

## Poster Abstract Book (All Poster)

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Navigating Academia as Black Muslim women: The experiences of Black Muslim students at the University of Leicester

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**Abstract:** The aim of the project is to highlight the experiences of Black Muslim female students and how universities might support these students to ensure they feel represented and included in the curriculum. The underachievement of ethnic minority students in HE specifically has been linked with a curriculum that lacks diversity and inclusivity. To begin to address this issue, we need to seek insights and experiences from 'non-traditional' students who do not fit this mould. Research that explores ethnic minorities in our society is important to avoid marginalisation and to increase inclusion by gaining insights into the aspirations and motivations of a largely silenced group. To elicit Black Muslim female students' stories, I will adapt a qualitative methodology. Multiple narrative interviews will be used to gain an understanding of Black Muslim female students' experiences of higher education and the extent to which they feel supported in their chosen subjects.

### **Poster Outline: Navigating Academia as Black Muslim women: The educational experiences of Black Muslim female students at the University of Leicester**

This study aims to explore Black Muslim female students' perspectives and lived experiences of inclusivity in UK higher education. The study will particularly examine Black Muslim female students' at the University of Leicester. In this study, intersectionality and Critical Race Theory will be used as a framework to construct and analyse Black Muslim female students' educational experiences. This will help explain how the intersecting of their religion, ethnicity, gender, and race impacts their lived experiences of higher education, thus, taking into account all aspects of one identity to understand, explain, and interpret Black Muslim female students' HE experiences.

Research that explores ethnic minorities' perceptions and experiences in our society is vital to avoid the marginalisation of these groups. The studies of Modood and Ahmad (2007) and Husbans (2019) into the educational attainment and experiences of women in UK have mainly covered Muslim women and Black women separately. Therefore there is a distinct lack of literature that explores Black Muslim women's educational experiences specifically. Studies investigating Muslim women's education include Peter and Richard (2009) and Shah, Dwyer, and Modood (2010) who suggest that the relationship between educational attainment and ethnicity needs to be explored more. Research

into Black Muslim women in HE still remains to be underrepresented although there are now some emerging studies coming to surface. A recent study of Nurein and Iqbal (2021) investigated young Black Muslim women in UK higher education and concluded that this group have a complex intersectional identities as well as highlighting that the Black Muslim community in UK still remain to be invisible in today's society. Thus, showing the importance of further research into the marginalisation of Black Muslim women in UK HE and beyond.

As this PhD study is currently at the data collection stage, I anticipate that the findings of the research will help open dialogue and provide quality information of a largely silenced group in UK higher education. In particularly in today's climate of the ongoing issues relating to institutional racism, lack of diversity and inclusivity in UK HE.

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