

How educators could help tackle religious segregation

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Educators could be doing more to address the challenges and obstacles faced by Muslim students in modern times, a new research report published today in the *Journal of Language, Identity and Education* suggests. Credit: Taylor & Francis

Educators could be doing more to address the challenges and obstacles

faced by Muslim students in modern times, a new research report published today in the *Journal of Language, Identity and Education* suggests. The research examines the experiences of Muslim ESL (English as a second language) students whilst studying in the US to identify what challenges they are faced with in their day-to-day life and how these could be overcome with the help of educators.

Based on his own experiences or experiences of those known personally, author Mohamed Yacoub outlines what "knapsack of invisible privileges" Muslim ESL students would like to possess. These include basic wishes which most students would take for granted such as being seen equally alongside other classmates in all senses, with similar political, personal and educational concerns. The research highlights some ways in which anti-Muslim hostility takes place, including vandalizing mosques, online cyberbullying and writing racist graffiti. Author Yacoub commented, "students undergo situations that indicate public space and some cities in the USA are exclusive to the dominant culture, and that any religious diversity is not welcome."

It is identified that there are four main external factors which shape the identity of Muslim ESL students including other students, the media, society and importantly professors. In the current political climate, it is identified that Muslim ESL students feel weakened and marginalized and henceforth do not speak up or protest about inappropriate treatment.

Yacoub outlines how educators could be assisting Muslim ESL [student's](#) positive self-image with activities such as coming up with counter arguments to rhetoric from anti-Muslim media channels, or creating a better dialogue or events that tell people who they really are. Partaking in activities such as these would allow the students to understand how important they are to the United States, and how important the United States is to them.

Author Yacoub said, "In the current political climate it is essential to highlight the unheard voice of international Muslim students in the United States."

It is warned however that these findings are not representative of the entire Muslim population in the US and should not be taken as such. The author recommends more empirical research into Muslim students' identity would be beneficial in order to further the field of the study and the findings of this research.

More information: *Journal of Language, Identity and Education*, www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/15348458.2017.1292854

Provided by Taylor & Francis

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