

Experiences of Muslim Female Students in Social Work Programs in Western Canada

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- ❖ Canada is known globally as a multicultural country.
- ❖ Multiple studies have indicated that Muslim Canadians believe discrimination, based on their religious beliefs, is common.
- ❖ Muslims account for about 3.2% of the Canadian population, of which 513,380 are women, constituting 3.1% of all women in Canada (Statistics Canada, 2011).
- ❖ Muslim female students' experiences in educational settings include difficulties in developing relationships with host students, stereotyping, a lack of accommodation, religious identity discrimination, and hate crimes.
- ❖ Neglecting these challenges could seriously impact their physical, mental, and social well-being, as well as violate the ethics of social work.

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Study Purpose

- ❖ To understand Muslim female students' experiences in relation to discrimination, inclusion/exclusion, social justice, and equity in social work programs in Western Canada.
- ❖ To explore the meaning that Muslim female students attach to their experiences in social work programs in Western Canada.

Research Questions

- ❖ What are the experiences of Muslim female students with regards to discrimination inclusion/exclusion, social justice, and equity in social work programs in Western Canada?
- ❖ How do the experiences of Muslim female students in social work programs in Western Canada impact their lives?

Method

- ❖ The study used a qualitative descriptive phenomenological design.
- ❖ Twelve Muslim female students currently enrolled in or recent graduates (within the past two years) of university social work programs in Western Canada were recruited via convenience sampling methods.
- ❖ Semi-structured exploratory interviews were conducted via Zoom between September and November 2020 and the phenomenological approach was used for data analysis.



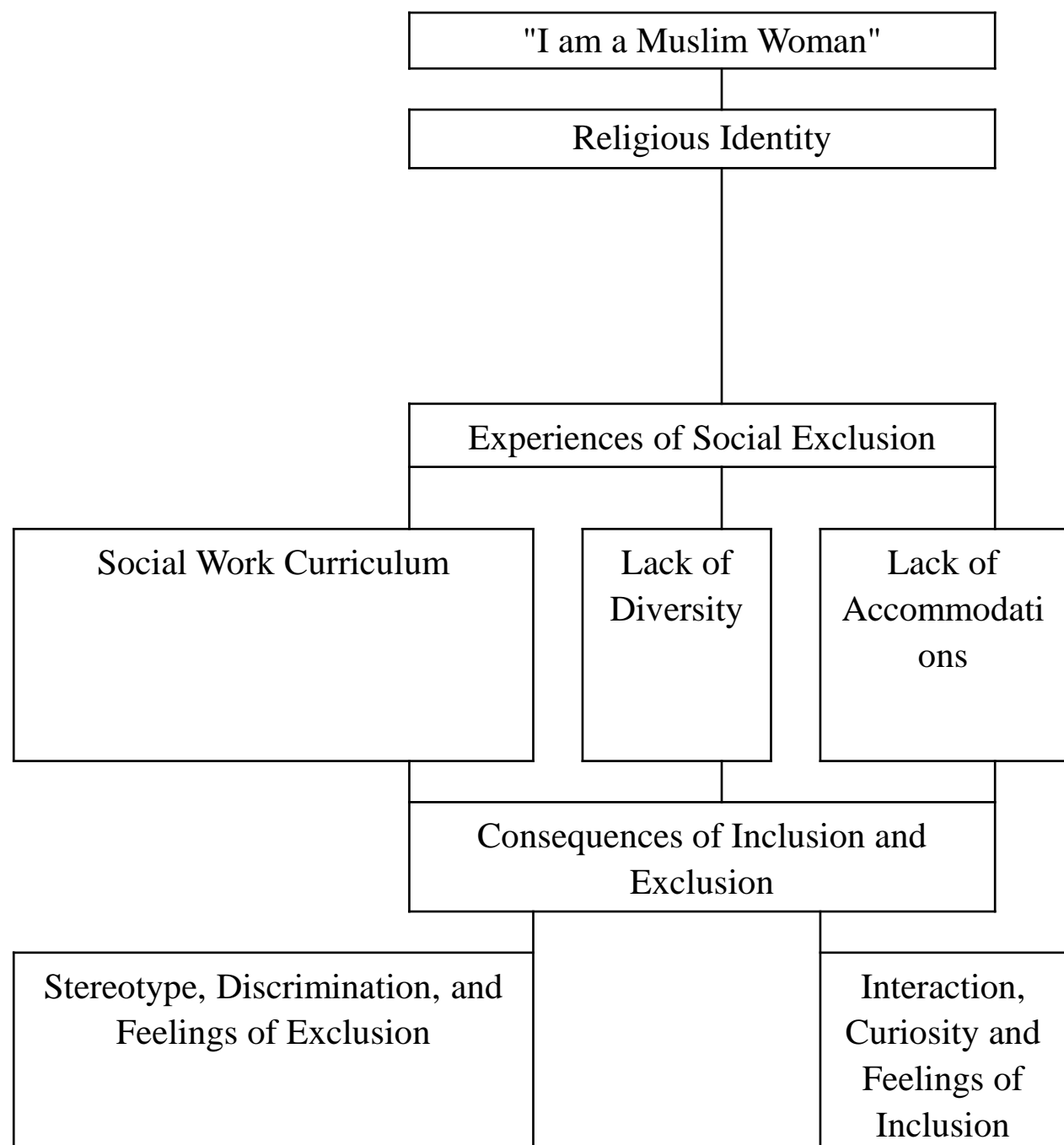
Findings

Theme 1: "I am
a Muslim
Woman"

Theme 2:
Visible
Religious
Identity in
Educational
Settings

Theme 3:
Experiences of
Social
Exclusion in
Social Work
Programs

Theme 4:
Consequences
of Exclusion
for Muslim
Female
Students



Conclusion

- ❖ Study participants identified experiences of exclusion, stereotyping and discrimination, including the lack of Muslim culture and religion in the social work curriculum.
- ❖ Muslim female students faced a number of challenges, including a lack of diversity, a lack of awareness among professors and students, and a lack of accommodation for religious and cultural practices, all of which have a negative impact on the physical and psychological well-being of Muslim female students in social work program in Western Canada.
- ❖ These findings could better inform educators and policy makers in designing curriculum and formulating culturally appropriate policies to increase diversity and inclusion.
- ❖ Further research is needed to evaluate the knowledge of social work professors and students about equity-deserving groups' cultures and religions, including Islamic culture and religion. The results of such research could further contribute to developing strategies and re-designing curriculum to promote cultural competency in social work programs in Canada.



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Thanks! Any Questions?

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