aspirations to secure family and community respect.

Seeking advice from formal and informal sources

98   The three items comprising this factor are all about seeking advice from a designated authority. It is noteworthy that seeking advice from friends did not correlate with this factor, suggesting that students strongly differentiate between two forms of advice: **informal advice** from peers and **formal advice** from someone at school/college, a family member and/or a religious leader.

- I would ask advice of someone who works at my school or college.

- I would ask advice of a member of my family.

- I would ask advice of a religious leader.

99   The item 'I would seek advice from my friends' stood alone in the analysis, and was treated thus in further analysis.

100   There is no significant gender difference on seeking advice from formal sources about how to deal with conflict between parental wishes and

personal goals (F Sex = .110, p<.740). However, there is a significant interaction between gender and faith (F Sex x Muslim = 3.821, p<.05), which can be attributed to differences between males and females in the non-Muslim sample only. That is, female non-Muslims are more likely than male non-Muslims to seek advice from formal sources.

Table 10: Seeking advice * gender * faith.

Sex	Muslim	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Male	Muslim	2.7	.61	172
	Non-Muslim	2.2	.58	192
Female	Muslim	2.7	.67	137
	Non-Muslim	2.3	.58	256

101 Ethnicity was not related to advice-seeking (F Ethnicity = 1.9, p<.126), but there was an interaction between ethnicity and faith (F Ethnicity x Muslim = 2.7, p<.015). That is, only Muslims who described themselves as White, Asian or Other were more likely than non-Muslims to seek formal advice about a conflict between personal goals and parental wishes: Black Muslims were, on the other hand, no more likely than Black non-Muslims to say that they would seek formal advice to deal with this conflict.

102 Seeking formal advice is positively correlated with:

- belief in the importance of faith as a guiding framework for life (r = .46, p<.00) and in staying true to one's cultural and ethnic roots (r = .47, p<.00);

- religious identity (r = .46, p<.00); and

- aspirations to have, and to provide for, one's own family (r = .25, p<.00) and to secure family and community respect (r = .38, p<.00).

103   Regression analysis shows that the strongest overarching predictors of
      seeking formal advice are as follows.

- Religious identity.

- Aspirations to secure respect from the family and community.

- Belief in the importance of faith as a guiding framework in life.

- Aspirations to personal and social growth.

104   The key factor working against the seeking of formal advice is a belief
      that growing up is about finding oneself as an individual.

Analysis of single 'advice-seeking' items
I would ask advice of a religious leader

105   Muslim students scored significantly higher than non-Muslim students on
      asking advice of a religious leader. Males (mean = 2.1) and females
      (mean = 2.0) did not differ significantly overall (F Sex = .264, p<.608); but
      within the Muslim sample, male Muslims were significantly more likely
      than female Muslims to say that they would seek advice from a religious
      leader.

Table 11: Religious advice * gender * faith.

Sex	Muslim	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Male	Muslim	2.6	.96	176
	Non-Muslim	1.6	.80	194
Female	Muslim	2.4	.94	140
	Non-Muslim	1.6	.79	259

106   There is no effect of ethnicity on whether a student would seek advice
      from a religious leader (F Ethnicity = 2.1, p<.11).

107   Seeking advice from a religious leader is positively correlated with:

- belief in the importance of staying true to one's cultural and ethnic roots (r = .58, p<.00) and in faith as a guiding force in life (r = .58, p<.00);

- belief that growing up is about finding one's place in the family and community (r = .50, p<.00);

- aspirations to secure family and community respect (r = .37, p<.00); and

- religious identity (r = .63, p<.00).

Seeking advice from someone at school or college

108   There was no difference between Muslim and non-Muslim students on seeking advice from someone at school or college. Males (mean = 2.5) and females (mean = 2.5) did not differ significantly on this item either (F Sex = .134, p<. 714). However, male Muslim students were significantly more likely than female Muslim students to say that they would seek advice from someone at school or college; conversely, female non-Muslim students said that they would seek advice from this source more often than their male non-Muslim peers (F Sex x Muslim = 4.04, p<.045).

Table 12: Seeking advice from college * gender * faith.

Sex	Muslim	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Male	Muslim	2.7	.90	175
	Non-Muslim	2.4	.92	198
Female	Muslim	2.5	.98	141
	Non-Muslim	2.6	.90	261

109   There is no effect of ethnicity on whether a student would seek advice from someone at school or college (F Ethnicity = 1.9, p<.113).

110   Seeking advice from someone at school or college is significantly predicted by a belief in staying true to one's cultural and ethnic roots as a foundation for a good life, a belief in faith as a framework for living one's life, a belief in the importance of finding oneself as an individual, **but also a need for respect from family and community.**

Seeking advice from a member of the family

111   Muslim students were more likely than non-Muslim students to report seeking advice from a member of their family. Also, males (mean = 2.2) were more likely than females (mean = 2.0) to say that they would seek advice from a member of their family (F Sex = 6.03, p<.014), irrespective of faith (F Sex x Muslim = .001, p<.976). There is no effect of ethnicity on whether a student seeks advice from a member of the family (F Ethnicity = .806, p<.490).

112   Seeking advice from family members is positively correlated with:

- belief in the importance of staying true to one's cultural and ethnic roots as the foundation of a good life (r = .25, p<.00), and in faith as a guiding framework in life (r = .25, p<.01);

- aspirations to secure respect from family and community (r = .25, p<.00);

- belief that growing up is about finding one's place in the family and community (r = .31, p<.00); and

- religious identity (r = .24, p<.01).

Seeking advice from peers

113   There is no difference between Muslim and non-Muslim students on whether peers would be asked for advice. However, females (mean = 3.2) were overall more likely than males (mean = 3.0) to seek advice from peers on how to deal with a conflict between parental wishes and personal goals (F Sex = 17.9, p<.00), irrespective of faith (F Sex x Muslim = .59, p<.442).

114 There was no association between ethnicity and likelihood of seeking peer advice (F Ethnicity = 1.15, p<.327) and no interaction between ethnicity and faith (F Ethnicity x Muslim = 1.13, p<.325).

115 Seeking advice from peers is positively correlated with:

- belief that growing up is about finding oneself as an individual (r = .20, p<.00);

- belief in finding one's own way in life, even if that involves making mistakes (r = .19, p<.00); and

- aspirations to personal and social growth (r = .20, p<.00).

Discriminant function analysis

116 To identify the key discriminators between Muslim and non-Muslim students across all core variables derived from factor analysis, a discriminant function analysis was conducted. Gender was also entered as a potential predictor. Ethnicity was excluded, because the majority of Muslim students in the current sample were Asian, and that would have confounded the findings. Muslim/non-Muslim was the 'classification variable' (that is, dependent variable). Detailed results are presented in Appendix 2 to this annex, but are summarised here.

117 The constructs entered were strongly significant in discriminating between Muslim and non-Muslim students (Wilks' lambda = .44, Chi-square = 490.2, p<.000). The key discriminating variables were as follows.

- Religious identity r = .502.

- Personal importance of faith r = .48.

- Belief that growing up is about finding oneself as an individual r = -.36.

- Belief in faith as a guiding force in life r = .45.

- Belief in the importance of staying true to one's cultural and ethnic roots as the foundation of a good life r = .44.

- Seeking formal advice in the event of conflict between parental wishes and personal goals r = .44.

118   The discriminating factor was as shown in Table 13, with Muslim students loading positively on this and non-Muslim students loading negatively.

Table 13: Structure matrix for discriminant function analysis.

	Function
	1
Religious identity	.878
Belief in importance of staying true to cultural and ethnic roots	.780
Personal importance of faith	.728
Belief in faith as guiding force in life	.724
Belief that growing up is about finding one's place in the family and community	.565
Personal importance of ethnicity	.415
Personal importance of culture	.396
Aspirations to secure parental and community respect	.377
Belief that growing up is about finding oneself as an individual	-.361
Seeking formal advice when faced with conflict between personal goals and parental wishes	.299
Aspirations to have and provide for one's own family	.213
Seeking personal goals irrespective of parental	-.203

wishes	
Belief in finding one's own way in life even if that means making mistakes	-.200
Personal importance of family	.184
Internalisation strategy for dealing with conflict with family	.177
Aspiration to material status	.143
Gender	-.089
Externalisation strategy for dealing with conflict with family	.065
Seeking peer advice	-.058
Aspiring to personal and social growth	.049
Aspiring to personal happiness/ control	-.042

119 The results for Muslims and Christians were identical, and are hence not repeated here.

Summary and conclusions

120 There was a strong factor concerning religious identification. Beliefs about growing up were concerned with either finding one's place in the family and community (Where have I come from?), or with finding oneself as an individual (Where am I going?). Foundations of a good future life were family oriented (staying true to one's roots, having one's own family, securing family and community respect) and personal (personal and social growth, personal control and happiness, and material status).

121 Two main moral orientations were discerned – hinging on the idea of living life either **with** or **without** a clear framework. One life orientation was about the importance of living one's life within a clear framework that assumed a right way to proceed. The other life orientation denotes the completely opposite way of proceeding in life – involving trial and error, the risk of disapproval and 'going wrong'.

122   Muslim students identify more strongly with their faith than do non-Muslim students, and are more faith driven in their values, beliefs and behaviours; non-Muslim students are, by contrast, more oriented to finding themselves as unique individuals. Muslim students see their personal identity as inextricably linked with their place in the family and as culturally rooted, whereas non-Muslim students are more likely to seek personal identity outside the family. Muslim students are more likely to believe in following the guidelines of their faith in the way they live life, whereas non-Muslim students believe in the importance of finding their own way in life, even if that means making mistakes.

123   All students aspire to personal and social growth, personal happiness and a sense of control, but Muslim students seek this within the framework of their faith, whereas non-Muslim students see happiness and growth more in individualistic terms. Female Muslims, however, appear to be more intent on reconciling individualism with the prescriptions of their faith, while male Muslims are more traditional. This is consistent with the slightly stronger religious identification of male Muslims than female Muslims.

124   For Muslim students, material status is a means of providing for one's own family and a source of leverage for securing family and community respect, while for non-Muslim students, aspirations are more abstract and less material, with relatively less grounding in family and faith (see below).

125   Strategies for dealing with conflict between parental wishes and personal goals were: internalisation of conflict (avoiding discussing conflict with parents), externalisation (seeking a compromise solution through negotiation), seeking formal advice, or pursuing personal goals regardless. The use of internalisation strategies is predicted by a strong faith and family orientation, while the use of externalisation strategies is predicted by a strong need for personal happiness, a sense of control and a personal identity as a foundation for a good life **in combination**

with a strong adherence to one's cultural, ethnic and religious roots. Pursuing personal goals regardless of parental wishes is predicted by a strongly personal orientation and a need for individualism, and a relatively low family orientation.

126   It is noteworthy that Muslim students are more likely than non-Muslim students to adopt an internalisation and/or externalisation strategy, whereas non-Muslim students are conversely more likely to adopt a personal goal strategy. However, male Muslim students are more likely to internalise conflict, whereas female Muslim students are more likely to externalise it to seek a compromise. Female Muslim students are more intent on combining personal needs with adherence to their family wishes and, ultimately, also their faith, while male Muslim students are more faith and family driven and are less likely to say that personal needs will drive them.

127   Seeking formal advice is predicted mainly by a strong religious identity, a belief in the importance of securing family and community respect and in faith as a guiding framework for living one's life, and an aspiration to personal and social growth. The key factor working against the seeking of formal advice is a belief that growing up is about finding oneself as an individual.

128   Seeking peer advice stood alone in the analysis, and was predicted mainly by a desire for personal and social growth, a drive for personal identity, and a belief in the importance of finding one's own way in life.

129   The factors that most strongly set Muslim students apart from non-Muslim students are as follows.

- Religious identity.

- Personal importance of faith.

- Belief in faith as a guiding force in life.

- Belief in the importance of staying true to one's cultural and ethnic roots as the foundation for a good life.

- Seeking formal advice in the event of conflict between parental wishes and personal goals.

130 The one factor that most strongly sets non-Muslim students apart from Muslims (other than scoring in an opposite way to Muslim students on the above factors) is the belief that growing up is about finding oneself as an individual.

Faith, rather than ethnicity, as a driver of beliefs, values and behaviours

131 Rather than ethnicity, it is the Muslim faith, and especially a strong religious identity, that is the overriding factor in accounting for the difference between Muslim and non-Muslim students. Simply being Muslim overrides the effect of ethnicity in accounting for differences between Muslim and non-Muslim students across all factors for the White, Asian and other ethnic samples.

132 However, for the Black sample (note that this is a very small sample relative to the others), ethnicity has a stronger effect than being Muslim/non-Muslim when it comes to religious identity, belief in the importance of staying true to one's ethnic and cultural roots, and belief that growing up is about finding one's place in the family. Ethnicity also overrides the difference between Muslim and non-Muslim students on the use of externalising strategies to handle conflict between parental wishes and personal goals, and on seeking formal advice to deal with this conflict.

Gender differences

133 Some significant gender differences were found. **Irrespective of faith**, females were significantly more likely than males to:

- aspire to achieve personal happiness and a sense of control;

- report using an externalisation strategy to deal with conflict between parental wishes and personal goals; and

- believe that one can stop college if necessary and return later.

134 Female Muslims are more likely than male Muslims to believe that growing up is about finding oneself as an individual and to report that they would pursue personal goals regardless of parental wishes (non-Muslim males and females do not differ significantly on this).

135 Female non-Muslim students are more likely than male non-Muslim students to say that they would seek advice from formal sources, and also specifically from someone at school or college, to help deal with conflict between parental wishes and personal goals (Muslim males and females do not differ significantly on this).

136 Males are more likely than females:

- to believe in the importance of faith as a guiding framework, irrespective of faith;

- to report using an internalisation strategy to deal with conflict between parental wishes and personal goals; and

- to seek advice from a member of the family to deal with conflict between parental wishes and personal goals.

137 Male Muslims have a stronger religious identity than female Muslims; are more likely to aspire to securing respect from family and community as the foundation of a good life; and are more likely to say that they would seek advice from a religious leader – and also from someone at school or college – to deal with conflict between parental wishes and personal goals (non-Muslim males and females did not differ on this).

138 Overall, females report being more strongly oriented than males to achieving a sense of personal happiness and control, irrespective of their faith, and being more willing to openly challenge parental wishes if they

do not tie in with their own goals. Muslim females, in particular, are strongly oriented to finding themselves as individuals, and they say they would pursue their own goals regardless of parental wishes. Non-Muslim females are more likely than non-Muslim males to say that they would seek formal advice from someone at college to deal with conflict, and also to seek advice from peers. Males – irrespective of faith – believe more strongly than females in faith as their guiding force in life. They are also more likely than females to use an internalisation strategy to deal with conflict between personal goals and parental wishes, and to seek advice from a member of the family to help deal with this conflict. Male Muslims, in particular, are more likely than female Muslims to aspire to securing respect and to say that they would seek advice from a religious leader – and also someone from school or college – to help deal with family conflict.

139 In short, females seem more concerned about their personal identity and being in control of this than do males, especially Muslim females, even if that means openly going against parental wishes. Males, on the other hand, have a relatively more faith- and respect-driven outlook on life, seeking to avoid any kind of overt disagreement with the family.

Appendix 1

Tests of Difference

Table 1: Muslim versus non-Muslim learners.

Religious identity				
Construct	**Muslim (Mean/SD)**	**Non-Muslim (Mean/SD)**	**Independent t-test**	**Probability**
Religious identity composite	2.4 (.74)	1.3 (.57)	26.01	.000**
Personal importance of faith	2.7 (.52)	1.6 (.75)	22.927	.000**
Personal importance of culture	2.3 (.67)	1.7 (.74)	11.276	.000**
Personal importance of ethnicity	2.3 (.71)	1.6 (.74)	12.01	.000**
Personal importance of family	2.5 (.67)	2.3 (.71)	3.306	.001**
Beliefs about growing up				
Construct	**Muslim (Mean/SD)**	**Non-Muslim (Mean/SD)**	**Independent t-test**	**Probability**
Family as framework for personal identity	3.3 (.45)	2.7 (.53)	17.34	.000**
Finding oneself as an individual	2.7 (.60)	3.2 (.56)	-11.68	.000**
Foundations of future life				
Construct	**Muslim (Mean/SD)**	**Non-Muslim (Mean/SD)**	**Independent t-test**	**Probability**
Staying true to one's faith	2.6 (.37)	1.7 (.65)	23.21	.000**
Personal and social growth	2.6 (.38)	2.6 (.35)	-.572	.568
Material status	2.4 (.49)	2.3 (.57)	4.15	.000**
Respect from family and community	2.7 (.39)	2.2 (.50)	13.58	.000**

	Muslim (Mean/SD)	Non-Muslim (Mean/SD)	Independent t-test	Probability
Providing for own family	2.7((.33)	2.6 (.43)	6.255	.000**
Personal happiness and sense of control	2.8 (.54)	2.8 (.34)	.305	.761
Moral and religious beliefs/Role of education				
Construct	**Muslim (Mean/SD)**	**Non-Muslim (Mean/SD)**	**Independent t-test**	**Probability**
Faith as a guiding force	3.3 (.44)	2.5 (.57)	21.109	.000**
Life being about finding oneself as an individual	3.1 (.51)	3.3 (.45)	-5.894	.000**
Single items				
One can always go back to college later in life if one has to stop for some reason	3.1 (.78)	3.2 (.67)	-2.6	.000**
It's really important to study and get qualifications before starting a family	3.5 (.74)	3.3 (2.1)	1.7	.045*
Responses to behavioural scenario posing conflict between parental wishes and personal goals				
Construct	**Muslim (Mean/SD)**	**Non-Muslim (Mean/SD)**	**Independent t-test**	**Probability**
Internalisation strategy	2.3 (.61)	2.0 (.66)	7.402	.000**
Externalisation strategy	3.4 (.41)	3.2 (.44)	3.788	.000**
Pursue personal goals	2.6 (.72)	3.0 (.63)	-7.298	.000**
Seek advice from authority	2.7 (.64)	2.3 (.58)	9.124	.000**
Single items				
I would ask advice of a religious leader	2.5 (.96)	1.6 (.79)	14.45	.000**
I would ask	2.6 (.93)	2.5 (.91)	1.03	.343

advice of someone who works at my school/ college				
I would ask advice of another member of my family	3.0 (.85)	2.8 (.86)	3.6	.000**
I would ask advice of my friends	3.1 (.74)	3.1 (.73)	.528	.598

**Significance p<.001
* Significance p<.05

Appendix 2

Discriminant Function Analysis

Table 1: Variables entered/removed.[1, 2, 3, 4]

| Step | Entered | Statistic | df3 | Exact F | | | |
				Statistic	df1	df2	Sig.
1	Religious identity	.502	597.000	591.153	1	597.000	.000
2	Personal importance of faith	.475	597.000	329.090	2	596.000	.000
3	Finding self	.456	597.000	236.859	3	595.000	.000
4	Faith as guide	.446	597.000	184.295	4	594.000	.000
5	True to faith	.441	597.000	150.456	5	593.000	.000
6	Advice	.438	597.000	126.821	6	592.000	.000

At each step, the variable that minimises the overall Wilks' lambda is entered.
[1] *Maximum number of steps is 42.*
[2] *Minimum partial F to enter is 3.84.*
[3] *Maximum partial F to remove is 2.71.*
[4] *F level, tolerance, or VIN insufficient for further computation.*

Table 2: Eigenvalues.

Function	Eigenvalue	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Canonical Correlation
1	1.285[a]	100.0	100.0	.750

[a] *First 1 canonical discriminant functions were used in the analysis.*

Table 3: Wilks' lambda.

Test of Function(s)	Wilks' lambda	Chi-square	df	Sig.
1	.438	490.951	6	.000

Table 4: Structure matrix.

	Function
	1
Religious identity	.878
True to faith	.780
Personal importance of faith	.728
Faith as guide	.724
Family as personal identity[1]	.565
Personal importance of ethnicity[1]	.415
Personal importance of culture[1]	.396
Respect[1]	.377
Finding self	-.361
Advice	.299
Own family[1]	.213
Personal goals[1]	-.203
Trial and error[1]	-.200
Personal importance of family[1]	.184
Avoid conflict[1]	.177
Material status[1]	.143
Sex[1]	-.089
Negotiation[1]	.065
Peer advice[1]	-.058
Personal social growth [1]	.049
Personal happiness/control[1]	-.042

Pooled within-groups correlations between discriminating variables and standardised canonical discriminant functions.
Variables ordered by absolute size of correlation within function.
[1] This variable not used in the analysis.

Table 5: Functions at group centroids.

Muslim	Function
	1
Muslim	1.429
non-Muslim	-.897

Unstandardised canonical discriminant functions evaluated at group means.