CONSTRUCTING THE ESPOUSED PURPOSE OF ISLAMIC SCHOOLS IN AUSTRALIA

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Statement of Authorship

This thesis contains no material published elsewhere or extracted in whole or in part from a thesis by which I have qualified for or been awarded another degree or diploma.

No parts of this thesis have been submitted towards the award of any other degree or diploma in any other tertiary institution.

No other person's work has been used without due acknowledgment in the main text of the thesis.

All research procedures reported in the thesis received the approval of the relevant Ethics Committees.

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[1] SWT: stands for *Subhanahu Wa Ta'ala*. A term routinely evoked by Muslims upon mention of *Allah*.

Abstract

RESEARCH TITLE: CONSTRUCTING THE ESPOUSED PURPOSE OF ISLAMIC SCHOOLS IN AUSTRALIA.

Evidence showing a positive link between Islamic practices and rituals at the everyday level with civic participation is on the rise (Harris & Roose, 2014; Patton, 2014; Vergani, Johns, Lobo, & Mansouri, 2017). Yet, character building to produce women and men of *adab* (Al-Attas, 1980) for active and confident engagement with society, has always been the *raison d'etre* of Islamic schools (Buckley, 1997). What remains unexplored is how these schools and their educational practitioners intervene and actively engage with their central purpose in the minutiae of everyday life (Apple, 2006). Specifically, how the racialised Islamic schools (Gulson & Webb, 2012, 2013) and their leaders mediate the "pluri-cultural" life (Said, 1977, p. xvii), articulating, embodying and defending alternative educational possibilities for parity of educational outcomes, lacks analytical consideration.

This study explored the construction of the espoused purpose of Islamic schools in Australia. Grounded in a critical race position (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995) and a faith-centred epistemology (Zine, 2004), it employed a collective case study methodology (Stake, 1995; Merriam, 1998; Yin, 2012) to understand how a disenfranchised community understands and experiences its everyday lived realities, and how leaders speak back to authoritarianism (Said, 2004; Apple, 2006) to achieve their aspirations in a diverse marketised Australian society (Walsh, 2014). An analysis of the promotional materials (Symes, 1998) and an online survey of stakeholders of Islamic schools in Perth, Melbourne and Brisbane were conducted in the exploratory phase of this inquiry, followed by an in-depth analysis of documents and a leadership qualitative questionnaire.

The findings revealed, firstly, that neoliberal technologies have worked to influence the schools' educational practices, creating possibilities that are bounded with limitations. By enabling choice—and as a consequence, the physical space where schools and their educational practitioners provide an education that aligns school values with those of students' homes; religious practice that can be freely exercised and instituted; and, support mechanisms to mitigate the harm arising from students' external social realities—neoliberalism has been productive for this disenfranchised community, allowing for its aspirations to provide the tools for achieving its purpose. Islamic schools therefore play a vital role in contributing to social

cohesion. Yet, substance has been compromised and remains unresolved by a formal curriculum that prioritises the dominant "excellence" discourse alongside an appended imitation Islamic curriculum model (Ramadan, 2004). Secondly, negotiation of key tensions arising from the external and internal contexts, primarily the prevalence of persisting dichotomies, summons leadership practices that not only draw on the schools' ethical frameworks and own personal values (Striepe, 2016) but full engagement in intellectual activity: persistence, critique and pushing through (Said, 1994). Thirdly, any attempts made by schools and leaders to engage with Islamic education must stem from learning and the collective creation and alignment of the "right" aims (Merry, 2015, p. 147). By persisting and pushing, schools and leaders who operate by faith (Dantley, 2005) focus on helping students negotiate their identities and connect with their worlds (Ramadan, 2004).

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List of Abbreviations

AFIC: Australian Federation of Islamic Council Schools

CFCE: Critical Faith-Centred Epistemology

CRT: Critical Race Theory

ESL: English as a Second Language

HPE: Health and Physical Education

KLA: Key Learning Area

LOTE: Languages Other than English

NAPLAN: National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy

NESB: Non-English Speaking Background

OP: Overall Positions

QCS: Queensland Core Skills

Glossary

Arabic terms associated with Islam, with the exception of names of people and places, and a few other words, have been set in *italic* type in the thesis.

adab: A comprehensive system of manners and etiquette that Muslims are expected to observe, including such details as hygiene and posture.

'adl: justice

akhlaq: character/behaviour

alhamdulillah: Praise be to *Allah*.

'alima: Female scholar of Islamic theology.

*Allah***:** Adherents to Islam understand *Allah* to be the proper name for the Creator.

al-qiraah Al-mushawwiqah: Interesting reading.

al-tamarin Al-mushawwiqah: Interesting exercises.

amanah: the trusteeship

'aqeeda: tenets of faith

'asr: mid-afternoon

assalamu alalikum wa rahmatullahi wa barakatuh: May the peace, the mercy, and the blessings of *Allah* be upon you.

burqa: An all-covering outer garment worn by some Muslim women.

caliphate: A united federation of Muslim states headed by a caliph that has existed in various forms in the past.

duas: supplications

Eid–ul-adha: The 'Sacrifice Feast'; it is the second holiday celebrated by Muslims annually.

Eid–ul-Fitr: The month of abstinence from food/water during the day and bad habits, increased worship activity, charity, and sharing meals with family and non-family members. Its end is marked by the festival of Eid.

Fiqh: The Islamic system of religious, political and civil laws as interpreted from the Quran and other sources.

fitrah: natural state

hadeeth (ahadeeth, pl.): Reports of the deeds and narrations of the Prophet that became the *Sunnah*.

hajj: The journey to Mecca, which is expected to be undertaken by each able-bodied believer who can afford it at least once in their lifetime. It is one of the "five pillars" of Islam.

halal: "Permissible"; usually used in reference to food and beverages forbidden to Muslims.

hijab: Usually refers to the scarf worn by many Muslim women.

'ibadah: worship

imam: A religious leader of congregation.

'ilm or instilling **ta'lim:** Seeking and imparting knowledge/instruction.

Iqra'!: Read!

Islam: Islam is a worldview focused on belief in the One God and commitment to His commandments. Beyond belief in specific doctrines and performance of important ritual acts, Islam is practiced as a complete and natural way of life, designed to bring God into the centre of one's consciousness, and thus one's life.

Jihad: The Arabic word for "struggle", it is usually taken to mean any form of striving in the cause of God.

Jummuah Khuttbah: Friday sermon

juba/thobe: Islamic clothing for men.

khalifa: vicegerent

kofi: skull prayer cap

madrassah: traditional school

ma'rifah: gnostics

masajid: mosques (plural for *Masjid*)

mashura: consultation

masjid: mosque

mubarak: blessed one

muhajjabas: veiled women

Muhammad (PBUH): A prophet active in sixth- and early seventh-century Saudi Arabia. Muslims believe he was spoken to by God, and he spent most of his life founding the Islamic faith. The words "peace be upon him" (PBUH) are routinely evoked by Muslims after mentioning his name.

Muslim: The term *Muslim* refers to one who believes in the *Shahadah* (the declaration of faith containing the basic creed of Islam) and embraces a lifestyle in accord with Islamic principles and values.

niqab: Usually a long covering worn by some Muslim women that leaves only a gap for the eyes.

niyah: intention

Qur'an: The sacred scriptures of Islam. Muslims believe it contains the word of God as communicated to the prophet Muhammad.

Ramadan: The ninth month of the Islamic year, in which Muslims may not eat, drink, smoke or have sexual intercourse between dawn and sunset. Its end is marked by the festival of Eid.

Rasullulah: Prophet of God. Often made in reference to Prophet *Muhammad (PBUH).*

sahabaa: Prophet Muhammad's companions.

salaat: The five daily prayers required of all Muslims. *Salaat* is one of the "five pillars" of Islam.

Sallalahu alayhi wasallam (SAW): Praise and blessings (of *Allah* SWT) be upon him (The Prophet).

sawm: To abstain. It refers to abstention from eating, drinking and sexual intercourse.

seerah: A collection of narrations about the people and events surrounding the Prophet, arranged in a chronological order.

Shia: One of the two main branches of Islam. It considers the descendants of the prophet Muhammad to be the best source of guidance and the first three *Caliphate*s as historic occurrences rather than a central part of their faith.

shura: consultation, mutual engagement

Sunnah: The way of the Prophet *Muhammad (PBUH)*.

Sunni: The larger of the two main branches of Islam. Followers believe the first caliphs were the legitimate successors of *Muhammad (PBUH)*.

SWT: Stands for *Subhanahu Wa Ta'ala* and means "pure is He and High"; evoked when *Allah* is mentioned.

tafseer: interpretation of the Quran

taqlid: copied, imitated

taubah: repentance

tarbiyah: nurturing wholeness

tawheed: The belief in one God and the finality of the Prophet Muhammad.

ummah: worldwide Muslim community

Wassalam: and peace

wudu': ablution

zakat: The obligation of Muslims to donate a small amount of their wealth to charity. One of the "five pillars of Islam".

Zuhr (zuhur) *Salaat***:** afternoon prayers

CHAPTER ONE: CONTEXT OF THE RESEARCH

1.1: Background

In a landscape where Muslims and their practices are conceived to be both antithetical and a barrier to integration and civil life, recent sociological work addressing misconceptions between religiosity and civic engagement amongst Muslims confirms a positive correlation between them. Evidence linking the enactment of Islamic practices and rituals at the everyday level with civic participation is on the rise (Patton, 2014; Harris & Roose, 2014; Roose & Harris, 2015; Johns, Mansouri, & Lobo, 2015; Vergani, Johns, Lobo, & Mansouri, 2017). Whilst interest in this issue is a consequence of the hype over the Muslim 'problem', the *raison d'etre* of Islamic schools has always been character building or developing learners with a body of knowledge framed by Islamic ethics and values, to actively and confidently engage with their societies. Not only is preparing learners for their societies by drawing on an Islamic worldview espoused as the theory of Australian Islamic schools, but this also guides the work of their practitioners. What remains unexplored is how Islamic schools and their educational practitioners intervene and actively engage with their central purpose in the minutiae of everyday life. This research project contributes to this lacuna by inquiring into how Islamic schools construct their espoused purpose in an Australian context.

This chapter provides a broad overview of the research focus. It contextualises the research issue, defines the research problem, articulates the research purpose and postulates a general research question. It concludes by highlighting the significance of the research. Specifically, this background begins by discussing the pluralistic and neoliberal Australian context, taking a special interest in religious revival and the "Other" to contextualise religious schools in Australian society. Against this backdrop, contemporary debates about religious schools, focussing especially on the controversies surrounding Islamic schools and tensions within some of them, are explored. The purpose of Islamic education and the choice for Islamic schools are then explored. Given the instrumentality of school culture as a hub for purpose construction and the emphasis in the literature on the role of leadership in enlisting others towards aligning a shared vision (Cashman, 2008; Kouzes & Posner, 2004; Schein, 2010), building and moulding the cultural context of a school (Deal & Peterson, 2009) and being alert to the organisational gap between espoused rhetoric and action (Argyris & Schön,

1974, 1996), this section briefly engages with these themes. A thesis summary is finally provided, chapter by chapter.

Islamic schools are integral to the Australian educational landscape for providing an education to a disenfranchised community. In this thesis, community refers to membership within a group who share similar beliefs, values, ideals and goals. It is protracted and applied to a school context, the Muslim community (Ummah) and national context. As Carbines, Wyatt, and Robb (2006) noted, they play a fundamental role in educating their students to become active members of Australia's multicultural society, whilst remaining true to their heritage and Islamic identity. "Islamic" and "Islamic worldview" connote the theory. They are constituted by the faith, its values, doctrines, teachings and worship. Cultural practices diverge from the faith's teachings (Douglass & Shaikh, 2004). The typology of 'Islamic school' describes stakeholders' desire to develop a school along the lines of an Islamic philosophy (Parker-Jenkins, 2005). This study adopts Douglass and Shaikh's (2004) typology of 'Islamic schools' as institutions striving to impart an education in the Islamic spirit within the multiple layers of school life. Theoretically, Islamic schools are characterised by infusing Islamic precepts (Bhabha, 1997; Buckley, 1997) in their vision and across their overall organisation. The hallmark of Islamic schools is their Islamic identity.

In fact, the ultimate purpose of education within an Islamic worldview, that of inculcating goodness and justice in men and women (Al-Attas, 1980, 1993), does not vary from that of the Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs' (MCEETYA) (2008) central purpose of building a democratic, "equitable and just society..." (p. 4). However, the approach to implementation and content does (Hanson, n.d.). Adopting an Islamic ethical framework as a reference point for preparing ethical beings who are concerned for and actively engage with society has always been bedrock to Islamic education, finding its niche in the concept of *adab* (Al-Attas, 1980, 1993). Alternatively, the *Melbourne Declaration on Goals for Young Australians* (MCEETYA, 2008) espouses that schools promote "equity and excellence" and work towards producing "successful learners – Confident and creative individuals – Active and informed citizens" (p. 7). Central to achieving these goals is the nation's economic prosperity and social cohesion.

Increasingly for Muslims, failure of the education system to cater for their children's needs (Clyne, 1998), combined with the 'Othering' (Ladson-Billings, 2003; Dunn, Klocker, & Salabay, 2007) of the Muslim identity in the public space have led to the search for spaces of inclusion and acceptance. Given Muslims' increased experiences of racism, social

exclusion (Poynting & Noble, 2004; Dunn et al., 2007; Akbarzadeh, Bouma, Woodlock, Ling, et al., 2009), and socioeconomic marginalisation in Australia (Peucker, Roose, & Akbarzadeh, 2014), for those scanning the educational market segregated religious schools rank high in their choice of schooling as they seek a restoration of justice in culturally congruent educative spaces (Zine, 2007; Merry, 2007, 2015; Shah 2012). Indeed, as has been noted by Merry (2015), "some types of religious schools serving disadvantaged and stigmatised minority pupils may be a more realistic course to follow in pursuing outcomes favourable to stigmatised groups" (p. 146). Yet despite the normalisation of policy frames of diversity and choice in Australia, some diversity remains controversial in practice (Gulson & Webb, 2012).

Despite neoliberalism's highly developed policy of choice in education and its concomitant encouragement of religious schools, controversy remains focused only on Islamic schools (Gulson & Webb, 2013). Amongst the more embryonic developments in the Australian educational landscape, Islamic schools are reflective of this controversial diversity in the context of the nation's market-driven, rational and economic governmental impetus for global competitiveness. In a landscape where the Muslim presence is becoming the arena most fraught with anxious hostilities (Bouma, Cahill, Dellal, & Zwartz, 2011; Jakubowicz, 2010; Lentini, Halafoff, & Ogru, 2011), "the policy assemblages pertaining to the establishment of Islamic Schools…enunciate a reconfigured concept of equity, which leaves these schools vulnerable and susceptible to ongoing racialisation and racism" (Gulson & Webb, 2012, p. 706). As is the case in Britain and France, even when Islamic schools live up to the stated requirements and are formally eligible for subsidy, they are not approved to the same extent as Christian and Jewish schools (Daun, 2009). The growth of Islamic schools juxtaposed with the suspicion and conjectures surrounding them, their appeal amongst clientele and recent scholarship showing that Islamic organisations can act as civic engagement spaces (Vergani et al., 2017) prompt inquiry into how Islamic schools construct their espoused purpose in Australia—the purpose of this study. In educational rhetoric, vision, mission and purpose are used interchangeably (Deal & Peterson, 1999). This study will use purpose as the preferred term of reference. A purpose is the reason for the school's existence and gives guidance to what people work toward on a daily basis (Starratt, 2003). As Apple (2006) noted, rather than looking with ironic condescension on the appeal that religious conviction has to so many people, researchers need "to get inside it" (p. 168). One must ponder and ask why large numbers of people flocking to Islamic schools have found in

such priorities answers to the problems they face in their everyday lives. It is in looking in these places, Apple (2006) says, that politics often matters the most.

Zine's (2004) critical faith-centred epistemology (CFCE), centring faith-based knowledge construction as a lens through which a particular reading of the world can be constructed and framed, orientated my thinking about construction of purpose in Islamic schools. Zine's (2004) CFCE, originating from the lived experiences of Muslim feminists is highly suitable for accounting for the experiences of a progressive social movement and the everyday realities of individuals entrusted with constructing its purpose. It therefore enabled me to engage with and look at schools in terms of their racialised status and markets and critically engage with culture and religion.

Thus, CFCE provides a space that is attentive to understanding and conceptualising schools' and practitioners' engagement in constructing the educational practices of Islamic institutions. Being attentive to the ways in which religion can operate as both a site of liberation and a source of oppression as well as a space for common resolutions for human problems and being attentive to religious discrimination are key to maintaining an emphasis on criticality and possibility within a CFCE.

1.1.1: The choice of Islamic schools.

Interest in this research arises from my personal and professional experience as a stakeholder of Islamic schools, as educator, parent and bystander. My professional experience in a government sector was enriching and provided the impetus for implementing educational change in my leadership role in later years. Nonetheless, it is my nineteen years of association with Islamic schools, specifically, my role as educator and principal for almost 10 years, that acted as a vehicle for reflection and engagement in this research. It is this experience and insights into Islamic schools, the Muslim community's increasing concerns for their children's education (Shah, 2017), a newly rekindled passion for writing, and the belief that I can make a difference not just to a school community but beyond, which ignites my passion and drive to further explore Islamic schools and the actions, contributions and struggles of those who influence institutional life.

1.2: The Pluralistic, Marketised Context of Australian Society

The multicultural, Christian, multi faith, secular (Bouma et al., 2011) and marketised (Walsh, 2014) natures of Australian society interact to form the backdrop against which this research is conducted. In this study of how Islamic schools construct their espoused purpose,

how they create institutional appeal and their interventions in the institutionalisation of the identity of schools who serve disadvantaged and stigmatised minority pupils (Merry, 2015), an understanding of the context, that is, the features and issues of the contradictory nature of Australian society, is important. This section will therefore address the particular context for Islamic schools, while drawing appropriately on the broader literature which addresses the situation of Muslims in this context.

Australia increasingly presents as a culturally, racially, religiously diverse (Jupp, 2001; Ang, Brand, Noble, & Sternberg, 2006; Jakubowicz, 2009) and neoliberal nation (Walsh, 2014). People from all over the world comprise this 'nation of nations' (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2016). Australian governments have frequently sought to shape and reshape national identity. The evolving nature of multiculturalism is an example. Multiculturalism was largely developed as a response to the cultural pluralism engendered by mass migration. Since its development in the 1970s, policies concerning immigrants' incorporation and integration have reigned prominently in nation building and citizen making (Moran, 2011). Australian multiculturalism is:

> the public acceptance of immigrant and minority groups as distinct communities, which are distinguishable from the majority population with regard to language, culture and social behaviour... such groups should be granted equal rights in all spheres of society, without being expected to give up their diversity, although usually with an expectation of conformity to certain key values. (Jupp, 2001, p. 807)

Central to the debates about national identity and multiculturalism has been controversy over immigration, multiculturalism, and national identity in Australia (Moran, 2011). Given its relevance to the current context, the Howard Government's (1999–2007) leadership years, as well as its contestations over multiculturalism, recalibration with neoliberal logics (Walsh, 2014) and their impact on Muslims living in Australia and education are canvassed. Since the mid-2000s, multiculturalism witnessed a paradigmatic shift towards an Australian citizenship that is representative of an assimilationist early exclusive era. Firstly, reversing commitments to cultural pluralism, Howard introduced neo-assimilationist policies that intensified demands for national unity, conformity and identity. One of the key reasons for this was earlier controversies erupting over the failure of certain immigrant populations to integrate.

To productively engage with the demands of globalisation and competition, a second key feature of the Howard administration was the inversion of multiculturalism from minority needs and its reconceptualisation and reconfiguration into neoliberal arrangements and sensibilities (Walsh, 2014). Neoliberalism is characterised by enabling choice, individualism, entrepreneurialism and consumerism. Emphasis is placed on enterprise and the capitalisation of survival through calculated acts and investments combined with the shrugging off of collective responsibility for the vulnerable and marginalised (Walsh, 2014). According to Walsh (2014), the Howard government strengthened 'productive diversity' initiatives and promoted the idea that, with proper management, diverse immigration could generate significant economic returns.

Notably, within neoliberal governance not only have governments and society taken up, as their primary concern, their relationship with the economy, but also the concept of the citizen and even institutions have been reconstituted and reconfigured by the economy (Apple, 2006; Davies & Bansel, 2007). As Davies and Bansel (2007) asserted, the 'passive' citizen of the welfare state has morphed into the "autonomous 'active' citizen with rights, duties, obligations and expectations – the citizen as active entrepreneur of the self" (p. 252). As for minority groups, instead of extending adequate resources for addressing discrimination and unequal societal participation for their protection and acknowledgement, minority groups have been constructed "as strategic resources and objects to be organised, administered and manipulated for market advantage" (Walsh, 2014, p. 296). Institutions, including education, have been reconfigured to produce the elite individualised, responsibilised and competitive actors who have become entrepreneurial across all aspects of their lives (Davies & Bansel, 2007). Choice is thus experienced as something individuals are responsible for when in reality the social sphere and conduct of citizens are captured along economic profits.

At the grassroots level, Australia remains one of the leading stable multicultural societies. Not only do local and state governments continue to promote the virtues of multiculturalism by providing continued funds, but public opinion indicates diversity is a significant part of Australian society (Dandy & Pe-Pua, 2010; Brett & Moran, 2011). For many Australians, diversity thrives as a key feature of Australia's national identity but also resides alongside other longer standing features, including 'fair go', the commitment to civility in everyday life, commitments to equality, democracy, and freedom and the spiritual indigenous connections to the land (Moran, 2011, p. 2167). Simultaneously, concerns for social cohesion were noted (Dandy & Pe-Pua, 2010). In a study conducted by Dandy and Pe-

Pua (2010) participants viewed the negative impact of cultural diversity to be related to perceived conflict, antagonism and tension between and among cultural groups. At the heart of contestations and the multicultural retreat was an emergence of a Muslim "problem".

1.2.1: Religious revival and the 'Other'.

In a landscape where the separation of religious beliefs from the state was never complete in Australia, where Christianity has also been a dominant force in the past two hundred years and continues to be "critical to the way Australia understands and identifies itself as a nation" (Bouma et al., 2011, p. 22), some non-Christian religions are depicted as problematic, re-fuelling debates about multiculturalism (Bouma, 2006; Jakubowicz, 2010; Moran, 2011; Bouma et al., 2011; Mansouri, Lobo, & Johns, 2015). Islam has come to occupy the panoptican gaze amidst political and media discourse, whose underlying politics frequent the perceived incompatibility of the faith and its ideals with Australian values, failure of Muslims to integrate and Muslims as having a "civics deficit" (Harris & Roose, 2014, p. 796). Contemporary geopolitical conflicts, namely generated by 9/11, the London bombings, local events, the 'War on Terror' and concerns over radicalisation, have made the faith synonymous with 'terror' and its adherents criminalised in the social imaginary. In Australia, the 2005 beach riots at Cronulla and Sydney's youth gang rapists have been conduits to heightened negative community sentiments. The *hijab*[2] and *burqa*, an expression for many females of their Muslim identity, resurfaces persistently as a thorny topic of political debate, prompting growing scholarly interest (Nussbaum, 2012; Al-Mahadin, 2013). Not a day passes without a coterie of political or theatrical reports and conjectures over the seeming threat of Islam, not just in Australia but more broadly in the Western world (Merry & Driessen, 2016; Shah, 2017). These are commonly accompanied by a fear campaign utilising categorical associations with *sharia*, *halal* and *burqa*, concepts that are often not even understood by some Muslims, as draw strings to influence the common sense. Additionally, the question of national security, the monitoring of "home-grown terrorism" and home raids of the so-called enemy within are concurrent with fierce outrage evidenced by anti-Islamic sentiments and protests.

In Australia, Islamophobia, based on assumptions and reductive characterisations, on stereotypes, fear and dislike of Muslim people, where Islam is both Other as civilisation and

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[2] Arabic terms associated with Islam, with the exception of names of people and places, have been set in *italic* type. Most of these terms may be found in the *Glossary*.

Other as religion (Gulson & Webb, 2013), and "the discrimination and social exclusion arising from this fear and hostility" (Choudhury, Malik, Halstead, Bunglawla, & Spalek, 2005, p. 146) continues to be problematic for Muslims. Incidents of harassment reported against Muslim families and women in the public domain are on the increase (Dow, 2015). The United Kingdom, the Netherlands and other European countries are also a case in point (Merry & Driessen, 2016; Shah, 2017). For over a decade, research has shown Islamophobic tendencies and its continued feeding of opposition to religious institutions (Dunn et al., 2007; Dunn, 2014).

Commentators and a growing body of research have pointed to the perceived misconceptions and stereotypical perceptions of Islam (Rane, Nathie, Isakhan, & Abdalla, 2011; Dunn, 2014; Keneally, 2017).

Underpinning this are several assumptions about Australia's Muslims: that their beliefs are antithetical to Australian values; that they cannot assimilate; that they are inherently violent and condone extremism and martyrdom; that they prefer theocracy and Islamic law to democracy and secular Australian law and that they actively oppress women. (Rane et al., p. 124)

A former premier of NSW, Kristina Keneally (2017), has questioned the double standards, noting that "Catholicism has done more harm to Australia than Islam. Where's the outrage?"

Castells (2009) explicates some of the tensions surrounding Islam in secular societies, noting that in the great majority of European nations, religious observance has dwindled:

…significantly enough, the active presence of God in Western Europe is mainly due to the growing Muslim community, whose submission to God in everyday life clashes with the secular character of public institutions, including the school. (p. xix)

As Mansouri et al. (2015) noted, "nothing signals this supposed violent "clash" more than visible practices of Islamic faith within Western social milieus". (p. 165)

In a socio-politically turbulent climate, the beliefs and practices of the 'Other' are conceived to be antithetical to conceptions of an Australian national identity, which hinges on a narrow nationalism (Akbarzadeh, Bouma, Woodlock, Ling, et al., 2009) entertaining 'assimilationist' citizenship notions of maintenance and conformity to "whiteness as a criterion for citizenship" (Ladson-Billings, 2004, p. 109).

1.2.2: Exclusion of the "Other": civic and educational disadvantage.

A dearth of evidence confirms that Muslims in the West point to their increased racism, exclusion (Poynting & Noble, 2004; Dunn et al., 2007; Zine, 2007; Yasmeen, 2008; Sughra Ahmed, 2009; Akbarzadeh, Bouma, Woodlock, Rahman, et al., 2009; Bassit, 2009; Shah, 2017), the "burden of stigmatisation and attribution" (Cherney & Murphy, 2016, p. 487) as a suspect community (Breen-Smyth, 2014) and its subsequent, profound effect on belongingness and citizenship within their country of residence (Peucker et al., 2014; Cherney & Murphy, 2016). Given its implications for the renascent appeal of Islamic schools, this section explores the empirical base to explicate the circumstances which lead to the search for culturally inclusive educational spaces. Poynting and Noble (2004) describe Muslims' experiences of social exclusion, stating:

> …a pervasive landscape of fear and incivility fundamentally alters the social opportunities for Australian Arabs and Muslims to function as citizens… It is not simply that people of Arabic-speaking or Muslim backgrounds experience abuse and harassment in their lives, but that these practices serve to disenfranchise them from full participation in Australian civic life. (p.19)

Although born, educated and employed in Australia, young Muslims face discrimination and barriers to civic access, in particular, participation in the employment and education institutional spheres. Singled out as a fundamental disadvantage for young students, visibility has been noted as a key barrier to social inclusion (Department of Immigration and Citizenship, 2008; Yasmeen, 2008; Office of Multicultural Interests (OMI), 2009); Kabir, 2011. In the Muslim youth summit (Department of Immigration and Citizenship, 2008) young Muslims spoke of the increased racialisation experienced as a consequence of their visibility, such as wearing the *hijab* and having Muslim names. It has been argued that being clearly placed as "other" had an impact on youths' perception of themselves, "for Muslim children growing up in this society, seeing their religion vilified at every turn… how they are viewed as Muslims… affects how they view themselves' (Bouma et al., 2011, p. 72). Australian Muslims continue to face considerably higher levels of unemployment, work in areas of lesser upward social mobility such as manual work, and face higher levels of poverty than non-Muslim Australians, despite, on average, higher levels of education (Peucker et al., 2014). According to Peucker et al. (2014), the continued disparity

in wealth not only works against Muslims' sense of belonging, but socio-economic marginalisation and disadvantage pose questions about civic participation.

The rhetoric for the wellbeing of students with expressions of concern for a misplaced identity is well documented by Australian educators (Halford, 2008; Mansouri & Percival-Wood, 2008). Young Muslims' demonisation as potential terrorists and the repeated pressure on them to denounce terrorism (Peucker et al., 2014), issues with the police and scrutiny, social experiences of being an outgroup (Cherney & Murphy, 2016), personal intergenerational conflicts and poor leadership (Ahmed, 2009) are signifiers of negative outcomes. Whilst the stress, frustration (Ahmed, 2009), angst and alienation (Peucker et al., 2014) that arise from such conditions are noted, Bassit (2009) confirms the effect of scrutiny and stereotyping in "damaging their [Muslim youth's] sense of belonging" (p. 738). As Peucker et al. (2014) assert: "a persistent sense of being on the margins of society makes Muslims less inclined to aspire for full citizenship" (p. 298). These considerations provoke the suggestion that the chances of a young Muslim generation venturing into the future workforce do not hold promise.

Conferring political and social membership, citizenship has been greatly criticised for three reasons: firstly, its conformist thrust (Forrest & Dunn, 2007; Chiro, 2009); secondly, in the ongoing ambiguous debates around Australian core values, particularly in educational discourse and in the implementation of the Citizenship test (Mansouri & Percival-Wood, 2008; Chiro, 2009). Thirdly, the Howard Government and its allies created a divisive situation of antagonism between "Australians" and those depicted and felt to be "un Australian". This type of "wedge politics" operates by defining the needs of a minority as a threat to national interests (Papastergiadis, 2005, p. 124). Since 9/11, media stereotyping and demonisation of Muslims has been on the rise (Dunn, 2003; Dunn et al., 2007; Mansouri & Percival-Wood, 2008).

Failure to climb the socio-economic ladder and social marginalisation for Muslims is compounded with questions over loyalty and citizenship. The "Muslim question" (Mansouri et al., 2015, p. 165), and questions of Muslims' loyalty to their nation states and whether they have the capacity to become active citizens persistently arise and circuit society. For adherents of the faith, Islamic principles and practices act as a manual and a gateway for righteous action, and as a consequence, for enacting good citizenship, an issue which has captured academic interest in recent years. Emergent scholarship shows not only that Muslims in the West can engage in active citizenship without betraying their religious

obligations but confirms a positive connection between core Islamic beliefs and citizenship (Ramadan, 2004; Yasmeen, 2008; Ahmed, 2009; Harris & Roose, 2014; Johns et al., 2015; Vergani et al., 2017).

Reinforcing the British report *Seen and not heard* (Ahmed, 2009), Yasmeen's (2008) South Australian study of religiously observant youth found their views of "themselves as Muslims first enables them to live their lives in a certain way, which they feel is consistent with being good citizens as well as good Muslims" (p. 731). In their interviews with 80 'ordinary' youth from Brisbane and Melbourne, Harris and Roose (2014) describe how young Muslims interlinked broader civic values with Islamic practice and its propensity for offering moral and civic guidance. For many of the young participants, Islam was not just about religious beliefs but was lived in everyday ways as a set of guiding principles. The researchers noted: "seeing their religion as a 'way of life' allowed them to position themselves as ethical citizens whose everyday lives were always inflected by moral and political reflection and guidance for action. This could then enhance rather than reduce their capacity for civic engagement" (p. 807).

Building on the understandings above, Johns et al. (2015) and Vergani et al. (2017) show how an Islamic religious framework acts as a reference point for engendering the development of good citizenship. Johns et al. (2015) highlight that young practising Muslims enact citizenship through Islamic rituals and faith-based practices and traditions, practices commonly embedded in the cultures of Islamic schools. Participation in wider community events and interfaith dialogue enable young people to embody values and principles informed by religiosity, while also opening up an avenue to become more connected and actively involved citizens. The researchers explain that by engaging with questions of faith, students grow in confidence to engage with the broader community as practising Muslim citizens, who are focused on shaping inclusive communities.

Furthermore, Vergani et al.'s (2017) study with Muslims from Melbourne delineated the more subjective dimensions, expressions and interpretations of how Islamic beliefs and everyday ritual practices shape civic engagement and political participation. Notable is this study's emphasis on social movements or organised groups, that is, the place of Islamic institutions who teach religiosity, but more than that, their potential for acting as civic hubs for facilitating civic responsibilities. This is reinforced elsewhere. Surveying 50 of New South Wales' 167 Islamic places of worship to provide a picture of the formal religious experiences of the state's 170,000 Muslims, Underabi (2014) found that mosques are part of

the solution. Underabi's (2014) report demonstrates how most mosques are not just places of worship. Rather, they serve a wide range of needs within and outside the Muslim community, acting as dynamic hubs for engagement, civic participation and charitable work. They are places that encourage greater national identification and belonging.

A common thread in these critiques is that Islam is a valuable guide and roadmap for civic engagement. Given that the cultural paradigm in Islamic schools is steeped in Islamic education and recent sociological findings asserting Islam as a "resource in the production of civic identity" (Harris & Roose, 2014, p. 807), then organised religiosity and groups (Vergani et al., 2017) in the form of Islamic schools merit serious consideration and study.

1.2.3: The experience of Muslim students in multicultural schools.

The aforementioned discussion thus far confirms the purported need for educative contexts to reconcile young Muslims' identities and increase social mobility. As well as presenting barriers to employment opportunities (Department of Immigration and Citizenship, 2008; Kabir, 2011), stereotypes within education and amongst educators are well documented (Mansouri & Trembath, 2005; Imtoual, 2006; Burridge, Buchanan, & Chodkiewicz, 2009; Santoro, 2009). In spite of multicultural education's precepts of inclusion, stereotypical constructions of ethnicity exist (Santoro, 2009). Marginalisation of Muslim students in the curriculum (Clyne, 1998), racist encounters with teachers (Mansouri & Trembath, 2005; Imtoual, 2006), the criminalisation of students (Ismailjee, 2015), failure of schools to employ culturally relevant pedagogies (McInerney, Davidson, & Suliman, 2000; Al-amri, 2013) and the yearning to belong (Burridge, 2009) have consequent ramifications during a critical period of identity formation. As far as the educational realm goes, Shah (2017) avers that the pervasive concerns "are not only about the lower educational achievement of Muslim students but also about schools' cultural environment, curriculum, discrimination and Islamophobia" (p. 57). For example, Clyne's (1998) interest in the education of Muslims in Australia has revealed that Muslims are marginalised in the curriculum, as well as the presence of misunderstandings amongst parents and the school, and school organisations that were predominantly co-educational. She noted the "removal of bias in texts, inclusion of Islamic perspectives in history and literature, and an Islamic world view in science is possible, but requires an understanding of the belief and value system of Islam that few non-Muslims have and with which some may disagree" (p. 284). Moreover, teachers

made assumptions based on inadequate knowledge of Islam. Clyne (1998) argues that teachers can act as conduits to bridging barriers.

Furthermore, racism and exclusion are issues of fundamental concern for both parents and students. Imtoual's (2006) narratives of the schooling experiences of young Muslim girls and Mansouri and Trembath (2005) confirm the institutionalised religious racism entrenched in the school structures. Parents were keen not to overstate the prevalence of racism within schools; nevertheless, they feel that it exists as a persistent undercurrent that "kills the spirit" (Mansouri & Trembath, 2005, p. 524).

Reinforcing the message of a Muslim student who "felt 'less than' her Anglo-Australian peers" (Poynting & Noble, 2004, p. 19), Burridge (2009) depicts the inner-world struggles of others in search of belonging and social recognition of their Australian self:

> …those of us from different backgrounds, where do we fit in? I have always defined myself as an Australian. You know, I was born here, raised here, gone to an Australian school, my language is English… If you look at the qualities that are attributed to an Australian… the whole mate ship thing and the love of sport – well then I'm just the same as the Australian old man who screams at the television every time the sports comes on. (Burridge, 2009, para. 9)

It is the concern for the slowly diminishing inner self and the creeping loss of one's self-worth that is at the crux of parental worries. If issues such as racism and class privilege are left silent in the classroom, the implicit message for students appears to be that the teacher and the school do not acknowledge that experiences of oppression exist (Erickson, 2010). Halford (2008), former principal of Sydney's Al Sadiq College, aptly puts it that most parents live in fear for their children's future, specifically encountering discrimination in social contacts and in having explicable behaviour instantly judged as suspect. Halford (2008) adds: "as parents, they must guard against their children losing self-esteem, becoming angry and experiencing a conflicted identity" (p. 56). In sum, an education that can help students negotiate their identity by equipping them with a repertoire of skills and knowledge necessary for a complex social context presents as an alternative solution in pursuing equitable educational outcomes. Neoliberalism's ethic of privatisation and choice has lent momentum to the unprecedented growth of faith-based schools generally.

1.3: Neoliberalism and the Growth of Religious Schools

The neoliberal thrust for the privatisation of education and parental choice has witnessed unprecedented growth in Australian non-government schools (Buckingham, 2010). Like that of other Western societies (Merry, 2007, 2015; Shah, 2009, 2012), the rise of religious schools is arguably the most defining feature resulting from the competitive marketisation reforms in Australia (Buckingham, 2010). As a study fleshing out the institutionalisation of Islamic schools' identities, and in doing so, nuancing Islamic schools' appeal in the educational market, this section sketches the growth of independent religious schools, of which Islamic schools are a part. It concludes by outlining, in brief, controversies surrounding them.

There are six states in Australia and two internal territories. Whilst the Federal government provides educational funding, the state government provides input as policymaker, advocate, and liaises between educators and politicians and the public. Under the Commonwealth Constitution, the state and territory governments have financial responsibility for government schools, contribute supplementary funds to non-government schools and regulate school policies and programs.

As a highly developed system of school choice in the world, the search for alternative educational platforms have given rise to the growth of independent religious schools in Australia. Faith or religious schools are cushioned within the traditional educational fabric of many Western countries. Australia's early history is illustrative of a faith-based educational foundation, with Protestantism and Catholicism foundational to its educational tapestry. Decades later, shifts towards a public system became desirable and a dual system of state and private education emerged (Jakubowicz, 2009).

The Australian education system as a whole has three overarching systems. The public education sector is owned and operated by the state government and accounts for 65.1% of student enrolments. The Catholic systemic sector comprises 11 dioceses in NSW alone and has remained unaffected with an unwavering 20.6% student enrolment since the 1990s. More than 760,000 students attended Catholic schools in 2017. Also, schools with a religious character that are partners with parents in funding (Independent Schools Council of Australia (ISCA), 2014) are known as non-government or independent schools. The independent sector, with an overwhelming majority affiliated with a religion, has witnessed phenomenal growth in the last two decades (ISCA, 2014). It accounts for 14.5 % of student intake in

Australia and when including the independent Catholic schools, a total of 1,123 schools and just over 604,436 full-time equivalent students were enrolled in 2017 (ISCA, 2017). The diversity of the independent sector is representative of the diversity of the Australian population as a whole.

The accompaniment of choice with costs gives schools in the independent sector no immunity from accountability and surveillance. By virtue of their funding from the Australian Government, independent schools are publicly accountable for all their operations. It is a condition that schools meet community standards and commit to the *Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians* (MCEETYA, 2008). Schools from all categories within the educational market must meet state or territory registration and curriculum requirements, submit audited financial data to government and other authorities, and meet all government regulations (ISCA, 2014). Along with other schools, they must participate in the National Assessment Program, implement the Australian Curriculum, subscribe to national values, publicly report school and student performance data and fully participate in national education initiatives such as the *MySchool* website and the outcomes and targets set out in the National Education Agreement.

Compliance with regulatory policies has not guaranteed faith-based schools immunity from controversy. The most powerful charge made against faith-based schools sustains the formulation that religious schools are divisive and do little for social cohesion (Short, 2003; Wilkinson, Dennis, & Mackintosh, 2004; Cush, 2005; Halstead & McLaughlin, 2005). Their teachings lead to social fragmentation, isolation and indoctrination of students. For example, Wilkinson et al. (2004) express the growing concern that students of differing ethnic and religious backgrounds are being isolated from each other through the growth of church-based schools. Just as Islam reignited controversy over the multicultural question, an additional reason why a system in existence for such a long time became controversial is because "schools with a foundation in religions other than Christianity and Judaism have been included, notably Muslim schools" (Cush, 2005, p. 436).

1.4: Islamic Schools: Mapping the Terrain

Islamic schools have officially been part of the educational tapestry since the early 1980s; however, they are far from being a contemporaneous concept on Australian shores. The concept of Islamic Schooling, that is instilling the precepts of Islam in educative spaces,

is a historical thread traced back to the Afghani cameleers' aspirations to cultivate the Muslim identity by providing a form of Islamic education for their children (Buckley, 1997).

There are 42 Islamic schools in Australia (ISCA, 2017). In New South Wales, following the majority of Muslim migration settlement, they outnumber their sister schools in Victoria, Western Australia and Queensland, the sites where this research project was undertaken. The sector has responded to increased demand, experiencing the fastest growth in enrolments and facilities (McNeilage, 2013). A brief outline is now provided of the choice of an Islamic school, the purpose of Islamic education and how this is reflected in the aims of Australian Islamic schools more broadly. The resistance, key debates, misconceptions surrounding Islamic schools and emerging internal tensions within them follows. The chapter concludes by exploring, in brief, gaps between their theory and practice.

1.4.1: The choice of Islamic schools.

Academics go to some length to explicate that it is not just observant parents who choose Islamic schools (Merry, 2005; Parker-Jenkins, 2005; Hussain & Read, 2015). The choice for their selection is as popular with religiously observant parents as it is for secular Muslim parents. In fact, there are two explicitly recognised motives for the establishment of and following from that the selection of Islamic schools in Western societies and these have remained relatively consistent from the 1980s to the present. To achieve the espoused purpose of an Islamic school in the contemporary educational landscape, it is essential that they translate into school practice. The first of these motives, going back to the Afghani cameleers' experience, is specifically related to the preservation of the Islamic heritage: transmission of a religious identity in a culturally congruent space which is free from racist encounters. What emerges from the literature is that the decline in moral values for Muslim parents accentuates the desire for a form of education which allows their children to maintain a world view and value set that they see as standing against the prevailing societal trends of 'Western materialism and permissiveness' (Parker-Jenkins, 2002, p. 277), to "shape up" and learn morality and customs (Merry, 2005) in culturally congruent spaces (Zine, 2007). There is a perception among many Muslim parents (Merry, 2005), as there is amongst others inclined to send their children to non-government schools, that modern society exhibits 'malign influences' (Muller & Associates, 2008, p. 11) and is in a state of moral decline (Merry, 2005). Merry (2005) noted that with the "spectre of secularism and permissiveness looming large, many Muslim parents are eager to shield their children from certain materialist

and secular influences by placing them in a comprehensive religious environment in order to foster a highly specific moral orientation" (p. 377). Underscored by an Islamic worldview of education, Islamic schools' cultures are seen to be congruent with meeting this purpose.

The second predominant motive, held in common with all schools, is the pursuit of academic achievement. Nonetheless, it seems to be no coincidence, given their increase of an additional ten out of the twenty-two schools in Sydney alone in the past decade, that Islamic schools' increased appeal synchronises with their clientele's exclusion. In an ambivalent social backdrop, lack of parity, as well as constrained opportunities for social participation and access has recast the attention towards Islamic schools as an alternative. Merry (2015) argues that in the case of Islamic schools serving a "stigmatised and marginalised group", voluntary separation in the form of Islamic schools is a "constructive alternative" (p. 148). Concurring with others (Zine, 2007; Shah 2012), he contends, they are a justifiable response to social inequality and educational disadvantage. Providing an overall assessment of the situation, Merry (2015) submits that "separation will continue to be an appealing alternative for those whose equal status is not recognised, whose opportunities are impeded or denied, and whose opportunities for participation all too often are diminished in integrated environments" (p. 149).

Although the choice of an Islamic school is invariably different amongst parents and may be based on academic inclinations, better discipline, or an inclusive school environment, nonetheless, they are mindful that the crux and distinctive quality of Islamic schools is to provide an education whose hallmark is the ethical teachings of Islam. It is what defines them (Moes, 2002; Memon, 2011).

1.4.2: *Adab*: an ethically framed education for enacting just action.

Conceived as a tool for equipping individuals to live in accordance with one's society and create an ethical and spiritual being who is multi-dimensional and endowed with a healthy sense of direction, the overall objective of Islamic education is character building (Syed, 2001; Tauhidi, 2001). The mechanics for the development of the Islamic personality lie within an Islamic values framework, which in turn leads to the development of *taqwa* – a highly developed and profound awareness of *Allah* (God), to enable learners to understand their responsibilities to the Creator and all creation with justice (Niyozov & Memon, 2011; Waghid, 2011). An Islamic epistemology therefore rejects the 'economy' as a primary consideration. "Knowledge", "justice" and "truth", argues Waghid (2011), to create what

Said (2004) refers to as "fields of co-existence" (p. 141), are reasons for enacting Islamic education. This is most evident in the scholarship of Al-Attas (1980, 1993), explicated in the concept of *adab* (instilling *ta'dib*), of discipline of the mind, soul and body.

In his keynote address at the 1977 First World Conference on Muslim Education, Al-Attas (1980) established and justified *adab* as the most enduring and suitable concept that fulfils the end and purpose of education, which is to produce the good men and women who constitute a better society. *Adab* refers to: "recognition and acknowledgement of the right and proper place, station, and condition in life, and to self-discipline in positive and willing participation in enacting one's role in accordance with that recognition and acknowledgement" (Al-Attas, 1980, p. 11). With respect to society, *adab* is the just order within. Indeed, the purpose of seeking knowledge in Islam revolves around inculcating "goodness" in wo/man. By the concept of "good", as Al-Attas (1980) explains, it is meant precisely that the wo/man of *adab* in the sense that it "encompasses the spiritual and material life of man" (p. 12). Across his scholarship Al-Attas (1980, 1993) underlines that a good citizen or worker may not necessarily be a good wo/man, but a good wo/man is connected to society. They are, as Said (1983) propounds, of "the world" (p.33). Al-Attas' (1980, 1993) thesis is that a good citizen who acts justly and contributes to the common good will as a matter of fact be a good worker. He maintains that for a just man acting concomitantly with the knowledge in a positive, commendable and praiseworthy manner, "there is no worthwhile knowledge without action accompanying it, nor worthwhile action without knowledge guiding it" (Al-Attas, 1980, p. 15). Therefore, *adab* constitutes both *'ilm* (knowledge/learning) and *amal* (action).

Adab presupposes that the more one learns, the more God conscious, refined, mature, peaceful, forgiving, wise and God-like one becomes (Niyozov & Memon, 2011). Wo/men of *Adab* therefore understand their responsibilities towards God, themselves, their milieu-environment and all its occupants, with justice (Waghid, 2011). Hence, *adab* guides individual interaction with society and determines the way individuals interact and conduct themselves in the community.

The reconcilability of religious knowledge and the secular disciplines is a hallmark of Islamic education and integral to the conceptual framing of *adab*. To explain, a Muslim approaches all learning – whether it is a study of *fiqh* (jurisprudence) or a doctorate in quantum physics – from the perspective of developing *taqwa* (Bhabha, 1997). For Bhabha (1997), both Quranic learning, key disciplines, reasoning and thinking skills are essential, but

they should inherently promote and inculcate Islamic values. An educational experience underpinned by the outcome and constitutive conceptions of Islamic education thereby not only provides the rationale for Islamic schools' existence and central purpose but is considered to be concrete and compelling for students, potentially bringing about positive personal transformation. Given its powerful claims for transforming the individual and the overall human condition, it is Islamic schools' and their leaders' calling to ensure that *adab* towards oneself, living beings and overall society is embedded into the informal everyday practices and the formal curriculum of Islamic schools.

The impetus for reconciling elements of students' religious and cultural social worlds and equipping them with the confidence, knowledge and skills for productive membership in society forms the rationale of Islamic schools in Australia. Indeed, for Buckley (1997), founder of the first Islamic school in Sydney's west, Islamic schools aim to: achieve the highest possible standard of moral behaviour and ethical attitudes; provide an Islamic environment free from undesirable social values; develop a Muslim personality; equip children with the necessary knowledge, skills, attitudes and behaviours; enable learners to contribute meaningfully to the general harmony, prosperity and good of society overall; and to develop Muslim Australian citizens who will be able to cope with the increasing demands and pressures of the global society and act as "ambassadors of Islam" to the world. These goals are not foreign to Sydney, Victorian and Australian Islamic schools generally but are couched in their philosophies. Victoria's Minaret College, for instance, claims "to produce a healthy Australian Muslim identity which is: connected, conscious, sincere to its traditions and committed to excellence, good citizenship and compassionate service to humanity" (http://www.minaret.vic.edu.au/index.php?id=34). However, where neoliberal policies have enabled the growth and choice of Islamic schools, controversy and tensions within them have been a source of constraint.

1.4.3: Tensions: amidst resistance, growth and internal constraints.

Islamic schools operate within contrasting forces of resistance and popularity, external tensions and internal conundrums. Since a consideration for this study is Islamic Schools in Australia, this section records their diversity and the tensions between social resistance and their growth as well as the tensions in operation within them. Firstly, much of the debate on educating Muslim children internationally and in Australia has focussed on Islamic schools. However, in most Western and European countries the majority of Muslim children attend

state schools and for many they are just as appealing (Parker-Jenkins, 2005; Gokulsing, 2006). It has been noted that since their inception, Australian Islamic schools enrol 10% of Muslim children, with the vast majority enrolled in public schools (Carbines et al., 2006). This is not due to lack of popularity amongst clients. A study surveying the *Hopes and aspirations of Muslim Australians* (Akbarzadeh, Bouma, Woodlock, Rahman, et al., 2009) shows that some 60% of parents were in favour of Islamic schools, if they had a choice. Access is constrained by high demand and long waiting lists (McNeilage, 2013).

Secondly, a characterising feature of Islamic schools is their heterogeneity. It has been noted that these schools are as diverse as the people who have established and work in them (Hussain, 2010). A distinctive difference is the cultural ethnic background of the Muslims who have set them up, in that Islamic schools are commonly based on ethnicity and a racial structure. Another difference is the sectarian diversity. In Australia, the *Sunni* sect dominates the market share; however, some cater for the less dominant sects of Islam. A few minority schools serve those of the *Alawite* and *Shiite* tradition in Australia. Notwithstanding their diversity, the schools' similarities lie primarily in their promise to integrate spirituality with the material in students' learning, whose impetus is grounded in the concept of *Tawhid*: God-consciousness in all spheres of life (Hussain, 2010).

Like the faith and its adherents, debates surrounding Islamic schools are the subject of much controversy, both internationally and locally. In their review of Islamic schools in three Western countries, Merry (2005) and Merry and Driessen (2016) observe Islamic schools' encounters with suspicion, negative attitudes and social and bureaucratic resistance. Although some in Britain rank amongst the leading schools academically (Hewer, 2001), Muslims have received little support from the government in financing Islamic schools in Great Britain, unlike Christian and Jewish schools (Fetzer & Soper, 2004). Resistance to Islamic schools is also strong in Belgium; however, this country is unique in the Western world because of its wide-scale provision of Islamic education in public schools (Merry, 2005).

In Australia, resistance to Islamic institutions' continued establishment is unparalleled (Buckley, 1991; Dunn et al., 2007; Gulson & Webb, 2012, 2013). The controversy over Islamic schools in Australia exceeds the contested dynamics at play in the debates on religious schools at large and is entrenched within the politics of racialisation (Al-Natour, 2010; Gulson & Webb, 2012). The sector is frequently under the microscope by political figures, bolstered by an assertive media commentary and public opinion over the values they teach (Wakim, 2005) and questions over their fit within Australian society.

In the process of establishment, it has become the norm for Islamic schools to be embroiled in lengthy legal proceedings and court hearings based on stringent campaigns of protests and petitions. Traffic flow, congestion and planning have become pretexts for the rejection of these schools. Buckley (1991) depicts the ongoing court hearings, media attention and neighbours' objections in the application for the establishment of the first Islamic school in the heart of Sydney – a school later given approval pending agreement to the building of an earth-integrated structure, rendering it obscure from the outside world. Twenty years later, applications for the establishment of the Hoxton Park School, the 600-student *Qaadiri* School at Austral and the extension to the Liverpool and Bankstown *Al Amanah Islamic Schools'* site at Bass Hill sparked fierce and heated opposition (Campion, 2009), a path also encountered in the application plan for the Quranic Society's 1200-student school in 2007 in Sydney's Camden (Gibson, 2008). In an analysis of the public terrain pertaining to the opposition of Islamic Schools in Australia, with an interest in "what forms of choice are legitimated in and by a racialised education market" (Gulson & Webb, 2012, p. 697), Gulson and Webb (2012) argue that in Australia planning issues for some have become the mode for racialisation: "it is therefore, possible for the supposed neutrality of planning to transmute traffic concerns. Here racialised educational politics are simultaneously racialised urban politics" (p. 703).

The then multicultural affairs commissioner Joseph Wakim (2005) has questioned: "Why Muslim Schools? What about the rest?" By way of a response, Gulson and Webb (2012) conclude their analysis stating that "existing and proposed Islamic Schools in Sydney are located within policy enunciations of school choice that code certain schools as either belonging or not belonging" (p. 703). Muslims find themselves in a paradoxical situation. Attempts to establish their own schools for their young in order to instil their values and beliefs, help them achieve their sense of purpose and integrate within mainstream society are tied up with numerous tensions. Minimal evidence is available illustrative of Islamic schools' contributions as a faith-based institution in a multicultural society (Gokulsing, 2006). This research, in part, contributes to this end.

As well as external tensions associated with their controversy, internal tensions pertaining to mismanagement of funding and leadership issues emerge as another conundrum for these schools. Among the most recent speculations, reawakened by media coverage, are potential federal investigations into alleged misappropriation of funds (Bagshaw, 2016) and other operational matters. For example, the alleged funnelling of government funding into the pockets of the Australian Federation of Islamic Council Schools the largest Islamic school

organisation in Australia, with particular attention to Malek Fahd Islamic School (MFIS), continues to be the subject of ongoing media interest. Also, Rissallah College and Al Noori Muslim School, having been allegedly charged with misappropriation of funds (Bagshaw, 2016), are repeatedly refreshed into the public imaginary in spite of the latter being cleared. The successive sackings of AFIC principals (Branley, 2015) and gender inequity, where it relates to the exclusion of girls from sport activities in a Victorian School, as reported by students and staff (Cook & Preiss, 2015), has also come under scrutiny.

Issues concerning misuse of grants and the sacking of principals are questionable and merit close and rigorous investigation. These are suggestive of governance malpractice in Islamic schools; the structure and governance policy in a western Sydney school has been openly criticised by a previous principal, claiming: "the board did not have the variety of skills and backgrounds required to be an effective board" (Bagshaw, 2016). The then Education Minister Christopher Pyne expressed his concern over the reported media allegations "in relation to curriculum, gender segregation, senior staff movements and financial transactions" (Pyne, as cited in Bagshaw, 2016). Whilst an audit of the six AFIC schools in relation to funds and dismissal of senior staff, to get to the bottom of these matters, is timely for the Education Minister, some of the issues on the federal investigative itinerary lack legitimacy. For example, gender segregation, a defining feature of Islamic schools' cultures (Hewer, 2001; Hussain, 2010), is a practice that government officials experience first-hand in their official visits to Islamic schools. The curriculum is another case in point. Like all independent schools, these schools' curriculums are subjected to frequent and rigorous inspections of all teaching and learning materials by the Board of Studies. Amidst little clarity, what is clear is that the hype over the 'myths' of Islamic schools—their experiences, teachings, leaders' work, and contributions—with its overly speculated and distant scrutiny, lacks investigative rigour and substance.

1.4.4: A gap between the theory and the practice of Islamic schools.

In recent years, an imbalance between treatments of their central aims has been observed of Islamic schools. Whilst the next chapter provides an in-depth synthesis of the research, this section uses highlights of the empirical base to pinpoint a gap between the espoused theory and experience of purpose in Islamic schools. There is a growing body of literature which demonstrates Islamic schools' concerted efforts to respond to the social issues of the times (Zine, 2007; Memon, 2010; Niyozov & Memon, 2011; Berglund, 2014).

However, it seems that ritualism (Ramadan, 2004), cultural intrusions (Hassen, 2013) and excellence (Welch, 2007; Niyozov & Memon, 2011) are overemphasised at the expense of engaging in an Islamic educational paradigm of holistic learning. For example, Islamic schools are performing well academically (Hewer, 2001; Niyozov & Memon, 2011). Notable is their adeptness at the competitive high-stakes testing context in Australia (Welch, 2007). However, early research by Sanjakdar (2001) reveals overemphasis on the secular knowledge base compromises an Islamic school's stated mission.

Whilst the teachings of Islam are bedrock to the existence of Islamic schools, it seems that "culture is used in place of religion" (Hassen, 2013, p. 513), and ritualism and rote-based teachings of the scriptures are in disconnect with learners' realities (Ramadan, 2004). Sanjakdar (2001), Ramadan (2004) and Hassen (2013) argue that this may be at the expense of the construction of a Muslim identity that is equipped with the tools for civic participation and complexities of life in their western societies. If these are true, there is a gap between rhetoric and practice.

Argyris and Schön (1974, 1996) warn of the crippling effects for organisational effectiveness should the gap between theory and practice widen. Given the centrality of constructing a religious identity that is equipped with the ethics and tools to connect with society, it would seem to be important to understand the 'deep' and complex layers of organisational culture (Schein, 1992; 2010) and as importantly the role that the leadership of an Islamic school plays in facilitating this.

1.5: Organisational Culture

The literature identifies the critical role of culture in the successful achievement of goals (Deal & Peterson, 1999, 2009; Peterson, 2002; Hallinger, 2003), in particular through the alignment of organisational goals (Schein, 1992, 2004, 2010). This is because, in a coherent organisation, the purpose defines what actions occur. It motivates staff and students by signalling what is important and steers the allocation of human and material resources (Starratt, 2003). It is therefore of utmost importance that the school culture is explicitly shaped in accordance with the purpose. Culture is "the assumptions which lie behind the values and which determine the behaviour patterns and the visible artefacts such as architecture, office layout, dress codes, and so on" (Schein, 1980, pp. 2–3). Moes (2002) argues that teaching Islam is what defines Islamic schools. This means that the school culture must be underscored by an Islamic worldview of education and philosophy. Given that culture is instrumental in achieving the desired outcomes of an Islamic school, it cannot be

left to chance. Building and managing school culture and the explicit construction of purpose within its multiple layers calls upon the influence of educational practitioners. When considering the external circumstances of the schools, as well as the potential gaps within them, translating espoused purpose into practice presents as a potential problem, one requiring the activism of practitioners (Said, 1994; Apple, 2006). Edgar Schein (2004, 2010) argues that leadership and culture are two sides of the same coin.

1.6: Leadership

Commensurate with educational leadership literature (Bolman & Deal, 1994, 2003; Deal & Peterson, 2009), culture is created, embedded, evolved, and ultimately manipulated by leaders (Schein, 2010). It is through understanding and creating contextually compatible conditions that leadership influences culture, as a measure to attain school purposes. Bush and Glover (2003) define leadership as "a process of influence leading to the achievement of desired purposes". A leader's primary role is then to ensure influence is geared towards the achievement of a shared vision within "the philosophy, structures and activities of the school" (Bush & Glover, 2003, p. 8), which requires an understanding of the school culture as well as leadership.

Leadership understanding must be construed and grounded in its context (Shah, 2007; Leithwood, Harris, & Hopkins, 2008). In the particular case of Islamic schools, it is necessary to appreciate an Islamic perspective of leadership as an encompassing concept. It is defined "as a process by which the leader seeks the voluntary participation of followers in an effort to reach certain objectives" (Beekun & Badawi, 1999, p. 2). Leadership from an Islamic perspective is ethical (Beekun & Badawi, 1999); a collective entity grounded in a moral act and distributed amongst all community members, a view emergent in a democratic conceptualisation of educational leadership. Extrapolated from the above is that, in synchronising Islamic schools' theory with practice, the notions of trust and responsibility are allocated both to a central authority figure but also dispersed amongst all individuals in Islamic schools.

1.7: Identifying the Research Problem

In a context of entrenched hostility towards Muslims and their institutions (Dunn et al., 2007), where Muslims perceive themselves to be "under siege" (Cherney & Murphy, 2016, p. 487), Islamic schools are a contested phenomenon. Parental concerns for their stigmatised children (Merry, 2015) to gain the best educational opportunities in accepting spaces have

been enabled by the neoliberal privatisation agenda. Against a backdrop of ambivalence, what is certain is the rhetoric of these schools to equip students with the knowledge necessary for responsible, productive and humane social membership using an Islamic ethical framework. There is evidence to suggest that this is not always done well in practice.

There is some evidence that points to a gap between what Islamic schools espouse and what they practice in the curriculum (Sanjakdar, 2001, 2005) in the construction of a religious identity (Driessen & Valkenberg, 2000; Hassen, 2013) and preparing teachers to provide contextually relevant learning (Memon, 2011). The present study will contribute to some extent to the exploration of these areas; however, it is not its primary purpose. Whilst cultural and political issues surrounding Islamic schools preoccupy popular discourse, there is little empirical evidence inquiring into the lived experiences and challenges encountered by the schools and those who institutionalise the schools' identities. As Grace (2003) points out, discourse and intellectual debates on faith-based schools are underscored by scant evidence-based research, "based upon distorted or partial knowledge" (p. 151). Misunderstandings of Islamic schools (Johnson & Castelli, 2002) are typical of Grace's views. To date there exists little concrete evidence in real-life contexts. In a landscape encouraging the sale of education, of corporatisation and consumerism, there is little if any insight into the ways Islamic schools in Australia construct their espoused purpose, and indeed the role of their leaders in this process, thus leading to the formulation of the key research question:

How is the espoused purpose of Islamic schools constructed in Australia?

In order to address the research question concerning how espoused purpose is being constructed in the schools' cultures whilst factoring in the circumstances of the schools, a number of research sub-questions were developed.

1. What claims do Islamic schools make about their purposes in their representational mechanisms?
2. How do broader contextual factors and stakeholder experiences contribute to the construction of the espoused purpose of Islamic schools?

A key vehicle through which espoused purpose can be done well in a school is culture. Leaders play a key role in this dynamic. In the current educational tapestry, particularly the complex cultural political context of Islamic schools, leaders play a key role in articulating, creating, shaping and operationalising the school's purpose into action and "converting it into operational terms" (Davies, 2004, p. 31). Concurring with Shah (2007), there is an

incomplete view of how leaders—those who make representations on behalf of these schools—exercise influence in this regard, and of their role in institutionalising the schools' identities. This lack of clarity about what leadership explicitly does to negotiate and find resolutions for the educational needs of their charges in their day to day practice (Apple, 2006) formulates the basis of the third research sub-question.

3. How do leaders construct the espoused purpose of Islamic education in a complex backdrop of educational choice, markets and Islamophobia?

Given Islamic schools' founders' commitment and struggles to establish them (Buckley, 1991; Gulson & Webb, 2012, 2013), the Muslim community's investment in them, and most importantly, the education, well-being and concerns for integrated individuals of the future Australian generations increasingly enrolling in them, this paucity in research warrants investigation.

1.8: Significance of the Research

This inquiry into constructing the espoused purpose of Islamic schools in Australia merits attention not just for its contribution to evidence-based research into a much-speculated upon phenomena or the knowledge this may contribute to wider scholarship. Both are significant and offer vital research. The findings of this study also contribute to real-life social and educational issues, practice and policy making. Firstly, in order to support schools that host a Muslim population and the Monday-to-Friday work of their practitioners, it seeks to offer concrete frameworks that support them in dealing with the complexities of their work.

Cornerstone to this study is the dynamic interplay between culture and leadership and leadership and culture. It responds to the lacuna of research in the distinctive setting of Islamic schools. In particular, it nuances the impact of different contextual factors on the nature of school leadership, the impact of the distinctive nature of Islamic schools' culture on the nature of leadership and how leaders seek to change school culture (Bush & Glover, 2003). By setting scholarly research in these types of school environments, there is potential to improve studies of educational policy, school effectiveness and leadership, by making them more comprehensive (Grace, 2003). In doing so, it offers knowledge of leadership practice in faith-based schools (Striepe, 2011).

Secondly, this study offers theory-driven scholarship and concrete context-based evidence which provide well-considered alternatives to the surveillance schemes and iron fist

de-radicalisation policies which exacerbate alienation. It can therefore guide the formulation of educational policy in countries that are looking for real solutions for real educational and social problems.

Finally, provisions of inclusion are central to this study. It opens up the space for a silent majority to be heard, a diversity of stakeholders who are not just leaders, nor teachers but the "excluded middle" (Harris & Roose, 2014, p. 810). It therefore engages with voices of students and teachers, the young and mature, educators and non-educator stakeholders, vocalising their experiences and their daily lived realities in their environment. Stakeholders of Islamic schools contribute to the overall tapestry of Australia and its schooling. This research acknowledges their existence and heightens a sense of belonging as active citizens significantly contributing to the Australian social tapestry.

In conclusion, this study offers the possibility of new scholarly insight that addresses a gap in the research of faith-based schools (Grace, 2003; Striepe, 2011) and will add to the limited research on Islamic schools.

1.9: Thesis Chapter-by-Chapter Summary

As the research question concerns constructing the espoused purpose of Islamic schools in Australia, a seven-chapter format was developed for this study. The first chapter describes the context and situates the research in the wider socio-political context it is embedded in. It outlines the rationale of the study, identifies the research problem and concludes by providing an overview of the thesis.

Chapter two reviews the literature informing the research. It engages with the critique and discussion of four core themes: purpose-in-use of schools, school culture, leadership, and Islamic schools. Chapter three details the design of the research. Critical theory and the contribution of critical theorist Edward Said anchor the conceptual framing of the thesis. It then incorporates the rationale for a multi-methodological qualitative case study.

Chapters four, five and six include an analysis and discussion of the results. Using the semiotics of promotional materials, the first of these presents an analysis of the espoused purpose of Islamic schools. Purpose-in-use and the action of leaders in bringing commitments into effects in the informal practices and the formal curriculum of the schools are followed in chapters five and six. Chapter seven ties in the findings and presents the significant

conclusions from the research. It describes this study's contributions and makes recommendations for further research.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1: Chapter Two Introduction

Against a backdrop of neoliberal educational policy of corporatisation (Apple, 2004) and a socio-political landscape reviving sentiments of the "Orientalist" (Said, 1977, 1994, 2004), the purpose of this study is to explore the ways in which Islamic schools construct their espoused purpose in Australia. The previous chapter identified contextual foundations of high relevance to this thesis, demonstrating how Islamic schools are implicated by the socio-cultural politics as well as internal issues. This section reviews and synthesises the literature pertaining to the operations of Islamic schools by drawing on theory in action: espoused theory and theory-in-use (Argyris & Schön, 1974, 1996). In addition, it identifies, more broadly, the relevant body of literature surrounding influential individuals who construct, articulate and represent purpose, then turns to Islamic schools. As part of the process, contextual factors which impact purpose are identified and implications for Islamic schools and their leaders in constructing purpose are crafted throughout. Four central themes that locate this study emanate from the literature review. These are: *purpose-in-use of schools*, *school culture*, *leadership*, and *Islamic schools in the West*. The concepts are interrelated; however, each concept is explored separately. The next section explores *purpose-in-use of schools*.

2.2: Purpose-In-Use of Schools

There is no shortage of evidence ascertaining that core to schools' activities is teaching and learning (Goodlad, 1984). Indeed, one hears, often enough, that a school's role is to teach students to use their minds well (Sizer, 1985). Although this is what schools do, it is not the broader purpose for which schools function. There is widespread agreement among sources as diverse as Durkheim (1956) and Parsons' (1959) formulations, current official postulations (MCEETYA, 2008) and distinctive cultural traditions (Al-Attas, 1980), that the function of education and therefore schools is to prepare individuals for their society, albeit an increasingly uncertain and complex one. Indeed, the espoused purpose of schools generally, the theoretical and official claims that are made "on behalf" of schools (Sara Ahmed, 2012) do not appear to be contentious territory. What is problematic as critique of educational scholarship and emergent theories have shown (Bowles & Gintis, 1976; Bourdieu &

Passeron, 1990; Ladson-Billings, 1995, 2003; Apple, 2004, 2006), is the contradiction between what is theoretically and officially espoused and how the purpose and philosophy of education translates into practice.

This section, drawing on the work of the architects of theory in action (Argyris & Schön, 1974, 1996) illustrates that whilst organisations and their stakeholders purport certain possibilities and actions, how they are actualised, that is, whether they are "performative" (Ahmed, 2012) in fact, differs. As a focus of this research concerns constructing the espoused purpose of Islamic schools in Australia, this section will explore *theory in action or espoused theory and theory-in-use.*

2.2.1: Theory in action: espoused theory and theory-in-use.

Argyris and Schön (1974, 1996) posit theory in action that governs organisations. Practitioners, they argue, hold two alternate theories about organisational behaviour. The first theory relates to the one that organisations and their leaders espouse: representational rhetoric and formally articulated claims. It is the theory that governs the action. Alternatively, *theory-in-use* or practice is the worldview, the values guiding and implied by people's behaviour, or the maps they use to take action (Anderson, 1997). In this sense, it is the common-sense thinking or the implicit assumptions that tell groups how to perceive, think about, and feel about things (Schein, 1992, 2010). Argyris and Schön (1974, 1996) hold that it is these maps that guide people's actions rather than the theories they explicitly espouse. In fact, few leaders are conscious of the theories they use and "consistently act inconsistently" (Argyris, 1991).

A key function of theory in action in enhancing organisational purpose is to determine the fit between espoused theory and theory-in-use. Argyris and Schön (1974) make the case that effectiveness, or as Ahmed (2012) aptly puts it, closing the gap, results from developing congruence between theory-in-use and espoused theory. Much of the work of organisational leaders is concerned with the gulf between espoused theory and theory-in-use or bringing the latter to the surface. This gulf presents dilemmas and difficulties if it widens. This framework offers a way of exploring the ways in which Islamic schools and their leaders construct espoused purpose, and further to that, a way of aligning rhetoric with reality. It is therefore reflected in the framing of the research questions. Culture provides a powerful home for optimising congruence when constructing espoused purpose because it "is not only all around us but within us as well" (Schein, 2010, p. 13).

2.3: School Culture

In addition to responding to external policy mandates shared in common across schools nationally, a key element of the espoused purpose that is unique to Islamic schools is the embedding of Islam across the school's social, structural, organisational and educational layers. Understanding this dynamic requires a consideration of the culture of Islamic schools, as purpose and culture are interdependent. Culture is instrumental to achieving the outcomes to which an Islamic school community aspires. School culture holds the key to what is important and spotlights dimensions for leadership focus (Deal & Peterson, 1999, 2009). It is pivotal to the success and achievement of a school's goals and vision (Peterson, 2002). As Schein (1992) argues, for culture to exist there must be a definable organisation in the sense of a number of people interacting with each other for the purpose of accomplishing some goal in their defined environment. This implies that purpose is dependent, in great part, on culture and educational practitioners for its integration.

Culture and climate are terms that have, at times, been used interchangeably, however climate is a subcategory of culture. According to Schein (2010), climate is subsumed by the 'artefact' layer of school culture and is better thought of as the product of some of the underlying assumptions. It is, therefore, a manifestation of culture (Schein, 2010). Climate is also known as atmosphere, ethos and tone, whereas culture is the underlying set of norms, values, beliefs, rituals, and traditions that make up the unwritten rules of how to think, feel and act in an organisation (Peterson & Deal, 2002). This study will use the concept of culture as being the broader, more fundamental term.

Of importance for a study relating to the issue of constructing the espoused purpose of Islamic schools is the critical role culture ultimately plays in the realisation of organisational goals and purposes (Schein, 1992, 2004; Deal & Peterson, 2009). Subsequently, an understanding of culture for leadership is important for aligning official claims with experience.

2.3.1: Features of school culture.

Resurgent interest in school culture (Deal & Peterson, 1999, 2009; Schein, 1992, 2010) in recent decades is based on growing evidence that culture can lead to better performance, "not just on test scores but in the full array of social, emotional, and communal outcomes we expect schools to attain" (Deal & Peterson, 2009, p. 4). Reviewing the school culture literature is relevant for identifying the possibilities culture offers leadership and the potential

for intervention in order to bring words into effect (Ahmed, 2012). This section discusses the influence of and offers a model of a school culture (Starratt, 2003). In addition, it presents critical elements of culture—the purposes, traditions, norms and values that guide and glue a community together (Deal & Peterson, 1999)—to nuance understandings of the possibilities culture offers Islamic schools, the phenomenon to be explored in this research.

Deal and Peterson (1999, 2009) and Starratt (2003) are foremost in providing useful frameworks explicating dimensions of school culture. Starratt's (2003) Onion Model of Schools, as depicted in Figure 2.1, offers a heuristic model for the alignment of officially articulated commitments with action, for understanding, measuring and synchronising purpose within the wide, deep and complex layers (Schein, 1992) of an Islamic school. It helps practitioners consider where to look, what to look for and the ways in which to look when critiquing, assessing, disrupting and working, from the most visible to the invisible levels. The Onion Model (Starratt, 2003) visualises a school as made up of layers of interrelated activity, incorporating the myth, beliefs and assumptions, purpose and goals, policies, programs, organisation and operations. Sitting at the centre of what life in the school is all about is the "vision of what the school can and should become" (p. 19). The history of a school, the rationale for its existence and its deeper sense of purpose and direction are included in its myth core, which must synchronise with the remaining layers for school success.
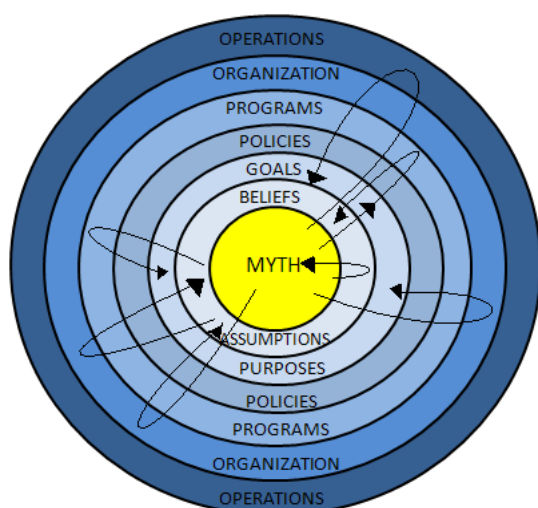
Figure 2.1: A school culture with an integrated vision (Starratt, 2003, p. 20).

The Onion Model (Starratt, 2003) offers a concrete tool for leadership action and provides an overall assessment of whether institutional claims align with the everyday

informal practices and formal curriculum. Informal practices encompass the daily organisation and operations of a school. Unless a school's values are embedded in the schools' vision and penetrate the remaining layers of school life, its goals, policies, programs, resources and overall organisation, the purpose is not realised and remains "dysfunctional" (Starratt, 2003, p. 20). For example, the policies layer articulates official rules that govern many of the day-to-day decisions made by external policy frameworks, the school governance and practitioners. It frames and guides the execution of the next layer, programs (including the curriculum), and provides the substance of teachers' and students' work. As a consequence, both layers and official documents associated with them are critical for leadership consideration as a way of establishing "what is of priority", and "whose knowledge", as Apple (2006) argues, "is of most worth?" (p. xix). Surrounding programs is the organisation layer, better described as the school compass, providing structural direction such as timetabling, groupings and class arrangements. The outer layer depicts school operations, aspects that are visible to anyone walking around the school.

However, being a school culture model, the broader context as an active constituent of purpose, on the other hand, is shown little consideration. The "situatedness" of the schools—their "constraints" and "limits" (Said, 1975, pp. 8–9)—are important factors for consideration, reflection and critical analysis. As stated, for leaders charged with constructing purpose for a racialised constituency, this is of fundamental significance and sidelining them marginalises the universal Islamic principles that Islamic education aims to achieve (Ramadan, 2004). As Apple (2004) reminds us, any 'critical' study of education must think "critically about educational relationship to economic, political and cultural power" (p. vii). Issues of marginalisation, knowledge, power, privilege and justice cannot be disassociated from the schools' 'locatedness' and the way critical educators construct, examine, critique, understand and interpret, think about and intervene.

If schools are to provide an equitable education, then interrupting the type of experiences encountered in mainstream schools implies the type of movements and actions that critique and counter dominant discourses and cemented customs. Culture offers a useful construct, however the creation of educational opportunities for equity and the restoration of justice requires the activism of practitioners who interrogate dominant practices, from both outside and from within. This summons a discourse of leadership. As a primary agent in shaping organisational culture (Schein, 1983, 1992, 2010), leadership is key to constructing purpose.

2.4: Leadership

The Muslim community sees the need for schools that give expression to its Islamic ethos whilst meeting all the educational requirements of any given school. Construction of purpose was shown to be interconnected with the local culture, educational policy mandates and the circumstances of schools and their constituencies. It is these understandings that shape the purpose of Islamic schools and summon leadership intervention. It is "with purpose (that) managers become leaders" (Cashman, 2008, p. 75). As noted, leadership is defined as a process of influence and as leading a group towards achieving mutual goals (Bush & Glover, 2003), a definition congruent with an Islamic view. Consensual influence distinguishes leadership from other such forces as coercion or manipulation, which cause compliance rather than energise people as a way of bringing about lasting change. School culture then influences and is influenced by leadership, eliciting the exercise of a form of leadership that is congruent with the local culture and the wider context it is surrounded by. An underlying factor of effective schools is their positive culture and the fact that effective school leaders are culture builders (Deal & Peterson, 1999, 2009). Schein (2004) highlights that "the only thing of real importance that leaders do is create and manage culture; that the unique talent of leaders is their ability to understand and work with culture; and that it is an ultimate act of leadership to destroy culture when it is viewed as dysfunctional" (p. 11). In essence, when constructing purpose, leadership understanding and intervention are of great importance for ensuring cultural cohesion. The single most important thing that leadership of Islamic schools does in response to its stakeholder expectations is to shape culture in accordance with its legacy and social reality, thereby striking a balance between their dual missions. This is done by creating shared meaning and driving a 'core purpose' (Cashman, 2008) and communicating it, as well as aligning it with school structures, programs and people. An understanding of leadership for those faith-based schools who serve both "God and Caesar" (Grace, 2009, p. 490), but specifically straddle the "pluri-cultural life as it entails Islam and the West" (Said, 1977, p. xvii) is important for conceptualising leadership activity in Islamic schools.

2.4.1: Conceptualising Western and Islamic educational leadership: the intercultural space.

Islamic schools, like their students, straddle the cultural worlds of contemporary Australia and their own specific religious traditions. A prerequisite to leadership intervention

in constructing core purpose is contingent upon leadership understanding of the context (Hallinger, 2003) and employing strategies and behaviours in accordance with the changing needs of the context (Davies, 2004). The intersection and linking of cultural worlds, translated into the notion of 'interculturalism', provides a useful frame for examining the role of leadership of Islamic schools. Interculturalism "is an idea that proposes an encounter between two cultures that takes place from fundamental characteristics, matrices, and unique aspects of each individual culture" (Coll, cited in Frawley, Dang, & Kittiphanh, 2011, p. 11). This section provides an intercultural examination of an Islamic and a Western perspective of educational leadership, starting with the latter.

Educational leadership literature abounds with adjectives labelling different forms of leadership. "Instructional", "transformational" and "authentic" are among the more prominent. As leadership in this study is exercised in a Western society, reviewing key Western conceptualisations of educational leadership as well as leadership understanding and responsiveness to its context becomes relevant. According to Leithwood, Louis, Anderson, and Wahlstrom (2004), leadership labels primarily capture different stylistic or methodological approaches to accomplishing the same two essential objectives critical to any organisation's effectiveness. Concurring with Bush and Glover (2003), these concern "helping the organisation set a defensible set of directions and influencing members to move in those directions" (Leithwood et al., 2004, p. 6). "Instructional leadership", for example, identifies strong, directive leadership focused on curriculum and instruction from the principal (Hallinger, 2003). "Transformational leadership" (Avolio & Bass, 1995), on the other hand, focuses on developing the organisation's capacity to innovate, to select its purposes and to support the development of changes to practices of teaching and learning (Hallinger, 2003, p. 330).

Furthermore, moral and values-informed leadership (Starratt, 1991; Sergiovanni, 1994; Begley, 2003; Duignan, 2006) has gained increased momentum. This is an educational leadership paradigm that is grounded in moral and ethical behaviour. For example, authentic leadership may be thought of as a 'genuine' kind of leadership (Evans, 1996), that is "knowledge based, values informed, and skilfully executed" (Begley, 2003, p. 1) and committed to transforming the lives of those they touch (Duignan, 2006). Proponents of authentic leadership call for norms of ethical leadership behaviour and argue for greater congruence and consistency between what leaders espouse and what they do. As previously noted, there is also a preponderance of opinion pinpointing the 'heart' of leadership (Deal &

Peterson, 1999) as dedicated towards building culture in achieving organisational goals (Deal & Peterson, 1999, 2009; Schein, 1992, 2004, 2010). Because of its relevance for this study, cultural leadership is further elaborated. In essence, all leadership styles and approaches are transformative in nature.

A balance of the literature would indicate that leadership's cultural understanding and responsiveness are precursors to constructing and embedding purpose in a school context (Begley, 2003; Hallinger, 2003; Leithwood et al., 2004; Lindahl, 2006; Deal & Peterson, 2009). Without a grasp of and responsiveness to the context, leadership "is a sure-fire recipe for stress and ultimate failure" (Deal & Peterson, 2009, p. 197). Hallinger (2003), drawing on Hallinger and Heck's review of the literature on principal effects, concludes that it is virtually impossible to study principal leadership without reference to the school context. He maintains that, "the context of the school is a source of constraints, resources, and opportunities that the leadership must understand and address in order to lead" (p. 346). By understanding and showing responsiveness to the cultural context, its history, current circumstances and deeper dreams and hopes (Deal & Peterson, 2009), leadership of Islamic schools act, connect, direct and move with the group towards purposeful construction. Accordingly, as the site of analysis of this study is Islamic schools, there exists a need for leadership that is responsive to the distinctiveness of the local culture and leadership role expectations to ensure the possibility of a culturally compatible leadership. The notion of intercultural leadership offers a plausible frame of reference to conceptualise and enact leadership in Islamic schools. The review turns to explaining this.

2.4.1.1: Intercultural leadership.

There is a gradually emerging body of literature tapping into cultural understandings of leadership (Bryant, 1998; Walker & Dimmock, 2002; Shah, 2007; Solin et al., 2008; Collard, 2007; Frawley, Fasoli, D'Arbon, & Ober, 2010). Generating a strong argument for leadership that straddles the intercultural space, Collard (2007) argues that educational leadership discourse has been dominated by Western perspectives oblivious to the cultural diversity that characterises the contemporary world. Moreover, Walker and Dimmock (2002) have warned of the links between cultural values and leadership practice, cautioning educational leaders from operating from within monocultural assumptions and frameworks. They hold that policies and practices should not be imported without due consideration of cultural and contextual appropriateness. Tapping into the work of Chan et al. (2008) and that of Frawley

et al. (2010) is relevant for illuminating the intercultural worlds of leaders. Both investigations suggest leadership considerations of the unique complexities arising from local culture and leadership role expectations. In the case of this study, the above argument signals the significance of exploring the cultural and intercultural dimensions of perceptions and leadership in Islamic schools rather than a Western paradigm only. As a focus of this inquiry is constructing the espoused purpose of Islamic schools in Australia, this section outlines a conceptualisation of a leadership framework which attends to the educational context, preserving tradition but also vision oriented as it moves the organisation forward.

2.4.2: A cross-cultural examination of Islamic and Western perspectives of educational leadership.

Besides being equipped with understandings of Western leadership and its practices, leaders of Islamic schools require "mind-sets" (Ramadan, 2004; Bolman & Deal, 2003, 2008), an understanding of leadership behaviours and practices that are congruent with the values upheld by the school community. Like an Islamic worldview of education, leading an Islamic school derives its philosophy from Islamic sacred scriptures and prophetic traditions (Shah, 2007). A review of the literature shows that leadership from an Islamic perspective intersects with a number of Western theories of educational leadership. It is values-based, moral and ethically focused, committed to assisting others and it both emphasises leadership and acknowledges management (Beekun & Badawi, 1999). Islamic leadership encourages both authority within one leader and leadership distribution towards knowledge building and acquisition. This section explores these notions.

Essentially, constructing and embedding institutional purpose in the informal practices and formal curriculum of Islamic schools requires leaders who are guided by faith, operate from a moral and ethical compass, and act upon a core set of values with the school community and broader society as a central concern. This notion will be canvassed. These ideas coincide with a growing recognition of spirituality and its impact on leadership behaviour and practice (Bolman & Deal, 2003; Grace, 2003, 2009; Dantley, 2005; Shah, 2007; Striepe & O'Donoghue, 2014; Striepe, 2016). Dantley (2005) promotes an alignment of faith and leadership, delineating how the "movement of faith" guides the actions of a transformative educational leader (p. 9). He conceptualises an educational leader who operates by faith as one who also problematises issues of concern, including that of the work context, asserting:

A leader who operates by faith hopes that she will, through dialogue and problem posing, help the learning community wrestle with issues and then diligently work to bring about a change that is grounded in justice and democracy in the school setting as well as the wider community. (p. 15)

Faith-based leaders, contends Dantley (2005), are not only transformative but also "principled and purposive" (p. 15). These notions, arising from "nomothetic and idiographic morality", describe educational leaders who operate by an inner sense of what is right and just and maintain diligence to embrace the spiritual self (p. 15). They form the bedrock of a leadership that is committed to performing institutional responsibilities in a just and virtuous fashion. Dantley (2005) propounds that as leaders pursue critical reflective projects and come to key virtuous decisions about the educational process, the nomothetic nature of that site can be radically transformed. Accordingly, purposive leaders perceive their work to be both intellectual and deeply spiritual.

The values in Islam underlying Islamic education and leadership behaviour are intertwined with the beliefs of the faith. An Islamic model of leadership primarily emphasises *khuluq* or behaving ethically and morally (Beekun & Badawi, 1999; Shah, 2006) with *'adl*, justice towards all of God's creations. Hence, leadership within an Islamic school is value-laden. For Shah (2007) "leadership is a moral and ethical values base underpinned by faith and religious philosophy. The intent within both is an emphasis on basic human values and a realisation to develop a distinction between right and wrong as well as collaboration and consensus" (p. 375). To serve God, a Muslim leader must develop a strong Islamic moral character, which in turn affect(s) a Muslim leader's behaviour (Beekun & Badawi, 1999). Islamic moral character therefore requires that leaders emphasise the following five key parameters of Islamic behaviour: justice, trust, righteousness, the struggle towards self-improvement, and promise keeping (Beekun & Badawi, 1999). It is therefore oriented towards achieving just outcomes. Striepe's (2016) recent case study of an Islamic school in Western Australia, for example, illustrated that leaders' personal faith and values are intertwined with and form a foundation for their approach to leadership. Of relevance to this study is that a model educational leader from the Muslims' perspective has to be value-conscious, irrespective of the extent they follow the path themselves (Jacobson, cited in Shah, 2007). This means that while it is desirable to appoint a leader with *iman* (faith), nonetheless, it is favourable to appoint someone with strong leadership skills even if the skilled leader were not a strong Muslim (Beekun & Badawi, 1999). Irrespective of the leaders' ethical and

moral stance, the principles of Islam and concepts of Islamic education are integral to achieving purpose construction.

Importantly, justice as an underlying attribute of leadership behaviour is inextricably bound with actions to effect Islamic education, its outcomes and constitutive concepts of *ta'dib* (good action), *tarbiyyah* (nurturing) and *ta'lim* (instruction). Beyond that, just leadership requires the adoption of leadership practices that inhere with the philosophy of Islamic education. When aligning their practices with the school ethos, leadership is tasked to take the necessary steps to assist others, cultivate care and employ *shura* (non-coercive deliberative engagement) (Waghid, 2011). As practices that effect maximalist achievement of the constitutive concepts of Islamic education, these will be explored in later sections. Leadership of Islamic schools therefore exercises and models moral consciousness anchored by justice and ensures it is part of the experience of their staff's teaching and stakeholder experiences. Leaders' spiritual position is therefore integral to leadership understanding of purpose construction in Islamic schools.

In addition, a dominant feature of leadership in Islam, resonating strongly in the literature of Western educational leadership, distinguishes it from organisational management. As the following sections illustrate, scholars concur that the expression of a vision distinguishes leadership from management (Bolman & Deal, 1994), whereas management embraces the neoliberal agenda of an ethic of performativity (Ball, 2016) in ensuring the technical aspects of purpose are embedded into the layers of school culture. However, in line with global neoliberal reforms in Australia and worldwide, management has become synonymous with leadership. As Ball (2016) clarifies:

> Management, or leadership as it is now called in education, is a delivery system for change, a method for re-culturing educational organisations, and is the fulcrum of changing relations between teachers and head teachers and thus teachers and the state, and citizens and the state. (p. 3)

Not surprisingly, the *Independent Schools Leadership Centre* (Association of Independent Schools NSW (AISNSW), 2015), established by the peak body for representing and supporting the independent schools sector in NSW, is a prime example of this transformation. Notably, its activities are designed: "to ensure that future leaders of independent schools are educators who possess the managerial skills… to confidently and successfully undertake the wide range of functions expected of them… It is important that

future school leaders …are confident in their ability to supervise the undertaking of all the managerial aspects of the complex business that is schooling in the 21st century". In contrast, in this study, "principled and purposive" (Dantley, 2005), faith-based leadership that is critical, visionary and seeks alternatives is necessary for influencing followers and disrupting dominant discourses. Simultaneously, management considered as a subset of leadership is also important for the strategic embedding of purpose. Management works actively and in concert with leadership to strategically facilitate purpose, ensuring its reach across school cultural dimensions.

Fundamental to an Islamic worldview, and also popularised in conceptions of leadership in the Western context, is the notion that leadership is a shared moral responsibility (Starratt, 1991, 2004). Islam stipulates that any group situation requires the appointment of a leader as an occupant of a formal authority (Beekun & Badawi, 1999; Adair, 2010), even in helping followers achieve a small goal, whether travelling on a journey or leading prayers. However, as Ogawa and Bossert (1995) assert, leadership is distinct from authority and position, though authority figures may be leaders, which takes us to an Islamic formulation of a shared approach to leadership, as a more influential approach to exerting influence. Although a single leader leads the flock to a designated destination, the metaphor of shepherd is Islamically extended to all individuals. Within an Islamic school context, this implies that responsibility for leadership is not limited to an elite few but inheres amongst members of the community (Beekun & Badawi, 1999) and that commitment is distributed to others (Ahmed, 2012). A teacher "is perceived as a leader, within and beyond the classroom context, expected to fulfil the leadership role as a guide to knowledge and conduct" (Shah, 2007, p. 371). However, Lawson (2005) posits that distributed leadership may be problematic for Islamic schools whose traditional views of authority are respected. Even where there is practice, power and authority often remain in the hands of the school founders.

The most critical aspect for a faith-based, values-informed leadership engaged in a collective moral purpose of constructing culturally compatible knowledge in meeting their dual expectations is focusing on the core business of "knowledge building" (Shah, 2007) and the reconstitution of common sense (Apple, 2001) through organisational learning (Schein, 1983, 2004). For Shah (2007), this is a dual process involving knowledge creation through the acquisition of knowledge. As well, it involves imparting knowledge to others in the school organisation and outside, thereby putting due responsibility on the educational leader as a "constant seeker and giver of knowledge, who acquires the right and responsibility to

lead through knowledge" (Shah, 2007, p. 373). From a Western perspective, "a norm of contributing one's knowledge to others is the key to continuous growth for all" (Fullan, 2002, p. 12). Hence, leadership attentiveness to the "reconstruction" of professional learning (Apple, 2001) is at the crux of purpose construction, a course of action of grave significance given that leadership of Islamic schools is morally charged with attending to instruction and knowledge building as a priority. At the same time, in the journey of aligning organisational core purpose, leaders, following the prophetic example, act in the service of their constituents (Shah, 2007; Adair, 2010), a notion that coincides with Greenleaf's (1991) servant leadership. From this perspective leaders have an 'ethic of responsibility' (Starratt, 2004) which, as summarised by Duignan and Bezzina (2006), causes them to focus primarily on the core values, the core people and the core business (p. 8). Implications for this study are that Islamic schools' stakeholders are connected to a larger project of social transformation, collectively entrusted to ensure that the knowledge embedded resonates with the way of life, values and realities of students (Apple, 2004; Ramadan, 2004)—and moreover, that this knowledge and values penetrate the cultures of their schools.

Inclination towards a faith-centred educational leadership approach anchored in ethics and morality is fundamental within an Islamic worldview and more recent Western scholarship. In achieving the purposes of Islamic schools, successful leaders have been shown to lead with cultural awareness and not merely manage. Given that Islamic education is the overriding paradigm governing the schools' espoused claims, some key questions merit pause and reflection: What does Islamic education mean, that is, its theories, goals, practices and experience in Western schools? Most crucially, how can Islamic education engender the type of knowledge necessary to restore justice to stigmatised students whilst fulfilling its rationale for broader society? How can leaders understand and engage with an Islamic epistemology amidst a complex context of markets and Islamophobia? By way of clarification the next section responds, where possible, to some of these questions.

2.5: Islamic Schools in the West

Having considered the broader purpose-in-use of schools, the instrumental role school culture plays and the critical role of intercultural leadership in making purpose perform; this section provides a synthesis of the literature to nuance specific areas and priorities for intervention. It seeks to illuminate key issues relating to Islamic education, the cultural paradigm of Islamic schools (Moes, 2002). As a starting point, Islamic education and its

philosophical argument, conceptual framing and evolving nature are explored. The rationale for contextualising Islamic education is then followed by a brief overview of key enablers for constructing purpose. Essentially, an Islamic school provides a culturally congruent and inclusive paradigm which reflects Muslims' commitments to society and their experience in their nation states. The school's personality is framed by Islamic education's underpinning theories and principles, constituted by values, knowledge seeking, imparting and inquiry (Shah, 2007) and service to society.

2.5.1: Theories of Islamic education.

Embedding Islamic education is key to the attainment of purpose in Islamic schools. Islamic education is what distinguishes an Islamic school from its state and Catholic counterparts. It is precipitated by an epistemology that is ensconced by the Islamic ethos of the school and secular disciplines so long as they do not contravene Islamic teachings. Simply put, the technicist, disciplines-oriented knowledge may be found across all school sectors, but for many Muslim students the transmission of Islamic values and beliefs can only be found in Islamic educational spaces. Following Said's rejection of ethnocentrism, McCarthy, Giardina, Harewood, and Park (2005) argue that "a complex and dynamically relational treatment of culture and identity should inform curriculum in schools" (p. 162).

Traditionally known as character education, the underlying principles of respect, care, etc., are not new to Australian schools and have always been bedrock standards and virtues taught by religious schools. While the National Values Framework (Department of Education, 2005) privileges a unified approach for all school contexts as the preferred and best possible project (Webster, 2010), for Muslim parents who want their children to have an equitable educational experience framed by Islamic education, which grounds the key learning disciplines in a moral framework, and to have their beliefs respected, recognised and acknowledged in the schools' informal and formal curricular, Islamic schools offer the possibilities and educational space (Clyne, 1998; Merry, 2005). As Islamic schools are charged with delivering an Islamic education ultimately featuring in an explicit cultural paradigm, and leadership is entrusted with embedding it (Shah, 2007), laying out its conceptual framework and the rationale for contextualising it is important for a carefully considered approach to the construction of purpose and goals of Islamic schools.

2.5.1.1: A conceptual framework of an Islamic education.

Education in the "Islamic spirit" (Douglass & Shaikh, 2004) or being socialised into an inherited body of Islamic knowledge (Waghid, 2011) is clearly a key desired effect in Islamic schools. The Quran and life experiences of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH)[3] frame the primary sources of Islamic education, formulating the moral meta-narrative. The Quran abounds with verses and messages that testify to the importance of seeking knowledge, truth, peaceful coexistence and achieving justice. Whereas Al-Attas (1980, 1993) has argued that education is *ta'dib* (goodness/just action), theorising *'ilm* (knowledge/instruction), and *tarbiyah* (nurture) within its conceptual structure, there is growing tendency that *tarbiyah*, in privileging total human development, is an all-encompassing term for actuating education for new times (Tauhidi, 2001; Davids & Waghid, 2016). Having considered the rationale of Islamic education constituted by the concept of *adab*, this section examines the constitutive concepts of Islamic education (Waghid, 2011): *ilm* or instilling *ta'lim*, *tarbiyah* and *adab* or instilling *ta'dib*. How this alternative educational paradigm can guide and inform schools to actuate an education for meeting the needs of their stigmatised students and prepare them for their society, is then discussed.

Increasing knowledge, a key motive of Islamic schools (Parker-Jenkins, 2002) means understanding and achieving *taqwa*, 'consciousness of God' (Hussain, 2010, p. 239). Two types of *ilm* (knowledge) are subscribed to as the right and responsibility of all Muslims. The first refers to revealed knowledge, attained through the religious sciences. The second, acquired knowledge, is attained through the rational, intellectual and philosophical sciences (Hussain, 2010). Therefore, *'ilm* defines the business of educational institutions and, as stated, visualises leaders as entrusted with the responsibility of providing for, seeking and imparting knowledge (Shah, 2007), thereby creating a community of learners.

Revisiting *adab* (Al-Attas, 1980) yet again is important as it establishes a concomitant, dynamic relationship between knowledge (*'ilm*) and action (*'amal*). Al-Attas (1980, 1993) maintains that for a just man acting concomitantly with the knowledge in a positive, commendable and praiseworthy manner, "there is no worthwhile knowledge without action accompanying it, nor worthwhile action without knowledge guiding it" (Al-Attas, 1980, p.

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[3] PBUH: The words "peace be upon him" (PBUH) are routinely evoked by Muslims after mentioning Prophet Muhammad's name.

15). Knowledge acquired and imparted to others in an Islamic school is therefore transformative and must be acted upon and put to good use to serve one's society.

Central to the concept of what it means to acquire *'ilm* is the use of one's intellect and rationality. In the *Qur'an* (2:164), people are invited to adopt open, inquiring minds, to observe, ponder, reflect, and use rationality, to draw meaning from their world and understand their position in it, hence, the impetus for critical engagement and deliberation. Mindful of increased global conflict, disagreements and change, contemporary philosophers of education (Waghid, 2011; Davids & Waghid, 2016) are placing equal emphasis on an area that has always been bedrock to Islamic education, concertedly stressing engagement of the intellect – the development of thinking and critical dispositions. A mere focus on the acceptance of knowledge, whether it may concern the sciences or religious doctrines and the concerted attention to over-crowded outcomes and performativity removed from criticality and thinking, fails learners in complex times. By reconstituting the place of thinking, a deeper understanding of Islamic education is fundamental to "assuming responsibility for the other", for promoting "friendship" and "respect" (Waghid, 2011, p. 130) in an age of ambiguity.

Whereas a vision of a good citizen resides in the notion of *adab* (Al-Attas, 1980) and *'ilm* guides just action, the notion of *tarbiyah* (nurture) is the concept drawn upon to actuate justice. The thrust for legitimating *tarbiyah* is rooted in Quranic verses, which illumine an inextricable link between guidance and *tarbiyah*. Drawing on Quranic verses, Davids and Waghid (2016) show how the Quran establishes a link between guidance (*huda*) and Allah's knowledge—and indeed his role as the educator—in the notion of *rabb*. Davids and Waghid (2016) argue that when considering this link between *huda* "as a constituent component of Allah's knowledge", and given that *rabb* is the source of all knowledge and indeed Muslim education, there exists a link between guidance and "Muslim education" (*tarbiyah*) (p. 62). Thus they present their thesis for *tarbiyah* as education, and they consider *huda* (guidance) to be the source of education. As Nasr (cited in Davids & Waghid, 2016) explains, Islamic education is concerned not only with the instruction and training of the mind and the transmission of knowledge (*ta'lim*) but also with the education of the whole being or *tarbiyah* of learners. It follows that nurturing, rearing and the socialisation of learners into a body of knowledge that places emphasis on the moral component of education and initiation into critical action undergirds the notion of *tarbiyah* (Davids & Waghid, 2016). In addition, Arabic, as the *lingua franca* of Islam, is an important medium for accessing and interpreting knowledge, and it is therefore the responsibility of schools to preserve it.

Waghid's (2011) contention, that conceptions of knowledge that frame understandings of Islamic education do not have a single meaning but exist on a "minimalist-maximalist continuum" and the "conditions that constitute them" (p. 1) and can therefore be reconstituted in different ways, provides leaders with ways of thinking about and articulating forms and content of Islamic education and how it can be reconstructed and embedded to enact its primary aims. In order to cultivate democratic citizenship and cosmopolitanism in Muslim educational institutions, Waghid (2011) propounds that actions such as *ijtihad* (critical reasoning), *shura* (deliberation, consultation) and *'amal* (responsible action) can be guided by critical forms of *tarbiyah* (nurturing), *ta'lim* (instruction) and *ta'dib* (good action). A minimalist curriculum framework and pedagogy can be "thin", "uncritical", "rote"-learning based and can lead to forms of action that are "biased towards the Muslim community" (Waghid, 2011, pp. 1–4). It is therefore not conducive to the attainment of knowledge, truth (*haqq*), justice (*'adl*) and peace (*salam*) (Waghid, 2011, 2016). Whilst a minimalist curriculum may be restrictive because it offers insufficient understandings of practising the Islamic faith, it cannot be entirely excluded.

On the other hand, if practitioners want to avoid the "stultifying impediments of doctrinaire thinking" that may be engendered by "thin" pedagogies and ensure advocacy for and justice in people's ways of living, then they ought to nurture a maximalist or critical form of Islamic education (Waghid & Davids, 2014a, p. 229). By embedding a maximalist Islamic education, students are taught to take beliefs and practices into "critical scrutiny", to develop a heightened sense of criticality that does not allow for things to be taken at face value (Waghid, 2011). Applied to concepts constitutive of Islamic education, a maximalist continuum of *tarbiyah* enhances deep intellectual inquiry and critical thinking, asking questions which involve "knowing *what*, knowing *how*, knowing to be" and "why" (Waghid, 2011, p. 2). Within a maximalist view of *ta'dib*, goodness is for society and every person should be a candidate for being a representative of goodness on the basis of the acts of justice he or she performs. A maximalist account of learning (*ta'lim*), on the other hand, does not entirely reject rote learning per se, but argues that learning is more a matter of *shura* (public deliberation).

A critical form of *'ilm* is then the pillar for the orientation of learning and inquiring cultures, one for practitioners concerned with creating Islamic school cultures to treat with concerted effort. Yet, initiating learners into what constitutes the tenets of Islamic education, for example, cannot just happen with an induction of learners into a maximalist approach

(Waghid, 2012). In practising the Islamic faith, a complementary relationship between a minimalist and a maximalist understanding of Islamic education is to be cultivated. Stated differently, Waghid (2012) contends that it does not make pedagogical sense to initiate learners into a discourse of deliberation without them having been made aware of what content of the religious education requires such a form of inquiry. Thus, initiation requires an introduction into a minimalist understanding of Islamic education, that is, those aspects associated with rote learning and what is important for a Muslim community to engage with (Waghid, 2012) than its thicker form of *"shura"* (public deliberation). Therefore, a minimalist understanding of Islamic education is a precursor for learning.

Central to the development of a heightened sense of criticality in learners in ambivalent times is the production and embedding of an integrated curriculum that serves social needs. Given that Islamic education is steered by knowledge (*'ilm*) concerns, an orientation towards a unified, non-bifurcated knowledge framework affords maximalist understandings (Waghid, 2011). According to Waghid, the point about socialising learners with the tenets of the Islamic faith through the underlying concepts of Islamic education has a better chance to be realised in a maximalist way if learners are initiated into understandings on the basis, as stated, of "an integrated view of revealed and non-revealed knowledge" (p. 11). As the umbrella principle of the Islamic worldview and its concomitant view of education, *tawhid* (the oneness of God) makes obligatory the adoption of a unified, holistic curriculum. *Tawhid* then permeates all aspects of life, the spiritual, social and physical, and obliges Muslims to adopt a holistic and comprehensive view of education. Thomas (2002) argues that Islamic education ideally aims to provide a milieu for the total and balanced development of every student in every sphere of learning: the spiritual, moral, imaginative, intellectual, cultural, aesthetic, emotional and physical, directing all these aspects towards the attainment of a conscious relationship with God. Thus, *'ilm* within an Islamic perspective is a holistic enterprise.

Implications for leaders of Islamic Schools, searching for a legitimate body of knowledge that reflects the values, aspirations and needs of their clients, reside in an orientation that coheres external context policy with local culture priorities by unifying the two bodies of knowledge into one. This orientation does not just coincide with the thrust of the Islamisation of knowledge (Al-Attas & Wan Daud, 2007; Waghid, 2011) but an education that serves progressive needs (Apple, 2006, 2015). Following Gramsci, Apple (2015) alerts practitioners not to indulge in "intellectual suicide" (p. 178) but exercise agency with

wisdom, therefore offering a key to another role intellectual leaders might play. Just as West (1990) warns of group insularity, Apple (2015) maintains that one of the tasks of a truly counterhegemonic education is not to throw out 'elite knowledge' but to reconstruct its form and content so that it serves genuinely progressive social needs, for "one hallmark wisdom of any struggle is to avoid knee-jerk rejection and uncritical acceptance" (West, 1990, p. 107). Just as knowledge must be reconstructed so that it serves progressive group needs, an intellectual leader in this age of difference must act as a "critical organic catalyst" (West, 1990, p. 108), always attuned to the best of what the mainstream and other traditions have to offer. After all, leaders are to be mindful that dominant practices and regulatory educational institutions are here to stay (Connell, 2009). Core to the intellectual and faith leader's role then is the embedding of an education underscored by *adab* that teaches students to use their minds well and increase their humanity.

2.5.1.2: The rationale for contextualising Islamic education.

The conceptual framing of Islamic education, though rooted in a religious orientation, cannot be separated from the milieu where Muslims live, as shown by the philosophical and scholarly arguments presented thus far. Just as Islam has adapted to various cultures and contexts (Daun & Arjmand, 2015; Abdallah, 2016), Islamic education has undergone a similar trajectory, always providing the tools needed to face the challenges of its environment (Ramadan, 2004; Niyozov & Memon, 2011). Following Noor, Panjwani (2004) notes that "the actual lived experience of Islam has always been culturally and historically specific and bound by the immediate circumstances of its location in time and space" (p. 25). Mapping its "journey" from the "sixth century's revelation", Niyozov and Memon (2011) explain that Islamic education has always embodied a process of careful negotiation between tradition and innovation, of "continuity and change" (p. 6). They note that a religious discourse is used interchangeably with the vocabulary of the time, tools and technologies of the cultures. It can then be extrapolated thus far that just as important as the concepts that frame it and the theological underpinnings it is derived from, knowledge of the broader society Islamic education is situated in and its circumstances are key determinants for those looking to implement it. Ramadan (2004) aptly puts it:

> The universality and "comprehensive character" of this [Islamic] message also requires a knowledge of the context in which individuals have to act in order that they may have the means to live consistently with the demands of the morality of their religion. This

knowledge of the milieu must be coupled with the constant exercise of a critical spirit able to understand, select, reform, and eventually innovate in order to establish a faithful connection between the universal principles of Islam and the contingencies of the society in which Muslims live. (pp. 128–29)

To the above Ramadan (2004) adds:

But it is essential that we go back to the scriptural sources to evaluate these practices (and to draw a clear distinction between customs that are culturally based and Islamic principles). We shall discover that there is broad scope for interpretation and that some people, either knowingly or not, have reduced it. (p. 140)

The statements above lend authority to delving into the essence of Islamic education. More than being equipped with knowledge of the context, they imply that discernment and questioning of dominance—whether it may pertain to cultural influences, mythical and deeply entrenched habits or customs, or even corporate thinking, which coalesce to reduce Islamic education—are as vitally important as knowledge of Islamic education for constructing purpose. Whilst debunking the imported "*taqlid*" methods of "instruction" and the uncritical socialising of learners into facts and figures, Ramadan (2004) maps the possibility of an "education" based on the principles of Islam as a way of connecting students with their everyday worlds and circumstances.

If the learning of the *Qur'an*, the tradition, law, and jurisprudence are fixed…we must add to it an in-depth knowledge of the environment, adapted for different age groups: mastery of the language, familiarity with the history of the country, knowledge of the institutions, study of the culture, social dynamics, and the political landscape, and so on. It is impossible to flourish independently without having the spiritual and intellectual means to discover who one is, where one lives, and how to plan one's way of faithfulness. (p. 129)

It can be extrapolated that just as teachers will be pressed to revise the classical manner in which they teach Islamic disciplines, they are inevitably compelled to align the forms and content of knowledge with a concerted gaze on the milieu, adding "an in-depth knowledge of the environment" (Ramadan, 2004, p. 129) in which their students' education is delivered. This means that trustees of Islamic schools revisit and re-engage with the "Islamic" in education to focus on the "Muslim" circumstances and concrete realities with the foresight that while Islam has ideals, they were continuously formed and reformed in the interaction

between the revelatory text and the circumstances of Muslims (Panjwani, 2004). Herein lies Davids and Waghid's (2016) privileging of the term "Muslim" education. For leaders of Islamic schools in the West, this means reengaging with sources and reading them with new eyes (Ramadan, 2004), critiquing and filtering out cultural infiltrations that have skewed educational understandings and practices. Leaders then combine understandings of traditional texts but also explore "the present". Added to this is "imagining the future" (Niyozov & Memon, 2011, p. 25). This process, as Panjwani (2004) asserts, was and should continue to be an interpretive and ongoing activity. For schools and their practitioners, then, Islamic education is to be seen and worked with "as an evolving, diverse and contested phenomenon, not only between meeting the needs of tradition and modernity" but also the needs of a heterogeneous Muslim community with various interpretations of Islam (Niyozov & Memon, 2011, p. 7).

The critiques presented by Ramadan (2004), Panjwani (2004) and Niyozov and Memon (2011) encourage counter-hegemonic interventions and activism (Apple, 2006; Said, 1994). Islamic education for new times implores its trustees to intervene and act by employing practices to connect 21st-century Muslim learners with its ultimate goal of co-existence and just action (Al-Attas, 1980; Davids & Waghid, 2016). As chapter three of this thesis makes clear, full engagement in reinterpretations, articulations and representations (Said, 1994) summons a discourse of leadership commitment and "the worldliness" of the intellectual in actuating change for an under-represented group (Said, 1994, 2004). This does not lie, Ramadan (2004) refutes, in teaching a new Islam. Rather, by exploring methods and ways which resonate with the realities of their stigmatised charges, their faith orientation concurrently with their milieu, but more than that, by participating in this deeply intellectual endeavour, practitioners redefine the nature, practical shape and future direction (Niyozov & Memon, 2011) of Islamic education.

It follows that not only does an Islamic educational paradigm adapt to its context, gatekeepers of Islamic education are compelled to be within, of, and acting for the context. This means that those making representations on behalf of the schools are to be versed with an Islamic worldview of education, contemporary educational approaches, in-depth familiarity with the context and act on behalf of their constituencies for the common good. The great task confronting these practitioner/leaders lies in borrowing from each other (Said, 1994). This entails the production of new ideas and new models based on interpretations of contemporary research and practices of Islamic schooling concomitantly with how Islamic

education can operate in the social context (Niyozov & Memon, 2011). An important aspect of leaders' work, for example, lies in engaging with the uncertainties of the human condition and the role of Islamic education in resolving interfaith relations and global tensions and challenges (Niyozov & Memon, 2011).

Therefore, effective leadership for an Islamic school lays emphasis on contextually appropriate instruction and knowledge that simultaneously integrates an Islamic worldview with the mandated curriculum, without neglecting the context as a way of constructing purpose. Leaders do not acquiesce to simplistic traditional approaches to instruction, nor succumb to the so-called pressures for narrowed visions of excellence and success. Rather, learning is reviewed to take into consideration their charges' everyday realities, and in so doing, leaders ensure a culturally congruent educational experience for preparing affirmed and well-integrated individuals. From this regard, there is no limit as to the issues confronting young lives in an increasingly complex social tapestry and what can be done to address them, ranging from: bullying, friendships, emotional intelligence and sex education to concrete issues that are part and parcel of young Muslims' circumstantial realities. These range from: managing technology, countering misrepresentations, proactive engagement with local and global issues where they concern the school and humanity, and the important task of questioning inequities and oppression as a way of engendering human coexistence. Such an approach engenders a sense of spirituality and builds a positive connection with God which culminates in righteousness and *amal* (responsible action). Against a policy thrust for corporatisation and excellence as well as inherited traditions, this is no easy task and challenges leaders to prioritise and balance. Yet, practice, it seems, belies theory. In a critique of Islamic education in the West, Ramadan (2004) questions whether it has been a meaningful venture:

> …although the Islamic message is universal and "comprehensive," …what is now called "Islamic education" is confined to the very technical memorization of *Qur'an*ic verses, Prophetic traditions, and rules without a real spiritual dimension. The learning of ritual spills over into mechanical ritualism, and the teaching that is offered is completely unconnected to American and European realities. (p. 127)

Ramadan's critique is notable in foreshadowing a widening gap between the theory and practice of Islamic schools.

2.5.2: Purpose construction in Western Islamic schools.

The rhetoric around what Islamic schools espouse does not always find expression in the experience of Islamic schools. With regards to connecting students with society, Ramadan (2004) questioned whether Islamic schools really give learners the "tools" they need to live pious, self-fulfilled lives, aware of their responsibilities (p. 132). The gap between Islamic schools' espoused theory and theory-in-use has been explored, in brief. This section navigates the empirical base to provide a lens into the informal curriculum. Also, it explores tensions arising from the formal curriculum, zooming into the gap between practice and theory. By way of conclusion, the chapter identifies three enablers where strategic intervention is to be seriously considered when constructing purpose: the school climate, the curriculum and teachers.

2.5.2.1: The informal curriculum.

Symbolic elements of religiosity transpire to confer a tight-knit community and sense of belonging in Islamic schools' informal practices, but these, it would seem, are not far-reaching in the sense that students are not developing a religious identity and an inner spirituality, but rather a "superficial" environment (Hassen, 2013, p. 514) transmitted through codes and rules (Driessen & Valkenberg, 2000). If this is the case, then the chasm between rhetoric and reality is deepening. Three key issues—family atmosphere, constructing a religious identity, and responsiveness to social issues of the times—are identified as either barriers or enablers in the informal structures of the schools. With the exception of an earlier Dutch study (Driessen & Valkenberg, 2000) and a more recent Australian one (Hassen, 2013), there is widespread agreement confirming the successes of Islamic schools in permeating their climates with an Islamic ethos and concomitant religious, every day worship practices (Küçükcan, 1998; Kelly, 1999; Hewer, 2001; Sanjakdar, 2001; Zine, 2007; Jones, 2012; Hussain & Read, 2015). Küçükcan's (1998) British study, and the Canadian studies of Kelly (1999) and Zine (2007) confirm the centrality of identity transmission as a function of Islamic schools. Tailored around Islamic holidays, special days of extra worship, celebrations of *Eid* festivals and prayer rituals, the school's climate as a variable to fulfilling the religious and spiritual needs would appear to be realised in Islamic schools. Teachers in Sanjakdar's (2001) investigation, for example, acknowledge the instrumentality of the atmosphere in helping to "preserve and transmit the faithful heritage and develop a genuine sense of belonging, comfort and pride" (p. 3).

Family atmosphere.

There is growing consensus that a notable characteristic of Islamic schools is a tight-knit community focused on attaining educational outcomes whilst being grounded in an Islamic philosophy (Küçükcan, 1998; Kelly, 1999; Sanjakdar, 2001; Zine, 2007; Hussain & Read, 2015). Engaging with the narratives of key stakeholders, the metaphor of "a family atmosphere" emerges as a salient theme in both Zine's (2007) and Hussain and Read's (2015) inquiries. To the participating youth (Zine, 2007), "a congruent environment where family-centred values are reinforced" as well as a "source of comfort, familiarity, safety, and cultural congruence" (p. 85) provided a space to belong. This is perceived by mums (Osler & Hussain, 1995) and other stakeholders (Zine, 2007) to be instrumental in accommodating an affirmed identity. The importance of respectful relationships and daily interactions amongst students and staff reinforces a sense of community. Whilst religious practices contribute to a family atmosphere and increased confidence, these, it seems, do not translate into greater levels of religiosity for learners (Hassen, 2013; Hussain & Read, 2015). If this is the case, a gap between what Islamic schools espouse and deliver is imminent.

The construction of a religious identity.

The rhetoric around the transmission of a religious identity is not necessarily experienced in Islamic schools. Surveying a number of Islamic schools and their stakeholders, one of the earliest studies conducted by Driessen and Valkenberg (2000) considered both the identity and academic purposes of the schools. Commenting on the former aim, the researchers concluded: "...the transmission of Islamic identity to the pupils seems to be a question of outward appearances, such as the learning of and conforming to behavioural rules and codes, and the learning and reciting of *Qur'an* verses" (p. 23). The investigators offered four reasons for these findings: the lack of appropriate religious instruction teachers, the limited time allocated to face to face religious instruction, inadequate resources and the lack of commitment of non-Muslim teachers to the identity purpose of the school.

In relation to Islamic practices, which, as stated, have been found to correlate positively with civic participation, the idea that it is more pronounced among those who attend Islamic schools is far from reality. The findings on the relationship between Islamic schools and religious identity construction in Victorian schools (Hassen, 2013), and on Islamic schools' contributions to social cohesion in US and English Schools (Hussain & Read, 2015), are

relevant for this study in constructing the espoused purpose of Islamic schools in Australia. Both studies concluded that schools may not suit those who are more observant of the Islamic faith, nor did they necessarily result in greater piety. In addition to codes and rules (Driessen & Valkenberg, 2000), Hassen (2013) noted that the environment merely provided the physical space that catered to the religious identity. Interviewee graduates noted that "the schools were lacking in the way they catered to them beyond the outward physical expressions of religious identity" (Hassen, 2013, p. 514). Dependence on available "infrastructure" for the transmission of religious identity was a matter of outward appearance, a "façade" asserted Hassen (2013, p. 510). Some of the participants who come from particularly observant homes expressed schools' inability to nurture not only a religious but a spiritual identity in their students. Drawing on a wider pool of stakeholders, Hussain and Read's (2015) participants were in agreement that parents and communities play a bigger role in shaping students' religious views and their behaviours. Whilst religious development is an underlying expectation of Islamic Schools, what is mentioned little by Hassen (2013) are the schools' constraints in meeting their religious obligations when the pervasive pressure to perform is paramount and resources are either not suitable (Jones, 2012) or limited (Tan, 2011; Berglund, 2014).

Furthermore, by fleshing out two issues, the impact of culture on religious practices and insulating Muslim students as two additional problematics (Hassen, 2013), these findings are helpful in illuminating possibilities for the reported feelings of alienation as a reason for student dropout, as reported by Jones (2012). Besides failure of schools to nurture a religious identity, Hassen's (2013) graduates also spoke of the way schools provided a cultural understanding of Islam, thereby leading to a belonging paradox – a term that is used to refer to how individuals feel as if they do not belong, in an environment that is meant to foster a sense of belonging.

A third concern raised by Hassen's (2013) graduates that teachers in Zine's (2007) Canadian study were consciously and strategically addressing was the issue of schools as bubble-like spaces. It seems that students were not cognisant of its damaging effects to identity construction until university life. It was argued that "insulating Muslim students from external narratives [does] not necessarily prepare them for life after their schooling experience" (Hassen, 2013, p. 512). In retrospect, an evaluation of religious identity construction premised solely on graduates' reflections, with no further evidence to corroborate the practices of the schools, shows methodological limitations. Graduates'

narratives based on memories backdating over a decade are not reflective of the schools' construction of the "Islamic". Whilst offering rich experiential accounts from one perspective, the study offers limited understanding of broader institutional practices, the current circumstances of Islamic schools and how they are responding to the social issues of the times. By way of confirmation, Jones (2012) asserted that living in a 'bubble' (p. 44) may have been the case in early days.

Responsiveness to the social issues of the times.

Research pointing to the successes of Islamic schools in focussing on the individual, the emotional and academic achievement in their formative years of establishment is gradually supplemented by a concerted focus on the development of community, or the promise of nurturing a social consciousness (Memon, 2011). The possibility of a "ghettoised" education, emerging from closeted school environments as Hassen (2013) contends, was considered carefully by Islamic schools and practitioners locally and on the international scene (Zine, 2007; Memon, 2010; Jones, 2012; Berglund, 2014; Hussain & Read, 2015). For example, Canadian teachers (Zine, 2007) spoke of their concerns over students living "cocooned", "closeted", "in a "bubble" as "actual by products of socially isolated Islamic school environments" (p. 85). A central goal of educators' strategic interventions was bound with nurturing civic responsibility. Teachers spoke of using "proactive strategies" to ensure students grew up with an "open mind and were tolerant of other social differences" (p. 84).

More broadly, work was taking place at grassroots level to build students' ethical standing for a socially healthy society. Outreach and dialogue programs to facilitate contact with the wider community commonly feature as part of the curriculums of Islamic schools. Having undertaken case studies in a number of Sydney, Melbourne and Brisbane Islamic schools, Carbines et al. (2006) explain that cooperation was seen by the schools' stakeholders as having "enormous benefits in achieving the espoused vision statements of the Muslim schools" (p. 67). Like Zine (2007) and Memon (2010), Jones (2012) asserts active community and global contributions to be core aspects of their programs, referring to interschool activities ranging across the areas of academia, religion, sport and the arts. *Zakat*, noted Jones (2012), as one of the five pillars of Islam, was central to all of the schools, which put as much emphasis on fundraising activities for charity as other Australian schools. Some of the causes were specifically for the Muslim community, like sponsoring a school in Afghanistan, but many others were equally for Australian causes like the Fred Hollows Foundation. Similarly, some of the more established Canadian Islamic schools are

reconceptualising themselves through a broader, more inclusive, and more service-oriented definition of Islamic education (Memon, 2010). Memon's (2010) study reveals schools' and teachers' active attempts to create a space for community service, encouraging and teaching about social consciousness as a fundamental aspect of faith practice (Memon, 2010; Niyozov & Memon, 2011). Also, Berglund's (2014) Swedish inquiry reinforces Islamic ethics as the basis for responding to the social issues of the times. Teachers, for instance, selected stories related to the contemporary circumstances of their pupils, employing historical Islamic narratives such as generosity and good behaviour towards neighbours, concertedly avoiding creating the 'us–them' dichotomies between 'Muslims' and 'Swedes' (p. 285). Berglund (2014) noted that "the use of narratives to exemplify ideal Muslim conduct …can be characterised as a way of connecting the 'macro' world of Islamic history to the 'micro' world of the pupils" (p. 286). Consonant with Waghid's (2011) philosophical elucidations for just action and the upholding of social justice, nurturing a sense of civic responsibility emerged as a prominent theme in all these studies.

Whilst the schools were committed to building understanding of diverse cultures and the religious beliefs that underpin them, drawbacks were not uncommon, for "the level at which schools can engage in interschool visits is thus most often constrained by practical barriers rather than a lack of willingness or goodwill" (Carbines et al., 2006, p. 70). Lack of administrative support, travel as well as other expenses, and provisions of release time for teachers to facilitate interaction were prominent. Furthermore, the selection process often privileged brighter students, and added to this are time constraints that did not allow for valued informal interactions amongst students (Jones, 2012).

In terms of pedagogy, Memon (2010) highlights criticality, or lack thereof, as a drawback, noting lack of inactive and uncritical interventions in the teaching practices as a barrier for developing greater social consciousness. Student experiences, it seems, lack the active and critical interrogation of "power and inequities", both outwards and "inwards" (p. 116). The encouragement to "help" others as an extracurricular practice of the mandatory curriculum only reinforces the socio-economic privileges of many Muslim families rather than challenge the inequities related to institutionalised forms of racism, poverty and culturally imposed gendered expectations. Just as important, Memon (2010) concluded, is connecting students with their communities without the marginalisation of a critical conscience. When considering the intellectually taxing, not to mention immense task of locating and translating (Berglund, 2014) teaching content to meet the needs of young

audiences, with few available resources (Jones, 2012), this additional undertaking for teachers who are pressed to deal with an already overcrowded curriculum presents as a barrier for aligning rhetoric with action.

2.5.2.2: Tensions from a formal bifurcated curriculum.

The formal curriculum, conforming little with a holistic vision of Islamic education, is a prominent cultural dimension whereby a gap exists between ideals and experience. This section identifies the tensions arising from two areas, the implementation of a bifurcated curriculum and its concomitant privileging of academic knowledge and teachers as barriers. Implications for constructing purpose are weaved throughout. Firstly, the separation between the religious and national curriculum has always featured in Islamic schools (Küçükcan, 1998; Kelly, 1999; Sanjakdar, 2001; Zine, 2007; Jones, 2012). This is fully captured in the Ikra School prospectus: "the School...follows the National Curriculum with some additional Islamic subjects" (Küçükcan, 1998, p. 39). Islamic teachings are clearly on offer. Problematic, however, is its structural separation from the mainstream curriculum. Meeting the key disciplines' content and outcomes has always been integral to Islamic education and schools; nevertheless, if they are not sufficiently integrated and balanced with an Islamic perspective, the propensity to undermine the wider purpose of Islamic schools is high. Tensions arise, for example, when the curriculum content and approach to the sex education strand within the Personal Development, Health and Physical Education (PDHPE) syllabus, both reflecting secular values, are implemented with no regard to Islamic values (Halstead, 1994; Sanjakdar, 2001, 2005). Sanjakdar (2005), for example, describes that in their attempts to create an Islamic perspective to sexual health education, teachers found themselves challenged by the current restrictive curriculum structures, policies and practices at their school. Subjects such as Art and Music are also as contentious. To overcome tensions, Jones (2012) indicated that several principals did not include music because they were aware that more conservative parents would object. If this is the case then Islamic schools are engaging selectively with the formal curriculum.

In the meantime, efforts to integrate the sacred with the secular body of knowledge remain at the discretion of teachers, who have been forecast as barriers to constructing a contextualised curriculum. Going back to Kelly's (1999) Canadian study and Berglund's (2014) more recent Swedish study, both revealed that attempts by teachers to incorporate Islamic precepts into the curriculum were gleaned from teachers' "interpretations" (Berglund,

2014, p. 294) of Islamic education. The issue that arises concerns the majority of educators, who lack knowledge of the Islamic faith, thereby posing questions about actions undertaken by schools to equip a vital resource for instituting the schools' ethos.

Some have attributed the presence of a majority non-Muslim teachers as a factor for the lack of commitment to the ethos of the schools (Driessen & Valkenberg, 2000; Hewer, 2001), as well as their limited knowledge of Islam to facilitate curriculum integration (Jones, 2012). Driessen and Valkenberg (2000), for instance, argue that without the presence of role models exemplifying Islamic norms, students experience a sense of 'ambiguity' (p. 23). "Why should any pupil believe the message that is being taught unless the teacher not only believes it first but also bears the fruit of that belief in every aspect of daily life?" (Hewer, 2001, p. 521). A more specific treatment of the formal curriculum shows that "a Muslim Mathematics or Science teacher might be able to mention Islam's contribution to knowledge in these areas but others simply stick to the curriculum" (Jones, 2012, pp. 44–45). When considering that Muslim teachers may be on the secular and less-observant spectrum, Jones' (2012) suggestions that Muslim teachers qualify to integrate an Islamic worldview holds little force. Memon's (2011) focus group discussions, for example, revealed the frustration felt by Muslim head teachers in their inability to infuse Islam into the curriculum. These insights bring to the fore conundrums surrounding integration, reinforcing the critical role of teachers. Beyond that, they provide reinforcement of a lack of consistent approach, even lack of commitment to instituting the principles underpinning the schools. Either way, what mostly mattered after all for a group of Australian students, noted Jones (2012), was passing their examinations in the ordained curriculum, which leads to another barrier.

Additionally, the mounting evidence indicating an orientation towards a culture of excellence and academic gains, with some schools reported to be amongst the top-ranking positions in Australia and overseas (Hewer, 2001; Sanjakdar, 2001; Ramadan, 2004; Patty, 2008; Niyozov & Memon, 2011; Merry & Driessen, 2016), does not contravene Islamic schools' theory. Rather, the schools' sustained and consistent efforts to shine in the leagues tables and rankings, whilst helpful in ensuring competitive university entry and optimising the professional trajectories of students, has been a detriment to meeting the holistic philosophy of an Islamic education. For example, Malek Fahd Islamic School (MFIS) in Sydney's west at one stage attracted media and community attention for its reputable academic achievement, and was singled out for its student selection criteria and approaches to protecting its rankings in the leagues tables (Patty, 2008). Whilst schools are keen to and do

indeed make a difference in raising the level of socio-economic disadvantage by helping students push the boundaries of familial expectations (Hussain & Read, 2015), parents were sceptical and held reservations, speaking of the school's high academic achievement with mixed feelings. The American parents, for example, were pleased with the progress of their children but several complained about "the demanding homework requirements and strict rule enforcement" (p. 562). Whilst Hussain and Read (2015) concluded that Islamic schools play a role in improving the mobility of students from disadvantaged backgrounds, and in doing so contribute to social cohesion, the tensions described thus far are compounded by the schools' alignment with the common-sense thinking emerging from a wave of neoliberal policies gaining prominence locally (Davies & Bansel, 2007) and worldwide (Apple, 2005). With the exception of Sanjakdar (2001, 2005), the issue of a culturally inclusive curriculum is allotted little attention.

Whereas the bifurcated academic curriculum orientation and teacher professional practice are problematic, what has been missed in much of this research is the contribution that professional learning and development can make for cultural cohesion. A synthesis of the literature shows that the problem at hand is not one of faith commitments but of interventions in reconstructing common sense. Though idealistic in fulfilling Islamic schools' key goal of identity transmission, "interpretations" by practitioners, even the ability to integrate runs into obstacles, specifically for the great majority of teachers whose common sense has been reconditioned and whose knowledge, practice and competence has been reconceptualised to fit in with the professionalised corporate realm (Connell, 2009). Realignment of teachers with purpose therefore lends legitimacy to the reconstruction of organisational common sense. Following Connell (2009) and Apple (2001), this implies the reorientation of teachers from the entrepreneurial driven model towards a framework that parallels with a contextualised teacher training model. This does not mean the disposal of the competent and professional teacher altogether. Seeing as "the presence of teacher registration authorities is now an established fact; this is not open to change" (Connell, 2009, p. 226).

Implications from a synthesis of the research base include the vital role of three instrumental areas that schools and their practitioners engage with to construct purpose: the climate, the teachers and the curriculum. Notably, teachers were most instrumental in shaping the desired school climates and influencing the curriculum. They were critical for breaking cultural barriers, allowing students to excel and creating learning opportunities for students to engage with society.

CHAPTER THREE: DESIGN OF THE RESEARCH

3.1: Chapter Three Introduction

This chapter sets out to describe and justify the research design chosen for this study. It begins by demonstrating and critiquing the validity of the conceptual framework that is being brought into play for this thesis. A brief background of the research purpose is then restated, followed by an explanation of the paradigms and philosophies that influenced this study, including addressing the attributes of the qualitative and interpretive paradigms. The later section of the chapter focuses on the design of the research, the role of participants, methods of data collection and data analysis. How barriers to access shaped the research design is weaved within these. It concludes with an outline of the trustworthiness of the research and related ethical issues.

3.2: Design of the Research

Merriam (1988) and Crotty (1998) point to the importance of the problem and research questions as being the guiding foundations for conducting social research. The real-life issue guiding the chief research question of this inquiry is:

How is the espoused purpose of Islamic schools constructed in Australia?

The research sub-questions are:

1. *What claims do Islamic schools make about their purposes in their representational mechanisms?*

2. *How do broader contextual factors and stakeholder experiences contribute to the construction of the espoused purpose of Islamic Schools?*

3. *How do leaders construct the espoused purpose of Islamic education in a complex backdrop of educational choice, markets and Islamophobia?*

The architectural design of this study and its techniques uses the qualitative tradition, framing its purpose in the context of critical theoretical concerns (Apple, 2001, 2004, 2006, 2015; Kincheloe & McLaren, 2011). It is a multi-perspectival (Kincheloe, 2008; Kincheloe & McLaren, 2011) study grounded in a critical race position (Ladson-Billings, 1995, 2003) and uses a faith-centred epistemology (Zine, 2004) to allow the voices of stakeholders of Islamic

schools, specifically educational practitioners, to be heard. It is a collective case study design (Stake, 1995, 2005; Merriam, 1998; Yin, 2012), since it seeks to understand the position of schools entrusted with offering an education to a disenfranchised community who is defined by a religious identity (Roy, 2004), and how they understand their lived realities and speak back to dominance to achieve their aspirations within a neoliberal society.

As a methodology that compliments critical inquiries, the qualitative perspective offers a means by which main themes around issues of power, ideology as well as subjective meaning can be addressed. Qualitative research is committed to an emic, idiographic, case-based position directed to the specifics of particular cases (Creswell, 2003), where the analyst strives for depth of understanding (Patton, cited in Merriam, 2002, p. 57), not just of the "part", but they must "grasp the whole" (Schwandt, 2000, p. 93). Therefore, critical theory in alignment with the qualitative approach affords the means by which insights into the lived realities, perceptions and constructions of the diversity of views of Islamic school stakeholders can be explicitly explored and brought to the surface. Whilst the study chiefly employs qualitative tools, as it is a case study, it is not against taking a quantitative posture (Lincoln & Guba, 2000). Quantitative methods are employed as alternatives (Patton, 2002) to elicit qualitative data in response to arising circumstances in the research proceedings. An overview of the research design is depicted in Figure 4.1 below.

Epistemology	Critical theory
Theoretical Perspective	A multi-methodological research: Critical Race Theory A critical faith-centred epistemology
Methodology	Collective case study design
Data Gathering Methods	The Stakeholder Survey Document analysis The Leadership Questionnaire

Figure 4.1: Overview of the research design.

3.3: Conceptual Framework: The Postcolonial Epistemology of Edward Said

Increasingly, Islamophobic societies heighten the need for activism of the intellectual to counter the persistent attacks and dog whistle politics on Muslim/Arabs and their institutions (Bassil, 2007). To transform conditions, Bassil (2007) argues, intervention by institutions and their informed and committed Muslim and Arab community leaders, including heads of mosques, churches and educational institutions, is therefore timely on multiple fronts. According to Said (2004), activism compels intellectual performances on many platforms and many sites that "keep in play both the sense of opposition and sense of engaged participation" (p. 2).

>   **3.3.1: Contextualising the activism of leadership in the struggle for human dignity and justice.**

The charge of Islamic schools and their leaders in employing theory-in-action (Argyris & Schön, 1974, 1996) to articulate and make representations on behalf of these institutions (Said, 1994) in the West, elicits intercultural leadership as a form of leadership to mediate the "double space" (Hall & Chen, 1996, p. 399). In a context where "the struggle on behalf of underrepresented and disadvantaged groups seems so unfairly weighted against them" (Said, 1994, p. xvii), a synthesis of the literature advanced the makings of committed individuals or champions (Ahmed, 2012) who operate by faith (Dantley, 2005) and proactively and critically engage with the realities confronting their marginalised charges and the circumstances the schools are situated in, which are characterised by neoliberal educational mandates and a policy of choice. Leaders are therefore "key to making things happen" (Ahmed, 2012, p. 103). Thus, the challenge of the racialised Islamic schools and, in particular, leadership life is not just to persevere but reverse the inequalities of their disenfranchised students across their educational practices (Apple, 2006). Leaders look to restore disadvantage and inequities by championing official discourses: to look outwards and just as equally, inwards. Seeing as it is educational practitioners that institute and bring to life the espoused purpose of Islamic schools, the primary purpose of this section is to contextualise the activism of leadership in the struggle for human dignity and justice, bringing into play critical theorist Edward Said's (1977, 1994, 2004) abstractions of the activism of the intellectual leader.

As mediators of the two worlds, for scholars, academics and leaders participation is not a choice but a moral imperative. Indeed, Said (1977) attaches "a special intellectual and

moral responsibility" to the "daily actions" of influential individuals "who by force of circumstance actually live the pluri-cultural life as it entails Islam and the West" (p. xvii). He defines their role to be one of widening the field of discussion. For Said (1977), this implies that leaders speak about issues of injustice and suffering but always within a context that is amply situated in history, culture and socio-economic reality. Applied to Islamic schools, the challenge for leaders is commitment not merely towards professionalism or specialisations (Said, 1994) but to embody the principles of intellectual freedom fighters (West, 1990), intent on interrogating inequities whilst providing "an education that aligns with the culture and everyday lives of students" in schools (Apple, 2006, p. 19). As stated, such a transformative movement summons a discourse of morals and values, but also of resistance and recreation (Ashcroft & Ahluwaila, 2001) critique and possibility (Apple, 2006), hence inviting the dynamics of faith (Dantley, 2005) and "intellectual" engagement (Said, 1994, 2004).

Developing an understanding of Said (1977, 1994, 2004) is an important step in helping reflect on the theoretical field this thesis is drawn from. His relevance for constructing espoused purpose lies in two realms. Said's legacy offers powerful tools for rethinking the cultural and political dynamics of schooling, but more so, how actors in these institutions in their representations of the "Other" can speak and write back to authoritarianism. Moreover, he inspires a language of critique and possibility for progress for those concerned with centring spiritual knowledge and religious meditations as the basis for building socially transformative movements that present possibilities for challenging oppression (Zine, 2004; Apple, 2006).

3.3.1.1: On activism of the intellectual leader.

More than any scholar of his time, Edward Said (1977, 1994, 2004) is renowned for his political commitment and for giving voice and representation to marginalised people, with the Palestinian plight always within his gaze. Said wrote little of education other than the valuable learning/knowledge that can be elicited by the interactions of teachers and students, but his theoretical vision casts important insight in two realms. Whilst renowned for theorising the field of postcolonial studies through his literary work on "Orientalism", Said (1994) also offers a model of intellectual activity for illuminating leadership actions and interventions for pursuing a just cause. How these lend conceptual clarity to the issues in this thesis follows.

Appropriations of the "Other" through self-propelling discourse that serves to support cultural domination, of "Western superiority and Oriental inferiority", is not just presented in *Orientalism*, Said's (1977, p. 42) key works, but is unique to his scholarship. Borrowing from Foucault, Said (1977) describes Orientalism as a "discourse" of power/knowledge: "a Western style for dominating, restructuring, and having authority over the Orient" (p. 3). Orientalism yields understandings of colonialism and constructions of the Orient: "dealing with it by making statements about it, authorising views of it, describing it, by teaching it, settling it, ruling over it" (p. 3). In this self-reinforcing discourse, the Oriental is represented as "irrational, depraved, fallen, childlike, different", as the antithetical "Other", whereas the European is "rational, virtuous, mature, normal" (p. 40). As a general theory of the "Other", Orientalism can be regarded as applying more specifically to Islam, Muslims and Arabs. The "knowledge" that produces "the Oriental", polarisations of "us versus them", "Islam" and "the West", is more than ever tied to the tumultuous landscape of contemporary history in which Islamic schools are situated.

Whilst Orientalism (Said, 1977) is a discourse of ideological representations, it fleshes out struggle and intervention, provoking activism of intellectual activity. Indeed, pre-eminent amongst Said's (1977, 1994, 2004) theoretical formulations in anchoring the intellectual home of this thesis is the role of the intellectual in eliciting deep understandings of practitioner intervention and agency, critiquing structures and confronting official discourses. The intellectual's key role is then to challenge reductive categories and stereotypes that serve dominant interests, whose purpose is to shut down human thought.

The distinction between the intellectual and the expert or "social engineer" (Molnar, 1957) is not unique to Said's theory. In fact, theoretical formulations of the intellectual abound. In *Representations of the Intellectual* (Said, 1994), Said himself offers a methodical exposition of the works of cultural theorists including Gramsci, Benda and Gouldner. Like others before him (Molnar, 1957), Said drew a distinction between the intellectual and expert "specialisations", what Molnar has coined as "second-zone intellectuals" (p. 36). Being an intellectual does not involve professional specialisation and being attentive to the technical labour of one's own profession. An intellectual is someone who speaks on behalf of a "standpoint", "vocation", "beliefs" of some kind and someone who makes articulate representations to his or her constituencies despite all sorts of barriers (Said, 1994, p. 12). The intellectual, including doctors, lawyers, teachers and educational leaders, argues Said (2004), ought to be fully engaged and critical with their society. The activist intellectual,

asserts Said (2004), is worldly. In fact, in his foreword, Bilgrami (cited in Said, 2004) reminds readers of Said's warning to professionals "of the disasters that will follow…if we conduct our public lives as intellectuals with indifference to the concerns and suffering of people" whether within one's sphere or remote from the Western sites of self-interest (p. x). Increasingly, application of the term itself is being applied to scholars/activists including Stuart Hall (Apple, 2015), Michael Apple (Ball, 2007), Edward Said (1994) to himself, and others to Said (Dimitriadis, 2006).

Activism in overcoming injustices of any type ultimately locates practitioners up against a "powerful network of racial authorities and corporations" who "crowd out the possibilities for achieving any change" (xvi–xvii). Thus, Said's notion of "amateur" comes into play to create a distinction between categorisations of intellectuals that have emerged over time. The "amateur" proves helpful in addressing the concerns above, providing a productive pathway of inquiry for envisioning possibilities as to how leaders of Islamic schools' communities can articulate and represent purpose in an era of difference and multiplicity (McCarthy et al., 2005). The nub of Saidian's (1994) strategy encourages leaders of Islamic schools to reclaim authority in the struggle to intervene to overcome disadvantage and bridge the exclusion of their stigmatised students, "to speak the truth to power" despite all sorts of barriers (p. 12). Interrogating power relations, says Said (2004), "is no panglossian idealism" (p. 75). It involves carefully considered evaluation of alternatives, choosing the right one, and then astutely representing it where it can do the most good and cause the right change.

As ethical and moral agents, leaders as "amateurs" are concerned members of their local school community and the broader society to which they are affiliated, seeking to confront injustices. Consonant with Ramadan (2004), the broader context, the schools, their practitioners' affiliations with the world (Said, 2004) and contextualisation of Islamic education emerges as an assertive force for leaders charged with constructing purpose for evolving times. Intellectual leaders are therefore active participants in transforming the conditions of their constituencies within and outside in humane ways. In doing so, they not only raise moral questions of the kind associated with assumptions undergirding educational practice and their relationship with social, economic or political forces, but also intervene by providing and actively engaging with alternative resolutions (Said, 2004; Apple, 2006), inviting the dynamics of leadership and intellectual calling. In other words, where leaders are confronted with issues of marginalisation, reconciliation, knowledge and oppression, they

actively engage with the circumstances of their constituencies. Thus, active interruption of "many of the inequalities that so deeply characterise this society" (Apple, 2006, p. 6) necessarily steers the actions of intellectual leaders. Therefore, the great task confronting practitioners in Islamic schools is to rise to the criteria of "openness, contextualisation and interaction with the wider society" (Ramadan, 2004, p. 133).

In spite of the widespread definitions of the intellectual, less attention has been drawn to the minutiae of intellectual practice. As Said (1994) asserted: "not enough stock taken of the image, the signature, the actual intervention and performance, all of which taken together constitute the very lifeblood of every real intellectual" (p. 17). Scholars who have influenced the sociology of education (Apple, 2003, 2015) have beseeched for this lacuna to be filled in educational research and practice. This research responds to that void. Apple's (2004, 2006) scholarship provided frames of analytical reference and will be reflected in chapters five and six of this thesis.

3.4: Epistemology

The research question, incorporating the purposes of our research, leads to methodology and methods (Crotty, 1998). An epistemology is a way of understanding and explaining how we know what we know (Crotty, 1998). It concerns what counts as knowledge about a particular group (Parker & Lynn, 2002). A critical race methodology that has an epistemological grounding in a spiritually centred knowledge recognises the 'intersections' and 'conflicts' (Parker & Lynn, 2002, p. 18), dreams and aspirations, struggles and compromises that can emerge from the voices of actors. It seeks to understand and place their stories at the pulse of political social change, in the search for justice. Essentially, it demystifies, bringing knowledge of those on the margins from the periphery to the centre, thereby offering "epistemological equity" (Dei, 2008, p. 8).

3.4.1: Theoretical framework: a multi-methodological research.

Theoretical perspectives describe the philosophical stance informing the chosen methodology (Crotty, 1998). Following Stanford, Parker and Lynn (2002) contend that research that has attempted to call attention to the concerns of disenfranchised groups has relied heavily on outdated and sometimes culturally inappropriate methods of investigation and exploration. Often researchers who have operated in a strict one-sided reductionist framework are shackled by the prearranged procedures of a monological way of seeing

(Kincheloe & McLaren, 2011). Regarding indigenous people and Othered minorities, Smith (1999) writes of the suspicion that research conjures:

> The word itself, 'research,' is probably one of the dirtiest words in the indigenous world's vocabulary. When mentioned in many indigenous contexts, it stirs up silence, it conjures up bad memories, it raises a smile that is knowing and distrustful…The ways in which scientific research is implicated in the worst excesses of colonialism remains a powerful remembered history for many of the world's colonised peoples. (p. 1)

Following the above argument, Zine (2004) and the work of others (Semali & Kincheloe, 1999; Smith, 1999; Dei, 2008) confirm that complex educational problems are no longer served by monologist orientations, contoured and shaped by the dominant academy. Rather, in an age characterised by heterogeneity and difference, to get a better handle and grasp of challenging educational issues, recognition and acknowledgement of minority knowledges cannot be ignored. As Said (1977) has argued:

> …there is a difference between knowledge of other peoples and other times that is the result of understanding, compassion, careful study and analysis for their own sakes, and on the other hand knowledge—if that is what it is—that is part of an overall campaign of self-affirmation, belligerency and outright war. There is, after all, a profound difference between the will to understand for purposes of co-existence and humanistic enlargement of horizons, and the will to dominate for the purposes of control and external dominion. (p. xiv)

A lens that blends multiple aspects of inquiry into focus whilst not diminishing the importance of others is fundamentally significant for understanding Islamic schools and the influential practitioners within them who seek to make articulations and representations, and who seek resolutions for complex issues concerning identity, education and ideology. To better understand the realities of Islamic schools and those charged with mediating the local culture and educational policy towards realising the purpose of Islamic schools in an Australian context, a multi-methodological (Kincheloe, 2001, 2008) research strategy is adopted.

3.4.2: *Bricoleur*-inspired research.

In this study, *bricolage* appropriated and realigned elements of theoretical frameworks from other traditions, where they seemed helpful in pursuing this inquiry. These elements and

the *bricolage*'s relevance to this study are explored in this section. A central process at work in *bricolage* research, as promoted by Kincheloe (2001, 2008), and of key importance for this inquiry, involves tailoring a research methodology based on three central tenets: context, learning from difference and the inclusion of spiritual and religious worldviews in academic work. Firstly, a *bricolage* inspired multi-methodological approach has the research context as its primary consideration. By looking beyond universal research methodologies, *bricoleur*s steer clear of pre-existing checklists and box ticking developed outside the specific demands of the inquiry at hand. *Bricolage* is of significance for enabling a multi-perspectival orientation that is tailored to the context of the research site. It therefore allows for this research to be located in a transformative praxis, to return to the very institutions, worldviews, thoughts, insights and aspirations of constituents, and struggles and work of everyday practitioners of the sites where the study took place.

Secondly, *bricolage* can be employed by critical researchers to challenge dominant constructions of academic work. In its critical concern for just social change, the critical *bricoleur* seeks insights from the margins of Western societies and the knowledge and ways of knowing of non-Western peoples (Kincheloe, 2001, 2008). Enabling recognition and acknowledgement of Western and non-Western ways of knowing is an important consideration for a study that seeks to understand the views of a misrepresented constituency in a Western neoliberal society whose beliefs and values, practices and actions are guided by Islamic values. In this inquiry, *bricolage* offers a space for challenging the erasure of spirituality and faith-centred ways of knowing in academic work (Zine, 2004), and it is therefore integral to a study whose social actors' struggles can be illuminated through religious concepts. As Zine (2004) argues, spiritual traditions and knowledges should not be nullified because they are not "secular" in orientation (Zine, 2004, p. 183). Doing so allows researchers to produce compelling knowledges that seek to challenge the neo-colonial representations about others at home and abroad (Kincheloe, 2008).

Thirdly, and following from the above, a central process at work in the *bricolage* involves learning from and bridging difference (Kincheloe, 2001, 2008) by locating similarities in what has been constructed in binarisms. Utilising multiple perspectives to understand the positionality of Islamic schools and the complex role of their leaders, the *bricolage* offers an alternate path for accommodating heterogeneity in a 'post' age. Importantly, the researcher as *bricoleur* acquires the tools and the learning of a variety of ways of seeing and interpreting the schools' and their leaders' circumstantial realities, the

local culture of schools and the views of their stakeholder participants, thus enabling nuanced interpretations. Therefore, more dimensions and consequences of the cases and their participants will be illuminated in the pursuit of knowledge (Kellner, cited in Kincheloe, 2001). More than that, by seeking and finding common grounds in worldviews that have been orientalised, dichotomised and constructed as antithetical to norms and everyday sensibilities, it follows in the footprints of the Saidian humanistic legacy (Said, 1977, 1994, 2004) of challenging and disrupting binarisms, for engendering peace and human co-existence. These alternative paths open up new forms of knowledge production and researcher positionality that are grounded on more egalitarian relationships with the research sites and individuals being researched. Involving a strong reliance on the spoken word, Critical Race Theory (CRT) (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995; Ladson-Billings, 2003), complemented by a spiritually informed epistemology (Zine, 2004) and grounded in a qualitative approach, offers a voice to the experiences and narratives of the parents, students and educator participants of a study of Islamic schools in Australia. The choice for these two epistemologies and the rationale for combining them for this research are foregrounded next.

3.4.2.1: Critical Race Theory.

As a position that uncovers the deep patterns of racial exclusion, CRT (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995) centres on the voices of the disenfranchised but also offers a position that considers moral action for social justice as a guiding post. In keeping with the critical tradition, seeking justice and a discourse of liberation are tenets of CRT. It is an epistemology that emphasises racism and has intersected with other areas of difference such as feminism (Parker & Lynn, 2002). Parker & Lynn (2002) contend that CRT:

…provides the theoretical and conceptual grounding for forthcoming discussions regarding the specific ways Critical Race Theory can be used as a methodological tool that can reveal a greater ontological and epistemological understanding of how race and racism affect the education and lives of the racially disenfranchised. (pp. 7–8)

CRT addresses timely social, legal, political and educational issues; as such it is deemed appropriate in exploring contentious issues and complex phenomena surrounding minoritised groups. It offers a lens through which educational practices and policies of racialised institutions and those who make representations on their behalf can be explored (Ladson-Billings, 2003). The contentious Islamic schools, the focus of this research, are an

integral feature of the Muslim community. CRT has been adopted because of its potentiality for excavating:

the silence…the places of exclusion and invisibility the kind of testimony that doesn't make it onto the reports but which more and more is about whether …marginalised peoples outside as well as inside the maw of the metropolitan centre can survive the grinding down and flattening out and displacement that are such preeminent features of globalisation. (Said, 2004, pp. 81–82)

CRT then enables engagement within and exploration and understanding of the experiences, worlds, expressed thoughts, silences, and insights of stakeholders, and also their successes and struggles in accessing and providing an equitable education for enabling responsible social membership and service. CRT's hallmark in seeking justice e for the misrepresented and silenced voices makes it suitable for this inquiry.

CRT is not the only way to theorise the racialised subject, however, it represents a space of both theoretical and epistemological liberation. One of the limitations expressed about CRT is "its lack of connection to the "real world" of practice" (Parker & Lyn, 2002, p. 18). Parker and Lyn's (2002) contention is that linking CRT to education can indeed foster the connections of theory to practice and activism on issues related to race. How it was used in the conceptualisation and data analysis in this study is elaborated below:

1. CRT's key tenets in blending theoretical perspectives are apt for unravelling the struggles of a stigmatised constituency and as the analysis reveals allows for writing and speaking back to power (Ladson-Billings, 2003). In the analysis of data, CRT provided a valuable tool for fleshing out the lived realities of the schools and their constituencies. In particular, it accentuates the activism of key players in negotiating educational practice and key curricular decisions against a backdrop of Islamophobia and markets.

2. Just as important is leadership's resolve in constructing purpose against a hostile socio-political climate. In a context where issues of belonging and socio-economic disadvantage for Muslims prevail (Peucker et al., 2014), how educational leaders responded to mandatory educational policy and importantly religious and cultural practices for educational opportunity and outcome are gleaned by a CRT framework. Specifically, CRT illumines the schools' and their educational practitioners' sustained attempts to explore and implement alternative educational

possibilities to curriculum models that not only have become unquestioningly accepted, but also instil and uphold enactments of citizenship through faith-based practices (Johns et al., 2015) including: prayers, segregation and the *hijab*, acts that are constitutive of the "Other". CRT thereby shows connections to life and school communities and educational practices of the "Other". As such, its tools assist in restoring educational equality and addressing issues of injustice.

Therefore, qualitative research, action and CRT can be seen as a way to link theory and understanding about racialised schools "from critical perspectives to actual practice and actions going on in education for activist social justice and change" (Parker & Lynn, 2002, p. 18). Commensurate with CRT, a critical faith-centred epistemology (CFCE) allows for the analysis of systems of oppression based on race, ethnicity, class, gender, sexuality, religion, and ability as they intersect within the lived experiences of marginalised groups (Zine, 2004).

3.4.2.2: A Critical Faith-Centred Epistemology (CFCE).

Following Latina/o critical theory, and feminist epistemology, Zine (2004) discusses the importance of an epistemology that centres on the Muslim experience and how previous research traditions have ignored Muslims or subsumed them under other forms of analysis. According to Zine (2004), faith-based traditions that are referenced in metaphysical realities can enter academic inquiries, functioning in a dialogical manner with other paradigms that may have more secular foundations. Concurrent with Said (1977), Ramadan (2004) and Niyozov and Memon (2011), Zine (2004) delineates the fundamental areas of commensurability between secular and religious ideologies, arguing for common unity that is premised on humanitarian grounds. She posits: "there can be intellectual alliances between secular and non-secular academic and philosophical perspectives, such as through the pursuit of common liberatory goals and struggles for social justice" (Zine, 2004, pp. 184–185). She continues,

> This encounter has the potential to refine and be refined by various empirical and ideological engagements based on common grounds. Attempting to unravel and dismantle these systems involves addressing the multiple sites of oppression and challenging the hierarchies of racialised and class-based dominance that ideologically and structurally sustain social difference and inequality. (p. 184)

How these understandings guided this study is foregrounded below:

1. Firstly, religious discrimination against adherents of the Muslim faith is highly institutionalised, persistent, and ideologically tied to the global political context. Any understanding of Islamic schools and their constituencies; the schools' growth; their informal and formal practices; parental choice for their selection; and importantly, leaders' decision making, prioritising, actions and reactions cannot be detached from this cultural climate.

2. Secondly, a CFCE acknowledges that spirituality can be a source of oppression. There are situations, for instance, in which Islamic precepts that guide conceptions of Islamic education and its outcomes associated with co-existence and justice and its subcategories of peace, respect, responsibility and care (Waghid, 2011) can be misused in Islamic institutions. In a climate of moral panic where Islamic schools are subjected to the perpetual gaze to produce responsible and active individuals for the workplace, those making representations on behalf of the schools are compelled to enforce regimented disciplinary action and dominant forms of knowledge. By adopting procedures for cherry picking academic students, offering rewards to sustain excellence, disciplinary action and consequences for underperforming students, a no-room-for-error policy, alongside the reverent role attached to authority, Islamic schools can become complicit in the construction of oppression against students and other key constituents.

3. Thirdly, religious resistance can operate as a catalyst for liberatory modes of praxis. A CFCE also offers a commanding space of resistance to injustice and provides avenues for critical contestation and political engagement for progressive individuals and movements making representations on behalf of Islamic schools.

4. Fourthly, the oft-repeated *Qur'an*ic exhortations of peace and co-existence, justice, unity, and accountability can be utilised as the guiding principles that govern theory and praxis. These Islamic-based principles, it can be argued, in many ways correlate well with the goals of the achievement of justice that educators of all persuasions and backgrounds see as central to their own theorising and practice. Taking accountability as an example, Zine (2004) delineates how this notion is constructed, having a significantly different disposition from an Islamic position. In this conception, accountability extends beyond an existential understanding. In a faith-centred Islamic epistemology it relates responsibility to a Creator, which delineates educational leaders' commitments, the everyday curriculum and policy choices they make and shapes the ethics of their actions and interactions with constituents. In

sum, in their relationships and dealings with external authorities, such as DEST and the public, as well as local constituencies, schools are guided by Islamic ethics and morals, accountable to a higher power.

Extrapolated from the above is that CFCE affirms religiosity's hold in shaping the way individuals and groups see, sense and define reality. As Muslim parents see their children's education through a cultural (Clyne, 1998) and religious lens (Roy, 2004), a faith-centred epistemology anchored in the critical tradition is best suited to exploring religious and cultural perspectives.

3.4.2.3: Researcher positionality.

The role of the researcher as an interpretive and subjective instrument with biases and values is inherent to qualitative inquiries (Taylor & Bogdan, 1998; Creswell, 2003; De Koster, Devise, Flament, & Loots, 2004; Lichtman, 2006). In addressing interpretive methods and methodologies, the positionality of CRT researchers as a criterion for quality is well established (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Parker & Lynn, 2002; Johnson & Castelli, 2002; Kincheloe & McLaren, 2011). In this inquiry, researcher position, reflexivity and self-checks as well as support mechanisms are prioritised as an ethical undertaking.

Kincheloe and McLaren (2011) and Smith (1999) offer what and Johnson and Castelli (2002) coin as "checks" (p. 41) that have to be built in by analysts adopting critical orientations to address as they use qualitative research methods and methodologies. Firstly, the researcher's identity and experiences—personal, professional and intellectual—are critical to the success of the research (Clyne, 1998), as they become inseparable from the inquiry. The researcher's personal and professional autobiography as well as her disciplinary orientations, points of view and social or even political affiliations with which she identifies (Kincheloe & McLaren, 2011) influence what she knows, and her experiences influence what she researches. To avoid the type of stereotyping that is swayed by orientalism (Johnson & Castelli, 2002), the researcher is required to be mindful of and declare the stance to be adopted from the outset. De Koster et al. (2004) describe this as explicating researcher self-constructs and cultural, social and historical roots as much as possible.

In the initial stages, my choice of researching Islamic schools in this inquiry was influenced by two positions: firstly, as an educator and as a Muslim parent, and secondly as insider/outsider. Firstly, as a mother of four children, of whom two each have attended selective and non-selective state schools, as well as Islamic schools, my informal

observations and participation in both sectors have been illuminating for pursuing this inquiry. The catalyst for this research was nonetheless my experience as an educator in government schools, but even more so in later years as an insider occupant of a leadership position in a small but rapidly growing Islamic school in Sydney. Both tenures highlighted important issues pertaining to the education of Muslims, the politics surrounding cultural issues in education and leadership scope, possibilities and limitations, as well as in providing a culturally congruent education for parity of outcomes. Taking up research, however, only came into fruition upon receiving an academic excellence award for administration leadership in postgraduate studies.

Whilst being an insider and having familiarity with the culture and an understanding of how things may be perceived can be advantageous, Smith (1999) warns insider researchers that the assumption that experience is all that is required is "arrogant" (pp. 138–42). She encourages insider researchers to take the difficult risk of testing their own taken-for-granted views about their community and its institutions. It is a risk, she maintains, because it can unsettle beliefs, values, relationships and the knowledge of different histories. As an insider, I entered the inquiry informed by not only the academic literature and empirical base but also my own experience and subjective "hunches" concerning what to expect of the case—many of which changed.

In the research process two approaches were adopted to monitor and control researcher subjectivity and support structures. Informal reflective evaluations to discern my personal position at regular intervals and comparing these with other data sources were integral to the process. Informal peer debriefing also offered opportunities to explore ideas that may not have been considered in isolation before. Johnson and Castelli (2002) caution that when reflexivity is conducted with "critical friends", "testing out the issue of cultural bias and/or ignorance is relevant again" (p. 42). Throughout the inquiry, ideas and concerns were shared with critical friends from the same bicultural backgrounds as that of the researcher, with individuals who were not, with supervisor/s, and frequently in interaction with stakeholders of Islamic schools who were not affiliated with the research sites. It was these reflective debriefs, both personal and collegial, as well as participants' voices, the cultural politics of education and my engagement with the work of critical educational theorists that shifted the focus from a traditional descriptive research to a critical orientation. In this instance, I regard my work as a first step "toward forms of political action that can redress the injustices found

in the field site or constructed in the very act of research itself" (Kincheloe & McLaren, 2011, p. 301).

3.5: Research Methodology: Collective Case Study Design

The methodology reflects the assumptions established in the epistemology, ontology and theoretical perspective and informs the strategy behind the choice of particular methods (Crotty, 1998). A collective case study design (Stake, 1994, 1995, 2005; Yin, 2012) was adopted because of the nature of the problem being investigated (Flyvbjerg, 2006; Merriam, 1998, 2002) and the arising research circumstances. Whereas this inquiry initially set out as an in-depth qualitative case study seeking first-hand information, ideas and thoughts directly from the voices of participants from one case school in NSW, it eventually harnessed "alternative forms of data collection" (Patton, 2002, p. 402) from participants in other Australian states. Initially, publicly available websites, including that of the Board of studies facilitated the generation of a list of Islamic schools. Considering that not all Islamic schools were updated on the Board of studies' website during the research proceedings, in order to supplement the list I drew on my informal networks base of these institutions in NSW. A similar approach was adopted for Islamic schools outside NSW. Following negotiation and numerous discussions, including face to face, telephone and email correspondence with four school principals, deputy principals, a chairman from NSW Islamic schools, an executive principal of a cluster of schools in Western Australia and a principal in South Australia, it transitioned to a collective case study methodology, primarily to gain and maintain site access. In addition to an analysis of documents, a survey and a questionnaire replaced the initial in-depth interviews with stakeholders and leaders.

A collective case is a study of multiple instrumental cases. The cases in the collection share "common characteristics and conditions" (Stake, 2005, p. 3), in that they all explore the espoused purposes of Islamic schooling and are therefore bound together by Islamic values and practices. Stake's (2005) work provided strong theoretical underpinnings for my research to inform the construction of the cases. Collective cases may be members of a group or examples of a phenomenon, what Stake (2005) refers to as "a quintain". A researcher studies what is similar and different about the cases in order to understand the quintain better. A collective case study orientation effectively enables the researcher to understand not just the specific, but also the conditions where understanding took place: "the complex of intentions, beliefs, and desires of the text, institutional context, practice, form of life" (Schwandt, 2000,

p. 193). This is timely for a phenomenon that has received little research exploring its entirety, and it is overdue in light of the suspicion surrounding the purposes, intent, practices and contributions of that phenomenon.

The three participating cases were Kindergarten to Year 12; independent, co-educational Islamic schools with enrolments varying from approximately 900 students at Bringelly, 1,200 students at Peace Academy and 2000 students at Medina. Both Peace Academy and Medina have additional campuses within their relevant states to cater for their growing student population. Bringelly, on the other hand, is part of a cluster of schools with campuses that can be located across Australia. Peace Academy and Bringelly are accredited to host local and international students and enrol Muslim and non- Muslim students. All three schools host a culturally and ethnically diverse student population allowing students to develop a better understanding and appreciation of Australia's multicultural society. In addition to the mandatory curriculum, Islamic studies and Arabic is taught. The cases are not-for- profit organisations. They are governed by boards of trustees.

Established since 1995, Medina is located in the State of Victoria. A second nearby campus came into full operations in 2014. The workforce population consists of both Muslim and non-Muslim staffs, comprising 192 staff members, of which 123 are teaching staff. The formal leadership team comprises the principal; two vice principals, heads of learning areas and heads of departments, including Islamic and Quranic studies. The college places high priority towards ensuring all students are equipped to become responsible citizens in today's changing world.

Peace Academy is part of a cluster of three Islamic schools in Western Australia. Peace Academy, the last site out of three campuses was officially opened in 2000. The college claims itself to be a God-centred, co-educational institution which provides a high level of academic and integrated Islamic education through its network of three colleges. Peace Academy now has a body of teaching and support staff of over 300 Muslim and non-Muslim teaching staff across its sites. The college principals are all of the Islamic faith, however, the great majority of Heads of Learning are of the non- Islamic faith.

Established in 1995, Bringelly is a project of the biggest Muslim schools' organisation in Australia. Staff composition consists of 56 staff, both Muslim and non- Muslim staff. The administrative team is of the Islamic faith; however, the majority of Heads of Learning are of

the non- Islamic faith. The College prides itself on its excellent academic achievements and awards won over the years.

A collective case study, even a two-case study, is generally preferred over single-case designs for producing credible results (Yin, 2012). Yin (2012) asserts that analytic conclusions independently arising from two cases are more powerful than those coming from a single case, having the advantage of generating understanding of the issues and interrelationships surrounding the phenomenon. Hence, the adoption of a collective case study was pivotal to best understand the research problem "in its complexity and its entirety as well as in its context" (Punch, 2005, p. 146). This procedure was important for identifying key participants and giving them voice through negotiating and facilitating the coordination of the data collection strategies and design. The next section reports on these.

3.6: Data Gathering Techniques

Studying the qualitative case requires particular methods of research. A case study can call on both qualitative and quantitative data (Yin, 2012) and can employ quantitative means to gather qualitative assessments and views. "The open- versus closed-ended nature of the data differentiates between the two types better than the sources of the data. The sources of the data do not cleanly map onto qualitative and quantitative research…" (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007, p. 6). Consistent with the research focus and a case study methodology, data was drawn and synthesised from a number of sources from each of the three participating schools in the study. Data were either viewed in-depth in "artefacts" or through the "observations" and references of participants in the study (Stake, 2005) through the Stakeholder Survey (Appendix F) or the Leadership Questionnaire (Appendix J). To best understand how the espoused purpose of Islamic schools is constructed, a sequential procedure strategy (Creswell, 2003; Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007) was executed in two distinctive but overlapping phases, as shown in Figure 4.2.
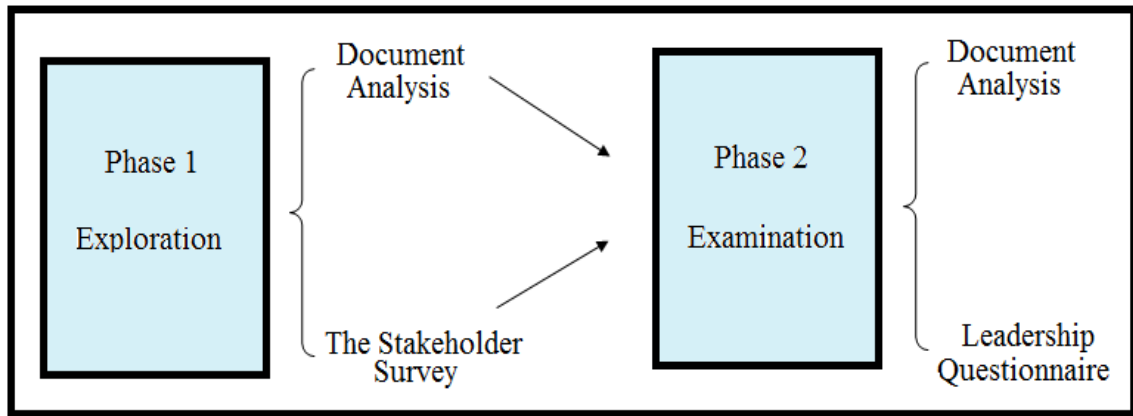
Figure 4.2: Stages of the research process.

The first was the exploratory phase, which encompassed an exploration of promotional materials and a multi-site survey of three K-12 school populations—from here on to be referred to as the Stakeholder Survey. The second phase involved in-depth document analysis and the collection of qualitative data from five leaders of two Islamic schools using the Leadership Questionnaire. Both phases involved "learning from the observation of others" (Stake, 2005, p. 8) alongside documents which corroborated what happens in the schools. This indirect method, elucidates Stake (2005) is necessary for activity at which the researcher is not present; the researcher needs to ask someone who was there and find records kept of what happened and artefacts that suggest it.

Compounding Muslims' accumulated heritage of suspicion and distrust (Mograby, cited in Clyne, 1998), a primary difficulty for accessing schools concerns "the increasing threat felt by Muslims due to the rise of Islamophobia" (Berglund, 2014, p. 283). As stated, the two data collection sources were employed as substitutes in this inquiry, which initially set out to give voice to both stakeholders and leaders through in-depth interviews and observations of artefacts as indicated in Appendix B. The adoption of alternative methods came about after follow-up discussion with the gatekeepers of schools in Sydney, and then later during the research process where it became clear and was ascertained that researcher presence and interviews with participants held no appeal for any of the participating schools. Practical, but creative, data collection consisted of using whatever resources were available at the researcher's disposal to do the best job possible (Patton, 2002). "This admonition to remain open and creative applies throughout naturalistic inquiry, from design through data collection and into analysis" (Patton, 2002, p. 402).

The open-ended nature of the questionnaires give insight into both the institutions' public face and the personal observations and opinions of its stakeholders as well as those

who implement the institution's practices – those committed to "making things happen" (Ahmed, 2012, p. 135). The data gathering tools, participant selection, procedures and design are discussed next, followed by the use of documents as a qualitative method that is highly suitable to cases. Table 4.1 below provides a detailed overview of the research process.

How is the espoused purpose of Islamic schools constructed in Australia?		
Data gathering method	Participants/sources	Timeline
THE EXPLORATORY PHASE		
Espoused purpose		
Analysis of school promotions	**Prospectus**: Peace Academy **Websites**: Medina and Bringelly	February–March 2013
Purpose-in-use		
The Stakeholder Survey	Stakeholders of three Islamic schools	February–March 2013
THE EXAMINATION PHASE		
Purpose-in-use: Leadership construction of purpose		
Document Analysis The Leadership Questionnaire	Community publications Policies Curriculum documents Leaders from Medina and Bringelly	Commenced in 2013; revisited in 2016 July–August, 2013

Table 4.1: Overview of the Research

3.6.1: Phase one: the Stakeholder Survey.

The aim of the Stakeholder Survey was three-fold. It sought participants' views in relation to the espoused theory of Islamic schools in general and their experiences of the purposes in their local contexts; to identify influential practitioners; and to provide understandings of behaviours practitioners engaged in when constructing espoused purpose.

3.6.1.1: Sample and participants.

The rationale for selecting specific participants reflects the purpose or goals of the study (Merriam, 1998; Arcury & Quandt, 1999; Creswell, 2009), allowing the researcher to find representative individuals who have the appropriate characteristics. Purposeful sampling was chosen to learn about issues of central importance (Merriam, 1998). Within this category, snowballing techniques were employed to allow the researcher to find representative individuals who have the characteristics being considered by the investigation (Bryman, 2008). In the first stage of this study, during the conduct of the Stakeholder Survey, the researcher made contact with a group of people of relevance to the research topic and then used these people to establish contact with others in the second stage. Stakeholders who participated in the first stage of the research, including: parents, students, teachers and official leaders were asked to nominate influential individuals to participate in the second stage of the research. The sample emerged during the inquiry.

A sample which reflected location by state and a preference for Islamic schools with an enrolment of senior students was used. Having attempted to recruit one case from New South Wales for a qualitative in-depth study without success, it was not deemed suitable to approach these schools again. Because the intent of the survey was also to identify and obtain a sample representative of a population, and to overcome difficulties associated with access, Raihani and Gurr's (2010) recommendations of recruiting cases across Australian states to participate in the first stage of the research was pursued.

3.6.1.2: Procedures and recruitment of participants.

An expression of interest to participate in the survey (Appendix A) was extended to principals of fourteen Islamic schools. Three Islamic schools from Western Australia, Victoria and Queensland consented to participate in an online, anonymous survey. Upon their expression of interest these schools were then provided with a formal request for research approval (Appendix B), followed by a package of participant information letters clearly labelled for distribution among the different categories of participants. A package of 150 envelopes was sent for each school. Pre-written newsletter and staff bulletin excerpts (Appendix E) were also provided for replication to recruit participants as well as remind them to complete the survey.

The results of the data from Peace Academy, Medina Grammar (Medina) and Bringelly Islamic College (Bringelly), the pseudonyms allocated to the three participating schools, are based upon the analysis of 61 electronically submitted survey returns. Peace Academy was the school with the highest response returns (32) followed by Medina (18) then Bringelly (11). The response rate was considerably more successful than that of Raihani and Gurr (2010), who reported 10 out of 100 survey returns.

A diverse group of stakeholders was selected to participate in the survey because of their special experience and background in relation to the area of inquiry. Participants were qualified to draw on their broader and richer experiences of Islamic schooling, and were therefore in an informed position when sharing their opinions, stories and for pinpointing potential participants for phase two of the research. Categories of participants are shown in Figure 4.3. All participants were advised in both the participant information letter (Appendix C) and upon accessing the online Survey (Appendix F) that going to the provided link and completing the questionnaire presupposed their consent to participate in the research.

• **Indicate your status as a stakeholder of this Islamic School (You can tick more than 1 box).**		
Answer Options	**Response Percent**	**Response Count**
Parent	19.7%	12
The leadership team: principal, deputy, coordinators	23.0%	14
Student	16.4%	10
Member of the board of directors	0.0%	0
Class teacher*	36.1%	22
Teaching support staff	3.3%	2
Teacher of religious studies	6.6%	4
Administrative staff	21.3%	13
Support staff (eg counsellor)	0.0%	0
Other (please specify)		3
answered question		**61**
skipped question		**1**

Figure 4.3: Number and category of the Stakeholder Survey participants.

3.6.1.3: The Stakeholder Survey design.

To minimise respondent fatigue, participants were asked to respond to a 10–20 minute survey incorporating a total of 8 questions. Open-ended questions were employed in the first stage to elicit stakeholders' opinions, direction, guidance, and recommendations; probe into possibilities and potential problems; as well as pinpoint potential influential individuals in response to the research questions, without the constraints of closed-ended responses. Closed questions were also used because they are direct to the point (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2007) and limit inconvenience. Despite concerted effort to provide a range of alternative responses from which stakeholders could choose, the closed questions on the stakeholder survey failed to generate usable data. The fluctuation of responses as the data collection moved from the general to the specific alongside highly favourable responses presented by participants raised concerns about the validity of the data. This issue will be explored in more detail in the limitations section. A detailed analysis of the findings has been included in Appendix K.

To address the possibility of participant bias, an extensive analysis of the schools' promotions replaced the closed questions pertaining to "the espoused purpose of Islamic schools generally" and were used to answer research question one. Promotional materials in the public domain are important texts for analytical attention and should not be "dismissed or under-estimated" as they "make truth claims" that are important in understanding the cultural politics of education (Meadmore & Meadmore, 2004, p. 381). Chapter four presents this data. Survey question 5 asked participants to describe their experience of contextual issues, focusing descriptions on their respective school's purpose. Data drawn from this question alongside documents and the Leadership Questionnaire responded to research question two and will be presented in both chapters five and six of this thesis. Section two of the Stakeholder Survey, questions 6 and 7, involved referral and identification of phase two participants. Data from these questions were used to invite five nominated leaders to participate in phase two of the research. Question 8 of the survey asked participants to provide explicit details for their selection of the leader. The question offered descriptive scope for stakeholders to comment on aspects of leadership actions, interventions and strategies for influencing purpose. Data from this question will also be presented in chapters five and six to show how leaders construct the espoused purpose of Islamic education. It responds to research question three.

The questionnaire and all correspondences, including expressions of interest, invitations and consent letters, were culturally sensitive (Patton, 2002), cognizant of the monotheistic (*tawhid*) worldview of Islam and its adherents. To ensure conceptual clarity, once completed, the survey was firstly submitted for feedback to a cleric of a prominent mosque in Sydney and to a head of Islamic studies at a prominent Islamic school in Sydney. Prior to administering the full survey, a pilot test was conducted to clarify unambiguous questions and response options. Altogether, six participants: two senior students; two Heads of Department; one teacher; and, one parent from three different Sydney based Islamic schools took part in the pilot. Two possibilities presented themselves for the unsuccessful instrument. Firstly, and pursuant to leading a school that was the recipient of a National Excellence Award, knowledge that the researcher was known in Sydney as an educational leader presented as a possibility for heightened trust, thus impacting on participants' willingness and unhesitant engagement with the survey questions. Secondly, with the knowledge that the data generated was being trialled, participants may not have taken the threat of intrusive questions as seriously as those who participated in the research.

3.6.2: Phase two: the Leadership Questionnaire.

Phase two of the research employed qualitative questionnaires with the nominated leaders to discern their opinions, thoughts and experiences of institutional life. Leader participants were recruited primarily to investigate their understandings of how they envision, articulate and represent espoused purpose. As noted by Ahmed (2012), individual commitment is an interface between policy and action. If a commitment is made on paper, across documents and policies, it does not necessarily mean commitment unless practitioners "act on and with the paper" (Ahmed, 2012, p. 140). Therefore, the nominated leaders qualified to provide nuanced and insightful descriptions of their Monday to Friday practice.

Peace Academy, the school with the biggest survey response returns (32), provided the researcher with broader and more explicit data pertaining to 6 influential individuals and thus presented as a potential case for conducting an in-depth case study design. When approached with the initial proposal to conduct a case study, the school declined to participate in further research. Seeing as the possibility of in-depth interviews presented as an obstacle in the conduct of this research, yet realising the fundamental criticality of giving voice to leaders, Patton's (2002) recommendations for finding alternative data methods were pursued and negotiated with the Medina and Bringelly representative authorities. Following formal request (Appendix G) and school consent (Appendix I), five leaders from Bringelly and

Medina partook in the online Leadership Questionnaire (Appendix J) without the presence of the researcher, as shown in Figure 4.4.

The Leadership Questionnaire guide was informed by the conceptual framework and the literature review. The questionnaire guide was framed around an explicit set of questions targeted at leaders. Characterised by being more open and in-depth, the questions bound the focus on a particular subject, yet minimised rigidity by allowing anecdotes and stories to flow (Patton, 2002). They had the additional benefit of delving into and clarifying some of the blind spots, with the advantage of providing a medium for open-ended narrations, reflections and further elaboration and additions.

Questions 6–9 supplemented the Stakeholder Survey and documents in relation to the schools' theory-in-use, provoking leaders' reflections on the rhetoric of the schools' claims and the reality of what happens. Focussing on the schools' commitments, questions 6 and 7 asked the five leaders to comment on the obstacles they face when seeking to embed the schools' distinctive identity, and aspects which have helped the schools in doing so. Questions 8 and 9 asked the five leaders to share their personal experiences of the schools' commitments and their thoughts in relation to institutional life. Focusing on leadership actions and practice, questions 1, 2, 3 and 5 nuanced an understanding of the struggles, barriers and leadership compromises when constructing purpose. Moreover, leaders proposed solutions, provided insights into events and corroborated evidence obtained from other participants and previous sources. The data from the Leadership Questionnaire were drawn upon to answer research questions two and three, that is, to show leaders' experience of purpose but more importantly their role in constructing espoused purpose.

Stakeholder-nominated influential individuals		
Schools	Pseudonyms given to nominated individuals	Titles of nominated influential individuals
Medina Grammar	Leader 1	Head of Islamic Studies and teacher.
	Leader 2	Deputy Principal.
	Leader 3	Principal.
Bringelly Islamic School	Leader 4	Head of HPE and Teacher.
	Leader 5	Head of Islamic Studies, teacher and *Imam*: Islamic Studies.

Figure 4.4: The Leadership Questionnaire participants.

3.6.3: Document analysis.

Document analysis "is a systematic procedure for reviewing or evaluating documents" and entails finding, selecting, making sense of, and synthesising data contained within them (Bowen, 2009, p. 27). Within the study of cases, where possible researchers supplement interviews with the analysis of documents that are produced in the course of everyday events. Documents have been used as a stand-alone data gathering method in qualitative studies. "Documents may be the only necessary data source for studies designed within an interpretive paradigm, as in hermeneutic inquiry; or [they] may simply be the only viable source, as in historical and cross-cultural research" (Bowen, 2009, p. 29). The processes of gathering and analysing documents were directly linked to the research questions. Reviews of documents were unobtrusive and non-reactive (Marshall & Rossman, 1995; Bowen, 2009), because the presence of the researcher does not alter what is being studied. Reflexivity is usually not an issue in using documents (Bowen, 2009), because their use as a technique counters the concerns related to reflexivity that are typical of hermeneutic research methods. At the same time, documents are rich in portraying the values and beliefs of participants in the setting (Marshall & Rossman, 1995). Public documents, including school prospectuses, policies, rankings, and accountability priorities are available from websites, thereby overcoming difficulties of access. These documents were useful for making inferences about events (Tellis, 1997) and ascertaining priorities. In this study, they were a valuable triangulation strategy and therefore used in depth to converge and corroborate evidence from other sources.

3.6.3.1: Phase one: promotional documents – prospectuses and websites of Islamic schools.

The first data gathering technique that was undertaken to ascertain official commitments in the exploratory phase involved the promotional materials of Islamic schools: the prospectus of Peace Academy, and in the cases of Bringelly and Medina, where the prospectus was not available, their websites. Data from this strategy was drawn upon to respond to research question one and will be presented in chapter four of this thesis to show how Islamic schools represent their espoused purpose, aims, and priorities, and to get to know the schools.

Ahmed's (2012) conceptual work provided a useful interrogative lens for focussing attention on the merits of official descriptions, "claims about" as well as on "behalf" of

institutions or "an institutional speech act" (p. 54). As texts, speech acts involve "naming: the institution is named, and in being "given" a name, the institution is also "given" attributes, qualities, and even a character" (p. 54). Such speech acts are taken up as if they have achieved the effects they articulate, "such that the names come to stand in for the effects… as performatives" (117). As texts which "can and do talk" (Ahmed, 2012, p. 9), a prospectus is designed to appeal to a market, to attract a particular type of clientele. This "rhetorical mechanism" provides a succinct account of a school's immediate aspirations and a summary of its educational advantages and its assets (Symes, 1998). They are notable for their design, specifically in providing relevant insights into the educational values that parents conceive to be of importance in schools (Symes, 1998). A prospectus is therefore a representation of how the school wants to be seen in the education marketplace. Representational practices, asserts Symes (1998), present as important means whereby a school constructs its identity and ethos and communicates it to the world.

Another avenue for efficient, instantaneous access to promotional materials is the school's website, an increasingly popular tool for reaching the local, national and international market. Websites are multimodal in that they employ different modalities of text: writing, images, sound, movement and spatiality, in their construction and meaning-making (Cranny-Francis, 2005). The internet, a modern everyday form of communication, says Cranny-Francis (2005), blends with various other traditional forms of communication to impact on the viewers' understandings of themselves and the world they live in, their renegotiation of subjectivity and formations of identity. Not unlike guided expeditions, websites offer virtual tours of main attractions, directing viewers' attention to important locations through their design, including their layout, hyperlinks, visuals and texts. They have the added advantage of keeping the immediate school community updated on everyday events and activities.

3.6.3.2: Phase two documents: programs and policies.

Publicly available documents, as Table 4.2 shows, including policies, newsletters and programmes from the schools, were important "records" of what happened when the researcher was not present (Stake, 2005, p. 8). Policies are all those texts "that frame, constitute and change practice" (Braun, Maguire, & Ball, 2010, p. 548). Braun et al. (2010) noted what happens inside a school in terms of how policies are "shaped and influenced" (p. 585), "interpreted, enacted and mediated" by the context, by institutionally determined

factors (p. 586). Context is not just a backdrop against which schools have to operate – it initiates dynamic policy processes and choices and is continuously constructed and developed both from within and externally in relation to policy imperatives and expectations (Braun, Ball, Maguire, & Hoskins, 2011, p. 590).

Consistent with Braun et al. (2011), context is an 'active' force in the three case schools' policy work. Schools produced their own take on policy, drawing on aspects of their ethos, as well as on the situated necessities, within the limitations and possibilities of context(s). The schools also generated their own policies that elaborated on and embedded aspects of national policy making into their own cultures and working practices, for example, behaviour and management policies and Peace Academy's *Bullying Policy* (2013), and in the case of the latter, signposted the daily informal programs. Schools also created policies and documents to integrate their distinctive ethos and Islamic affiliation, foreshadowing religious practices and habits, including the dress code, Islamic practices and rituals. Policy documents, timetables and handbooks were drawn upon to respond to research question two and research question three where I show key contributors to the construction of Islamic education and areas leaders prioritise. Analysis of the three data sources facilitated interpretation of the data.

Document Sources				
Document type	**Area**	**Peace Academy**	**Bringelly**	**Medina**
Espoused purpose				
School promotions	Mission; beliefs and priorities	- Induction Policy (IP, 2014) - Prospectus (2014)	- Website - Annual Magazine (AM, 2012)	- Website
Purpose-in-use				
Community publications		- Newsletter (2014, March 25) - Quarterly Publication (2012), Issues 183 & 283 - Annual Reports (2012, 2013) - Academic Calendar (2015)	- Annual Magazine (2012). - Principal's Message - Website - Academic Calendar (2015)	- Newsletter (July,2011, Issue 5) - Bulletin (2012, Issue 1) - Principal's Welcome - Website - Academic Calendar (2015)

Policies	- Induction Policy (IP, 2014) - Bullying Policy (2013)	- Behaviour Management Plan, (BMP, 2014) - Homework - School Organisation	- Duty of Care - Code of Ethics - Staff Dress Code - Behaviour/ Management - Homework
Curriculum documents	- Assessment Policy - Guidelines to the National Curriculum (2013) - Islamic Studies (Years K–6)	- Parent Information Booklets, (Years K–6, 2014) - Website	- Curriculum Handbook (Years K–6) - Timetables

Table 4.2: Outline of Documents Analysed in the Research

3.7: Analysis of Data

Data analysis, the procedures whereby researchers move from the qualitative data that have been collected into some form of explanation, understanding or interpretation of the people and situations under investigation (Lewins, Taylor, & Gibbs, 2005), is critical as a basis for the "meaningful" formation of the body of the study. Case study analysis is eclectic (Stake, 1994), and there is no single way to analyse data (Anfara, Brown, & Mangione, 2002). A systematic, analytic process (Lichtman, 2006) was adopted in the collation, organisation and interpretation of the data to optimise public disclosure of processes (Anfara et al., 2002). The next section explores social semiotics, specifically multi-modal discourse, for its significance as a culturally appropriate analytical approach for increased understanding and unpacking representations and meaning.

3.7.1: Critical social semiotics.

The analysis was guided by social semiotics, a theoretical framework which deals with the study of signs and meaning in all its appearances and forms, in all social occasions and in all cultural sites (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006; Kress, 2011). Primarily, semiotics is interested in modes of communication other than language. Unlike discourse analysis, social semiotics takes interest in how language and other modes of communication combine in multimodal texts and communicative events. It views images, gestures as well as spoken and written language as "semiotic resources", or resources for meaning making (van Leeuwen, 2005; Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006). "Through its investigation of their context dimension, social semiotics brings into close focus the way in which signs play a role in constructing the social world, in translating its meaning and significations in a climate of an ever-changing political

economy of competing interests and demands" (Symes, 1998, p. 135). In social semiotics, the interest of the institution at the time of producing the sign leads them to choose an aspect or bundle of aspects of the object to be represented as being criterial for representing what they want to represent (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2001, 2006). In the case of the participating schools, the most plausible, the most apt form for its representation was in producing a culturally compatible message that utilised the literacies of its anticipated audience(s) (Cranny-Francis, 2005).

As a term that is explicitly used to describe meaning making across a variety of modalities—visual, verbal, and sound—multimodal discourse is highly useful in the study of multimodal texts (Cranny-Francis, 2005; Kress & van Leeuwen, 2001, 2006). Multimodal discourse provides useful analytic tools to apply to the study of texts in an explicitly institutionalised context. "Discourses are socially constructed knowledges of (some aspect of) reality" (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2001, p. 4). Multimodal social semiotics is inherently an instance of discourse analysis (Kress, 2011). In the prospectuses, home pages and policies analysed, the schools made strategic use of a variety of "shared cultural resources" (Kress, 2012, p. 372) to communicate knowledge to clientele, appealing to culturally specific meanings (Cranny-Francis, 2005) and shared ideals. Words, texts and images coalesced to construct a shared world with clientele to form identification and affinity with the schools. How social semiotics and the explicit application of multimodal discourse were applied to the analyses in chapters four, five and six, alongside Apple's (2004, 2006) intellectual scholarship follows. The next section outlines the analysis of chapter four.

3.7.1.1 Multimodal discourse analytic tools for unpacking 'institutional speech acts': analysing school promotions.

Since building on social semiotics (Hodge & Kress, 1988; Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006), there has been budding interest in the nuances and subtleties of visual analysis in scholarship (Symes, 1998; Wardman, Hutchesson, Gottschall, Drew, & Saltmarsh, 2010; Drew, 2013). Symes (1998) notes the shift from verbal to increased visual forms of semiosis whereby schools' images are depicted through visual vignettes of school life, a technique employed to show off the school. Analysis of an ensemble of modalities that give the schools "interiority", including writing, visual images (Ahmed, 2012, p. 54) and iconography, was undertaken for schools across three Australian states. The analysis focussed on the frequency and content of written texts and particular images, both what is represented and effaced, but it

also considered the visuality of written texts (Cranny-Francis, 2005) and techniques applied within images, including gaze, layout, composition and distance (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006). To facilitate a deeper insight into how multimodal texts combine to "produce meaning" (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006, p. 1), subjecting the participating schools' promotional and policy documents to "critical scrutiny" (Waghid, 2011) and "empirical enquiry" is timely for producing "constructive synthesis" (Niyozov & Memon, 2011, p. 25), as is prescribed in the critical tradition.

In the analysis of promotional materials in this thesis, a number of questions were considered in relation to representation, as shown in chapter four: what ideals, stories and values are the images and words denoting, assuming and inviting clients to assume, and how are they doing it? In the analysis of the iconography, the above questions were also considered in relation to representation, including "ideological meaning" or "iconological symbolism" and "iconographical symbolism" (van Leeuwen, 2001, p. 101). van Leeuwen (2001) explains iconographical symbolism as: "the 'object signs' not only denote a particular person, thing or place, but also the idea or concepts attached to it" (2001, p. 94). To analyse iconological symbolism is to "ascertain those underlying principles which reveal the basic attitude of a nation, a period, a class, a religious or philosophical persuasion" (Panofsky, cited in van Leeuwen, 2001, p. 101).

3.7.1.2: Analysis of the informal practices and formal curriculums of Islamic schools.

The data gleaned from documents and participants' perspectives, in both chapter five and chapter six, the informal practices of Islamic schools and the formal curriculum of Islamic schools focussed on the critique, frequency and content of written texts and their wider cultural-political and educational (Apple, 2004, 2006) interconnections. Thematic analysis facilitated the identification, analysis, and interpretation of patterns of meaning ('themes') within qualitative data (Clarke & Braun, 2017). Using this approach any data type can be analysed, from widely used qualitative techniques such as interviews, to qualitative surveys. Thematic analysis was used to identify patterns within and across data in relation to participants' lived experience, views and perspectives, and behaviour and practices. Thus themes and issues were identified.

Based on the premise that context shapes policy enactments, in the analysis of policies in chapters five and six of this thesis, certain dimensions of Braun et al.'s (2011) model were

harnessed to enable analysis of "conflicting findings and interpretations", to 'make sense' of the policy puzzles, as a heuristic roadmap to sketch "the connections between policy and practice" (Malen & Knapp, 1997, p. 420). As the model does not account for all aspects of context (Braun et al., 2011), for the purpose of this analysis, the contextual aspects relating to "situated" or local and "external" contexts, as well as their interconnections, are considered.

Chapter six, *Constructing Purpose in the Formal Curriculum* of Islamic schools and understanding leaders' actions and common-sense assumptions (Apple, 2004, 2006), as expressed by their commitments and contributions was integral to the research question and conceptual framework of this thesis. Analysis of leadership action nuanced faith (Dantley, 2005) and intellectual engagement (Said, 1994) and was therefore organised simultaneously around the model proposed by Bolman and Deal (2003, 2008) that presents the four mental frames: the structural frame; the symbolic frame; the human relations frame; and the political frame. Structures are strategic: rule-oriented, programmed, and policy driven. To embed purpose, leaders of Islamic schools would set standards and operationalise them to ensure behaviour is predictable and consistent. When framing symbolically, faith leaders understand the importance of symbols and recognise their responsibility in articulating and galvanising a vision and values that give purpose, direction and meaning to an organisation. The human relations frame highlights the relationships between organisations and people and their development. Here, leaders of Islamic schools help groups develop a shared sense of direction and commitment to purpose. Finally, the proposition of the political frame emphasises that "goals are not set by edict at the top but evolve through an ongoing process of negotiation and bargaining" (Bolman & Deal, 2008, p. 196).

3.7.2: Discussion of issues and reporting the data.

Generation of key issues occurs as part of the interpretation process. As data is reread and visuals and certain words, terms and categories are examined concomitantly with wider contextual concerns, one notices that the same ideas appear richer and more dominant than others (Lichtman, 2006). Towards this end, Apple's (2006) scholarship, specifically *Ideology and Curriculum* (Apple, 2004) and *Educating the "right" way* (Apple, 2006) offered a solid intellectual platform for critical engagement with the data and the cultural politics of education. In concert with this thesis' theoretical position, to accomplish a critical examination of what education does, one is to place educational institutions—albeit ones holding a stigmatised minority—back into the larger and unequal relations of power and into

the relations of dominance and subordination and the conflicts in society of which they are a part (Apple, 2006).

Issues emerging from the documentary synthesis and participants' reported experiences and assessments were analysed to determine congruency between understandings and execution, that is, to report on the alignment between what is claimed and what is experienced in Islamic schools and, importantly, how leadership influence these dynamics. These are then shaped into a general description, as reorganising and rewriting and rethinking often lead to more powerful ideas.

Metaphors, (Creswell, 2003; Lichtman, 2006; Taylor & Bogdan, 1998) and more specifically in this study, the Arabic lexicon, comprising shared concepts and key Islamic terms which have emerged from the data, were used to report on participants' worldviews. They were invaluable for providing "thick description". Notably, they portrayed the phenomenon through participants' stories: issues of importance, everyday educational practices, texts used, disciplinary measures adopted, habits, recurring activities and religious rituals, meanings, feelings sacred texts and *ahadeeth*.

3.8: Verifications

Validation or trustworthiness of findings is essentially about establishing "truths" (Silverman, 2005). It occurs throughout the research process. In seeking emic interpretations and multiple perspectives, scientific rigour is inappropriate for determining trustworthiness, for the quality of a study in each paradigm should be judged by its own paradigm's terms. As an alternative to reliability and validity, Lincoln and Guba (1985) put forward the concept of trustworthiness, which successfully illuminates the ethic of respect for truth and establishes the integrity within a predominantly qualitative case study research project. The criteria for trustworthiness are premised on the credibility of findings, their transferability to other contexts, the dependability of findings and confirmability (Guba & Lincoln, 1989).

Rich, thick, detailed description was provided so that anyone interested in transferability or generalisability of results to other contexts will have a solid basis for comparison. In qualitative case study research, it is the rich, thick description, the words, not the numbers that persuade the reader of the trustworthiness of the findings (Merriam, 2002). Dependability or reliability is based on the assumption of replicability and whether the same results could be obtained if the same thing is observed twice. Triangulation is used, which strengthens dependability as well as credibility. Confirmability refers to the degree to which

the data and results could be confirmed or corroborated by others. The interpretive paradigm's assurances of integrity of the findings are rooted in the data themselves (Guba & Lincoln, 1989). This means that the data can be tracked to their sources and "that the logic used to assemble the interpretations into structurally coherent and corroborating wholes is both explicit and implicit in the narratives of a case study" (Guba & Lincoln, 1989, p. 243). The disclosure of process was made transparent through systematic, transparent, step-by-step outline of the methods for data collection and analysis. Thus, both the "raw products" and the "processes used to compress them...are available to be confirmed" (Guba & Lincoln, 1989, p. 243). In addition to checks and rechecks of the data, the researcher actively searched for and described any negative instances that contradicted prior findings.

3.9: Ethical Considerations

An ongoing ethical question compounded by the multi-perspectival, *bricolage*-inspired creation process of this study is "do we have it right?" (Stake, 1995, p. 107). In a social climate, apprehensive of the phenomenon under study, ethical obligations towards this inquiry were paramount. Stake (1995) reminds researchers that, "although we deal with many complex phenomena and issues for which no consensus can be found as to what really exists – yet we have ethical obligations to minimise representation and misunderstanding" (p. 108–09). Whilst we, as researchers, cannot guarantee Islamic schools and their participants that their lives will be changed or improved by our efforts, we "absolutely do bear the responsibility to ensure that they are no worse off" for having permitted us in their lives (Schram, 2003, p. 147). Accordingly, ethical considerations were prioritised as the researcher sought accuracy and logic in interpreting the meaning of the arising issues as well as alternative explanations. Acquired knowledge of the issues surrounding the phenomenon, as well as a mix of criticality, common sense, intuition, discipline and triangulation protocols were deliberative undertakings to find the validity of data observed (Stake, 1995).

The Human Research Ethics Committee of the Australian Catholic University gave approval for the conduct of the research; the approval number is: 2012 227N.

3.10: Limitations and Delimitations

Researcher access and inability to get detailed in-depth qualitative data through inquirer–participant verbal interchange was a source of constraint in this study. Limitations of this study include inability to clarify the observations and experiences of stakeholders, and

the thoughts and perspectives of participant leaders first-hand. While this can be attributed to the schools' conditions, primarily the revival of an orientalist cultural political climate perpetuated by the mechanics of perpetual surveillance, Grace's (2009) claim concerning the uneasy relation between faith and research holds value, explicating the reason for various faith communities' neglect of researching the leadership, school cultures and outcomes of their particular school systems. His contention that research can produce results that are disturbing to the faithful, and for this reason some religious authorities have not encouraged systematic and rigorous investigations of their own schooling systems, when applied to this research, cannot be dismissed. Overcoming "constraints" pertaining to site access and creatively providing alternative data strategies (Patton, 2002) to access information are strengths of this study. An exploration of the "quintain" (Stake, 2005) offers a foundation and potentiality upon which further research can be premised, and importantly, generates conversations and dialogues about faith-based and Islamic schools.

3.10.1: Limitations of the questionnaire instruments.

Despite employing alternative research tools, replacing interviews with written questionnaires, this research demonstrated that a social desirability bias persists even if schools and participants consent to participate and research is administered in a nonthreatening situation. Randall and Fernandes (1991) as well as Tourangeau and Yan (2007) alert researchers who are dealing with sensitive matters to be sensitised to the possibility of bias, an issue which presented itself in this research. Social desirability bias (Zerbe & Paulhus, 1987), specifically the "threat of disclosure" are attributed to the issue that participants in this study selectively engaged with, providing partial responses or did not respond to what they conceive to be "intrusive" questions and sensitivities within and surrounding the phenomena (Tourangeau & Yan, 2007). It is plausible that stakeholders, and in particular participating leaders, harboured negative sentiments and held views which were in disagreement with the way purpose is constructed in Islamic schools but were hesitant to voice them. In spite of assurances of anonymity and confidentiality, some stakeholders may show and want to be seen to be actively supportive of the schools' authorities, who in turn want to be seen to be compliant with external policy and therefore win local, educational and social approval. As Randall and Fernandes (1991) assert, managers are often reluctant to have their ethics observed or measured, and few employees may agree to provide information to researchers that might be incriminating to them or to their colleagues.

3.10.1.1: The Stakeholder Survey.

The Stakeholder Survey offered a range of alternatives from which to choose, presented least sensitive questions in the closed responses, and facilitated checks with experts as well as a pilot study. Despite the measures undertaken, a significant social desirability response bias was observed and analysis carried out on the closed-ended questions of the Stakeholder Survey raised serious questions about the validity of the responses, presenting overall the most attractive responses. To work around falsified responses and the threat of validity (Randall & Fernandes, 1991), the closed-ended responses were excluded. As noted, participant responses to the scale-type questions were replaced with the analysis of promotions and qualitative data gleaned from stakeholders and leaders. Analysis of the results generated from the scaled instrument of the Stakeholder Survey is presented in Appendix K.

Additionally, schools' choice of certain documents to upload online suggests biased selectivity (Yin, 1994). One factor to consider is that educational and promotional documents must be seen to align with educational policy mandates and the clients' position. They do, however, reflect the priorities of the schools' authorities. As Bowen (2009) suggests, these are potential flaws rather than major disadvantages.

Another potential limitation relates to the researcher's bias and underlying assumptions, therefore, entering the research with fresh eyes and explicit attention to 'self-policing' (Johnson & Castelli, 2002) to monitor and control bias was important.

3.11: Chapter Three Conclusion

A multi-perspectival design combining CRT and a faith-based epistemology is best suited for a complex educational, racialised but neglected issue for creating understandings and knowledge generation. A case study design but more so, the flexibility of naturalistic inquiries in allowing alternative research designs and data collection in sites where suspicion of research thrives, clearly overcomes issues of access. More than that, it respects the needs of the cases whilst providing an avenue for contributing to knowledge production of an under explored issue.

CHAPTER FOUR: ANALYSIS OF PROMOTIONAL MATERIALS

4.1: Chapter Four Introduction

This chapter presents the analysis of phase one of this research. Data is drawn from "archetypal promotional documents" (Symes, 1998, p. 140), that is, the printed prospectus of Peace Academy and the websites of Medina and Bringelly to respond to research question one. This concerns the claims Islamic schools make about their purpose in their representational mechanisms. Purpose can also be constructed and communicated through professionally prepared texts. Prospectuses and websites are amongst the many alternatives schools employ to share and represent constructions of their purpose (Meadmore & Meadmore, 2004). Professional texts that are embossed with the school's iconography constitute a vision of the school, "drawing on a selected representation of its culture", thus, "the schools' purposes become promotional and a vehicle for inciting imagination" (Meadmore & Meadmore, 2004, p. 138).

Social semiotics, the study of signs in all its forms was applied to the analysis of promotional materials. In the analysis of promotions, it focussed on both images and written language, both meaning and visuality. Chapter three outlines the suitability of multimodal social semiotics and its appropriateness for the identification of shared cultural ideals and concerns between schools and their stakeholders.

A significant part of the context in which the promotional documents are examined is the marketisation of education—proceeded by neoliberalism's encouragement of competition (Buckingham, 2010)—combined with the controversy surrounding Islamic schools (Gulson & Webb, 2012; Merry, 2015). In an age where schools are employing "stratagems" for "impression management" (Symes, 1998, p. 134) to access a slice of the market share, Islamic schools are on the rise experiencing high demand. In this phase of the research, the analysis of school prospectuses and their counter "buttoned up" versions (Symes, 1998, p. 141) was paramount to understand the three case study schools' representation of their vision or espoused purpose, that is, what makes these schools distinctive, where they place the greatest emphasis, and how they make themselves appealing to the community. Thus, promotional materials typically consist of elements which may be included or omitted depending upon the degree of importance that a school accords them (Symes, 1998, p. 140).

In the analysis, the schools' "speech acts", including images, written texts and iconography (Ahmed, 2012), depict the discursive shift between that of the 'idealised' to that which is 'realised' (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006) illustrating new interpretations and responsiveness to that of the context of their viewers (Panjwani, 2004; Ramadan, 2004). They therefore provide reinforcement of Islamic education as an "evolving, diverse and contested phenomenon" (Niyozov & Memon, 2011, p. 7) with possibilities, opportunities and tensions (Waghid & Davids, 2014a). Two issues resonated strongly: (1) *promoting 'Islamic' education through iconographical representations*, and (2) *shifting discourses from representations of divine ideals to human reconstruction of a Muslim education*. In the process of transition from discourses stressing the ideals of 'Islamic' education to a discourse filtered through a human lens (Panjwani, 2004) and towards that of "Muslim education" (Douglass & Shaikh, 2004; Davids & Waghid, 2016), schools use rhetorical stratagems (Symes, 1998) to appeal to their heterogeneous readership, who have various interpretations of Islam (Yasmeen, 2008; Niyozov & Memon, 2011). As Ramadan (2004), Panjwani (2004), Niyozov and Memon (2011) expound, Islam is interpreted by Muslims. The schools in this study commonly featured iconographical practices in either prospectuses or websites, including: their names, logos with calligraphised Arabic texts and mottoes, a message from the principal, an overview of the school and its history, its location and accessibility, codes of conduct including dress codes, a description of the curriculum, and a statement on the religious convictions of the school. These provide "insights into the way in which certain precepts and values have sovereign status in the life of the school" (Synott & Symes, 1995, p. 140) and frame the analysis of the first issue.

4.2: Promoting 'Islamic' Education Through Iconographical Representations

Synott and Symes (1995) show how the "ideological iconography" of a school is "part of a complex mechanism of signifying practices that confer identity on a school over and beyond its administrative name" (p. 140). The logos of Islamic schools, for instance, visually construct a complex and conceptually rich representation of an institutional identity as the bearer of knowledge, which is unquestionably heritage and spiritually oriented, in their use of shapes, abstract symbols, Arabic inscription and calligraphy, on the one hand, to another representation which alludes to local educational ideals. The intertextual nature (van Leeuwen, 2001; Cranny-Francis, 2005) of the logos of Islamic schools presents a view of 'Islamic' education and communicates the position of a secular education, in the

presentations of layers of ideological meaning in their iconological symbolism (van Leeuwen, 2001). *'Ilm*, referring to knowledge or instruction, a fundamental concept constitutive of Islamic education (Hussain, 2010; Waghid, 2011), is of strong resonance in the landscape of the three schools' logos. This section explores how *'ilm* as an underlying signifier permeates the iconographical representations of Islamic schools.

To make their messages understandable for their context, schools choose forms of expression (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006) which they believe to be maximally transparent to their clients. There were striking similarities and differences in the iconography the three schools utilised to compete in the market space, appealing to the "diversity of frameworks of being a Muslim" across the spectrum of clients who adhere to "the primacy of divine will" (Yasmeen, 2008, p. 22). For example, the first icon, occupying an elevated status and positioned on the left side of the school's promotions, was the logo badges and names of Islamic schools. Kress and van Leeuwen (2006) note that the left section of a text serves as a point of departure, the place providing an 'anchoring' residence. They identify the top of the page, on the other hand, as the location for idealistic representations. In this location, a school draws viewers' attention to its theory or, semiotically speaking, the idealised narrative (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006). With this backdrop, schools create a distinctive identity in conjunction with the iconography, impressing it upon consumers.

Strategically positioned in the centre of the logo, the open book is a feature adornment, frequently accompanied by a crescent and in some badge logos verses of the Holy Quran. This is significant. By drawing on a select set of iconography to represent their ideals and values, the schools appeal to clientele within the same social group—locally and internationally—on the basis of the unity of faith, hence guaranteeing an "*ummatic*" (a community of believers) reach. Synott and Symes (1995) identify an open book, the commanding feature in the logos of Bringelly and Medina, as the most common icon to feature on the school badge. The inscribed *iqra'*, the Arabic imperative for "read", positioned in the centre of the book in Bringelly's logo and supported by reiterated written statements, corresponds with suggestions by Synott and Symes (1995) that the book's presence serves to underline the academic ethos of a secular education, to stress the centrality of literacy.

Alternatively, a text can be both religious and secular according to the "interpretant" and the "context" in which it is received (Synott & Symes, 1995). In the promotional materials reviewed, visual intertextuality is mobilised to appeal to values which are commonly upheld in both secular and Islamic education, upholding the importance accorded

to literacy and excellence. To elaborate, schools utilised the literacy of their projected audience (Cranny-Francis, 2005), thereby promoting secular knowledge and Islamic values. Kress and van Leeuwen (2006) explain that a "motivated sign", such as that of an open book, produces a "kind of realism" in which the "values, beliefs and interests" of a group find expression (p. 159). For a culturally trained eye, one that is attuned to the surroundings, dependent symbols constituting spirituality, as exemplified by the open book together with the inscribed Arabic centred in Bringelly's open book, would thus correspond with the Holy Quran. Making all other elements 'subservient' (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006, p. 194) to the central commanding presence of the book, the text concertedly acknowledged by Muslims as the *sine qua non* of knowledge (Al-Attas, 1980), suggests that *'ilm*, knowledge of the Quran, is the anchor, the departure point within the 'knowledge' offerings of the schools. At Bringelly, the bold outstretched lines on the two sides of the book, similar to that of Medina's widely opened book, are illustrative of the ongoing and bountiful journey of pursuing knowledge, depicting these schools as places of knowledge seeking and imparting (Shah, 2007).

Flanked by the book are select symbolic images or texts whose existence, and at times lack thereof, provide layers of additional meanings. Reinforcing the visual representation of the book in Bringelly's logo, the word *iqra'* is engulfed between the open book and a crescent in a miniature minaret. Like the book, the command *Iqra'!* can be conceived by viewers differently. Situated within the context of Islamic schools, it takes on a spiritual meaning given its significance as the very first Quranic revelation to Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) on the Mount of Hira by the archangel Gabriel. The Quranic verse "*Iqra!*" (96:1), with its repetition in following sections of the Quranic chapter, to an individual who has never previously read, presses home to followers of the faith the fundamental importance of seeking knowledge in Islam. The word captures an instance of overwhelming trepidation and responsibility to deliver a mighty message which, upon its delivery, evokes emotions and sentimental values. Often kept alive and poignantly recounted by tellers including scholars, teachers and parents, and evocatively received by listeners as a highly emotive moment in stories, poems and *anasheeds* (Islamic songs), the text promotes religious knowledge and literacy. It equally encourages followers to seek other forms of knowledge as a fundamental duty, items for consumption at Bringelly.

Peace Academy, on the other hand, often framed the school and its offerings within a distinctly religious discourse. This school mobilised iconographical symbolism, constructing

an identity characterised by an 'Islamic' discourse of education in its use of authentic scriptural Arabic texts, corresponding visuality, and miniature images of minarets. The school employed multiple modalities in its representation of its 'Islamic' identity: written texts, visuality of texts and iconographical symbols to recruit local and international students. Like Bringelly, Peace Academy's iconography drew on a special set of representational symbols, combining Arabic written texts with visuals to depict the school's underlying values, thereby giving itself a wider competitive edge in the local and international community. Here, the selling item is an 'Islamic' education. For instance, a miniature mosque, the name of *Allah* (SWT) and one of His attributes as well as the opening verse of the Holy Quran centrally positioned above the motto replaced the open book adopted by the other cases. Like Bringelly and Medina's adoption of the open book to construct an identity constituted by 'knowledge', the name "*Allah*" (SWT) inscribed in Arabic in large captions accompanied by "*Bismillah arrahman arraheem*" (In the Name of *Allah*, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful), the opening verse of the Holy Quran above it, as well as acknowledgement of one of God's attributes, "*jalla jalaluhu*", meaning "may his glory be glorified", in between the two texts, cast no doubts as to the signification of the message. Where Bringelly deployed *iqra'* enclosed within the book to ground its position as a provider of *'ilm*, the use of the name *Allah* (SWT), with its recognisability as the source of all knowledge or the "All Knowing" (Quran, 49:13), can be attributed with the school as being the best provider of knowledge.

Similarly, inscription of the opening verse in its original Arabic form provided layered meanings recognisable by a select clientele. Occupying a special status and importance in Islam, the opening verse of the holy Quran is commonly associated with and used for new beginnings. Adherents of the faith are encouraged to begin all new projects, works, goals or missions with this verse, for it is commonly understood that any important work beginning without it, is imperfect. By employing the opening phrase, Peace Academy invites parents to a new beginning. Thus, a new beginning at the school is accorded a divine blessing, a pathway to a life of perfectibility.

As well as conjuring a life of striving for perfection, by employing calligraphy the texts visually signify their 'authority' (Cranny-Francis, 2005). In both the opening text and God's attribute, typographic ligature is used as a technique, where the designer has joined the characters by writing one above another for the former and one inside another for the latter. The typeface used for *Allah* (SWT) is precisely attuned to the literacy of the audience (Cranny-Francis, 2005). Here, the producer uses four straight lines to form the word, two of

which replace the usual curved 'l' in the Arabic word, presiding majestically like miniature minarets on top of the middle lines. The last letter of the word is an exaggerated semi-circle curved around the shortest line. Cranny-Francis (2005) identifies forms of handwritten religious texts in association with "authority". Featuring beautiful visual elements such as typographic letters that are more than just illustrations of the verbal text, and religious symbolism, the "preciousness" and "beauty" of the manuscript is immediately associated with those in "position of power and authority" (Cranny-Francis, 2005, p. 9). Here, an association is formed between the viewer and the designer, chronicling the history and life of "the illuminator and his community" (Cranny-Francis, 2005, p. 9). In this sense, the text enacts the concept of the divine word. Beyond acting as a symbolic means of differentiation from a school's competitors, Arabic texts and ligatures of Quranic verses ensured a wide reach to those of various religious commitments. Although all cases employ authentic scriptural sources—the *ahadeeth* and Quran—using the calligraphised opening of the holy Quran implies this school's commitment to the original revelation as its primary source, highlighting its Islamic tradition with emphasis on religiosity as a salient feature.

Kress and van Leeuwen (2006) note that "images define to some extent who the viewer is, and in that way exclude other viewers" (p. 117). By strategically employing symbolism which replicates the divine order, Peace Academy draws on the literacies of clients, appealing to practicing and devout followers of the faith. Adopting authentic sources and symbolism as representational techniques acts as a mechanism of differentiation (Meadmore & Meadmore, 2004) between this school and its rivals. Using a strategic selection of verses from scriptural sources in combination with their Arabic inscription, the schools invite consumers to experience education within an 'Islamic' spirit, one which Douglass and Shaikh (2004) explain aspires to achieve the ideals of Islamic teachings. By appealing to the client's emotional and spiritual consciousness, schools have an elevated competitive edge in the educational "quasi-markets" (Apple, 2005, p. 273).

While there were striking similarities in the portrayal of the three schools' inherent values through symbolic imagery, these were gloved with diversity (Merry, 2007; Hussain, 2010) as culturally, racially and spiritually diverse subjects, providing services for consumption for a heterogeneous social group in a Western context. Adoption of the crescent moon featured prominently in Medina and Bringelly's logos, directly above the open book, as signifiers of cultural values. Such practices reflect the diverse interpretations of followers of the faith. In this case, it illustrates the contention of whether symbols such as the crescent

moon are in fact an authentic representation of Islam. In essence, Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) and Muslim leaders used simple black, white or green flags as identifiers with no writings or symbolism on them. The icon of the crescent moon became affiliated with the Muslim world after the Ottoman Empire's conquering of Constantinople, hence Istanbul's adoption of the crescent as a symbol on its flag. Although adopted by a number of Muslim countries, many followers continue to reject the moon and star as a symbol of Islam. Diverging from Peace Academy's representation of an educational identity framed by 'Islamic' ideals, the crescent moon presiding above Medina's open book, accompanied by the five stars below it, points to a specific religious-cultural heritage, also depicting the school's commitment to its cultural heritage. As such, Medina speaks to a select clientele from a specific cultural group whilst opening its doors to others.

Like the logo, the school name acts as "a system of connotation" for encapsulating purpose/s and as an ideological iconography enhancing certain precepts and values with which schools wish to be aligned (Synott & Symes, 1995, pp. 141–42). The school name, prominently located on the right side of the logo, is the first text viewers see on the home pages and prospectuses, directing viewers' gaze to the school being sought. Just as schools declared a distinctively religious dimension or used subtle cultural nuances across shared symbolic resources, school names were salient icons, embracing both the national context the schools existed in and their Islamic heritage. Where Bringelly used Arabic and English written texts to reveal its state's name, positioned above and below the logo, Peace Academy's name combining "Australia" with "Islamic" retained its English print. The use of Arabic texts or the word "Islamic" as identifiers, alongside Bringelly's handwritten and Peace Academy's artistically calligraphised Quranic verses, provide authoritative reinforcement of the schools' spiritual advantage. At most, these iconographical ensembles essentially position schools within their religious and national tradition, both Islamic and Australian, revealing little of their cultural and ethnic affiliations.

Alternatively, Medina's adoption of the crescent, the open book and the school name is noteworthy, effacing all other imaginings in constructing its institutional identity. Notable is Medina's dismissal of the Arabic or "Islamic" as identifiers, adopting instead "knowledge" as its name, transliterated in English. In essence, the overall dismissal and absence of Arabic suggests that the visuality of Arabic is not a marketing strategy Medina values. These signifying practices constitute mechanisms of inclusion and exclusion, arguably embracing certain "insiders" and excluding others (Kress, 2012). Affiliations include those from a

shared cultural, ethnic, social and economic group within their spaces. Essentially the promotional materials depict these schools' affiliation to their transcultural worlds, marketing their Australianness, but always reminding clients of their religious affiliation, depicted by scriptural representations as a unique quality of the schools.

In general, the Australian context is a feature not commonly identified in names of faith-based schools or in government schools, who often either reference suburb names, or in the case of denominational schools, their religious affiliations (Synott & Symes, 1995). Two assumptions underlie this. The first ties back to the cultural politics within which Islamic schools are situated. In a context where Islam is represented as a threat to national interests (Hanson, 2016), the schools studied are inherently giving assurances of allegiance to their national states through iconographical naming, wanting to be perceived to be aligned with national values and interests, and as integral to the educational landscape. The second assumption is seemingly promotional and competes with the wider market to recruit international students. The schools thus buttress their ideologies and affiliations through persuasive rhetorics within a context which situates them in a competitive, consumer-driven market and the wider cultural politics. They are Islamic schools, proud of their heritage, just as they are of their Australian identity which ties them to other schools nationwide.

The context of the logo also constitutes a field for the written text of the motto. As noted by Synott and Symes (1995), it is an important device for framing schools, for individualising them and creating some overarching principles and philosophies, drawing attention to "its significance in the symbolic universe of the school" (p. 145). Like the open book, the motto, which referred to one word—"knowledge—at Bringelly and Medina, was open to the interpretive lens and can indicate secular or religious ambitions, depending on the context. For example, the mottoes usually embellished inside or beneath the logos are always given focal attention, reinforcing the construction of the 'Islamic' ethos in the imagery. Embodied within the field of the logo and enshrined by other symbolic resources, "*ilm*" constitutes the pursuit of a divine calling, emphasising the spiritual and material advantages to knowledge inquiry in these schools. Indeed, whether Peace Academy adopts "academic success and Islamic values" or terms such as 'hard work', 'progress', 'advance' and 'knowledge' for its motto, these are integral to the vocabulary of mottoes across Australian schools (Synott & Symes, 1995). For insiders, *'ilm* (knowledge) and its associative terms are the derivatives of famous *ahadeeth* (narrations) of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), who made it incumbent upon all Muslims, females and males, to engage in a constant and

continuous journey of knowledge seeking, encouraging followers to seek knowledge in lands as far away as China.

Juxtaposed with the discrete iconographical units, the curved shape of the logos, embodying the motto, adds to the landscape of a spiritual order. Unlike linear shapes which depict human agency, Kress and van Leeuwen (2006) state that one associates curved shapes with an organic and natural order, further adding that "the world of organic nature is not of our making, and will always retain an element of mystery" (p. 55). Where the iconography in the schools' logos constructs idealised narratives of 'knowledge' and learning, situating the schools within a discourse of 'Islamic' education, the logos' circularity alongside the symbolic icons adds legitimacy to their depiction of a divine order, giving the impression of these establishments as being concerned with a religious education. By according *'ilm* an elevated status in the logos (Synott & Symes, 1995) and consistently with other icons, schools are emphasising through words, symbols and shapes their enshrined values and commitment to tradition in a rapidly changing world, to leverage market appeal. By touching hearts and minds, the images, texts, typographical ligature, and Arabic inscriptions integrate to authoritatively demand affiliation with the schools in seeking *'ilm* as a religious obligation, persuasively calling on viewers' moral consciousness. In sum, they depict signing up with the schools to be fundamental to parents' faith commitment.

4.3: Shifting Discourses: From Representations of Divine Ideals to Human Reconstruction of Muslim Education

Contrasting with the representations of the sacred world constituted by the iconography of the schools, this section explores the role of human agency in interpreting and promoting the ideals represented in the iconography, for "the divine will has always been received through human receptacles" (Panjwani, 2004, p. 26). Kress and van Leeuwen (2006) assert that linear shapes, such as squares, hexagons, and triangles depict human intervention as "elements of the mechanical world of human construction" or constructions of reality, whereas circles depict a "divine order" (p. 54). The discursive shift from theory to practice in implementing Islamic education brings to the fore the "historical, cultural and social forces", a focus on "Muslims", "context" (Panjwani, 2004, p. 26) and circumstance. Such an interpretive activity requires the intervention of social actors and their intellectual dispositions in a continuous forming and reforming of the ideals, in the "interaction between the revelatory text and the concrete realities of Muslims" (Panjwani, 2004, p. 26). The

reconstructions of the ideals thereby manifest in the schools' representational practices, their 'institutional speech acts' (Ahmed, 2012). Across the homepages of Medina and Bringelly and on the front cover of Peace Academy's prospectus, the linearity of the images mounted by rectangular, square and hexagonal frames juxtaposed with that of the curved logos above them points to intersecting discourses. They signify a discourse of divine ideals and a discourse of human interpretations of these ideals. The linearity of the photographs on the promotional documents located below the logo depict human interpretations of the ideals of Islam, thus manifesting two issues of strong salience. The first, *securing secular and academic knowledge*, and the second, *constructing an unrivalled education*, depict "a history of human beings who continuously, but imperfectly, have sought to grapple with their human condition in light of their interpretation of Islam's ideals" (Panjwani, 2004, p. 25).

Claims made by the schools and those who have authority to act on behalf of the organisations are typically located on the homepage or early pages of the prospectus as matters of primacy, assuming "an appearance of valuing" (Ahmed, 2012, p. 59). Institutional commitment and official articulations by leaders are assigned an elevated symbolic value than less authoritative matters, which are assigned to later pages (Symes, 1998, p. 144) or accessed through hyperlinks. Beneath the idealised narrative depicted in the schools' logos and names, Bringelly and Medina's websites had hyperlinks to embedded pages promoting their institutional character to viewers. Firstly, in the top centre of the schools' homepages, a location representing 'ideals' (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006), flashing photographic images of student activity, symbolism and facilities are impressed upon the viewer, with each school showcasing its unique selling advantages. The front cover of Peace Academy's prospectus, as with the homepages, featured a montage of images constructing idealised representations of institutional life. Like the images, mission statements and the message of the principal are part of "an aesthetic and moral order" (Ahmed, 2012, p. 59). Accordingly, the official description, one that is befitting of the status of the schools' principals, is usually located in the early sections of promotional materials (Symes, 1998). Combined with the school's iconography, the texts constitute a vision of the school "drawing on a selected representation of its culture" (Meadmore & Meadmore, 2004, p. 138). Specifically, the texts depict a modern, excellence-oriented education, energised by heritage, which together imply that the schools are preparing students for constructive engagement for a complex present and an uncertain future.

4.3.1 Securing secular and academic knowledge: assets for a productive life.

As with the hierarchically ordered contents of the promotional materials, the 'spatialisation politics' applied to the representations of the various programs made available at the schools (Symes, 1998, p. 144) emphasised the more academic areas of science and technology, always preceding the more recreational and religious-oriented disciplines of Health and Physical Education (HPE) and Qu'ranic studies. In the idealised sections of the promotional materials, boys and girls of various age groups from Peace Academy and Medina are concertedly depicted to be engaged in a plethora of learning, through actively experimenting, writing, teaching, collaborating in groups, working independently, huddled around science equipment or computers, holding books or contemplating.

For example, a prominent hexagon, filled with mini overlapping blank hexagons, overlapped Peace Academy's school name and logo, providing continuity between the logo and the montage of photos below. Kress and van Leeuwen (2006) explain that the choice for the hexagonal framing of the images is "charged with meaning" p. (53). To explain, on the middle right section of the front cover of Peace Academy's prospectus, attention is drawn to the row of linear assembled trophies, from those highly visible at the front to the blurred ensemble all the way at the end. The viewer's attention is drawn to the remainder of the hexagonally framed images to the left of the page, depicting student activity within the academic, physical and religious dimensions. As meaning-making units, the hexagonal framing of the images can be seen by the viewer as discrete units marketing various academic, extra-curricular and spiritual programs, giving the impression of student-centredness, of confident and responsible students engaged in a hype of ordered activity. Positioned to the right, the image of the trophies depicts the idealised 'new' (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006) and the value placed on achievement, thus constituting excellence across all disciplinary dimensions. When "stacked, aligned with each other in geometrical patterns" the hexagonally framed images augment compatibly to "form the module" (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006, p. 54), projecting the impression of an all-round excellence-oriented education, implying an experience only this institution can offer. In addition, the blank hexagons straddling the logo and photographs create a space for viewer imagination to roam, imagining other possibilities—big and small—on offer, only at Peace Academy.

Across the images analysed, strong connection with viewers were represented in close up, medium-size front shots where viewer attention focuses on girls' and boys' gazes, or is drawn to the academic learning activity being performed by them, as well as symbolic

representations of achievement. Kress and van Leeuwen (2006) note that "interpersonal" compositions can either create strong engagement and therefore close affinity with the viewer, or detachment. In these compositions, a visual categorisation has two related functions. In the first place it creates a visual form of direct address. The producer uses the image to do something to the viewer; the participant's gaze and the gesture, if present, "demands that the viewer enter into some kind of imaginary relation with him or her" (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006, p. 117). It acknowledges the viewers explicitly, addressing them with a visual "you". In the second place it constitutes an "image act". Two of the schools' images elicit notions of students as intellectually stimulated across disciplines, such as literacy, science, technology and languages, and as learners and facilitators of learning. For example, in both Peace Academy and Medina, two middle-year high school boys are captured in two separate photographs standing next to a whiteboard in single, medium-shot images, their gaze locked with that of the viewer. In both, viewer attention is drawn from the boys' gaze to whiteboards overflowing with either science or Arabic texts. From Medina, one of the boys guides the viewer, pointing with a long ruler, from left to right, to a chemistry formula. The second boy, from Peace Academy, is captured holding a whiteboard marker pointed to a whiteboard that is overcrowded, from right to left, with handwritten Arabic texts, suggesting proficiency in this language. Engagement in learning, which is represented by the schools as information that is already familiar, as a 'given' the images, serves as departure points for the 'new', for information not yet known to the reader (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006, p. 58). Here, the viewer is clearly meant to be most centrally involved with the boys to the right of the image, semiotically positioned and integrated as the 'new', signifying them as facilitators and leaders of learning, hence deserving of the client's attention. The half-turned bodies, interlocking gazes and smiles establish strong viewer affinity, inviting viewers into a world of learning and leading, thus reinforcing parents' desire to have their sons and daughters educated in these spaces for a prosperous future, as Bringelly asserts. Here, parents are assured that their children are being prepared with vital cutting-edge skills to prepare them to become what Medina coins as "multidimensional citizens": learning, leading and facilitating. The background of the boys, being of Asian ancestry combined with Harry-Potter-like glasses, gives the boys the appearance of being distinctly intelligent. The school logo and name is highly visible on the blazer/shirt of the students, asserting how academia functions as being integral to the school ethos, associating the school with the intellectual realm.

Unlike boys, who were depicted in singular shots, girls were more likely to be captured in groups, positioned as essentially working together, active doers, competent and engaged. In the three coeducational schools' images, strong emphasis is placed on senior girls, at home, as active participants in learning and engaged in intellectual, physical and social endeavours: stressing the sciences at Peace Academy, competitive sport at Bringelly and interactive, cooperative learning at Medina. For example, an idealised image presiding on top of all others on the front cover of Peace Academy's prospectus shows a group of girls from different cultural backgrounds in deep concentration, collaborating on a science experiment. Two of the girls are attentively huddled around instruments—a retort stand, clamp, conical flask and funnel—while the third is in close proximity, assisting and doing preparation work. Elsewhere in the prospectus, located on the seventh page, more emphasis is given to a larger image of the same photograph, coinciding with Symes (1998) assertions that prospectuses increasingly showcase girls in forms of non-traditional areas of learning. Depicting them wearing white laboratory coats, protective eye coverings and white *hijab*s tucked into their jackets normalises the potential of professional success for girls and the school's propensity to produce female scientists, pharmacists or researchers.

Alongside images which quantitatively depict the academic trajectories of the school, on the homepage of Bringelly's website were also those that constituted boys and girls as competitive subjects within the physical disciplines. One prominent photograph featured two boys in the process of backstroke in a swimming pool, described by the school as the "2015 Secondary Swimming Carnival". In subsequent pages, girls are depicted in naturalistic shots fiercely competing in sport. Alongside naturalistic photos in the subsequent pages of Bringelly's website, portraying girls as competitive sportswomen, visuals create an overall impression that the camera has caught three girls in their natural course of action. The idealised images, depicting students' active engagement in literacy, science, Arabic and computers, construct equity and a narrative of excellence in all spheres. They serve to signify students as natural achievers in the intellectual, physical and social domains, and also construct an institutional identity strongly emphasising and committing to equity as an underlying premise. By positioning girls within non-traditional roles, schools disassociate with cultural myths that marginalise girls whilst privileging boys, ones which have no bearing within Quranic injunctions and an 'Islamic' educational paradigm. More than that, they suggest that it is precisely these exclusive qualities of the schools that empower females to achieve success whilst preserving freedom of religious expression. Consumers are therefore

guided into examples of students being bound up in the schools' knowledge-seeking ventures, of an education for the mind, body and soul (Al-Attas, 1980).

Meadmore and Meadmore (2004) assert that religious values are subsumed by contemporary educational pursuits or aligned in partnership with them, blending tradition with innovative, contemporaneous educational pursuits, subsequently achieving an "inclusive appeal from this association" (p. 384). Texts depicting the intellectual trajectories of the schools draw on contradictory cultural and dominant values and meanings. Consolidating visuals that speak to an all-rounded education are texts which denote the achievement orientation of the schools. Messages which valorise achievement are explicitly stated repeatedly across the schools' speech acts, such as the school's mission and principal's message. Medina's vision of "high academic standards" in their Vision Statement, for example, corresponds with Bringelly's encouragement of pursuing "excellence" and rewarding "achievement" in the school's Philosophy. Elsewhere, beneath the image depicting the intellectually active girls in the prospectus is the priority of "Academic Excellence", singled out in a caption then capitalised in statements. This goal, restated as one of the assets on offer by Peace Academy, is delineated by the principal in page four of the prospectus, as follows:

[Goal] 2. There is a HIGH LEVEL OF ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT in all areas, which is apparent through the increasing number of awards received from state and national competitions and the individual accomplishments of our students.

By virtue of its capitalisation, the above visuality of achievement juxtaposes with the accomplishments described in the remainder of the written text, attracting the reader to the school's academic milieu.

Elsewhere, an idealised image on Bringelly's homepage contains a board displaying high performing school rankings, captioned: "Elite Schools Tops in OP Data". A click on the hyperlink takes the reader to the quote below:

Bringelly Islamic College stands 11, with 89.8 per cent of its students consistently achieving OP 1–15 on average between 2007 and 2011. It is noteworthy to mention that during the years 2006–2008, 100 per cent of its students achieved OP 1–15. (School website)

In the extract, the school name is displayed alongside the top achieving schools in the state, hence normalising academic success as a distinctive asset of the school. These texts,

reiterated across each of the schools' documents, valorise neoliberal and neoconservative ideologies of the relentless pursuit of excellence (Apple, 2006; Davies & Bansel, 2007), drawing close associations with rankings, quantification and metrics, thereby inviting parents to imagine the real academic profiles created in the school. The pursuit of excellence within narrowed constructs of performativity and rankings, as denoted by the written texts and visuals, including leagues tables, trophies and competitions, serves to position the reader to accept, as suggested by Cranny-Francis (2005), particular values, attitudes and ideas to enable a re-negotiation of viewer subjectivities. That meritorious success heightens future trajectories, providing social advantage, is not lost on this minority group, who are keen to provide the best education for their children, and who, as Sheikh Wessam Charkawi says (cited in Social Cohesion, Offshore Detention, 2015), are born into 'the age of terror', isolated, marginalised, told they do not belong and feel that they do not belong. Schools are therefore appealing to parents' subjectivities, to what is valued, important, and even urgent; they are also developing the literacy of their clients (Cranny-Francis, 2005) to notions of 'excellence' that are valued in secular contexts.

Furthermore, buildings are promoted as another value-added adjunct to success. It has been noted that school buildings can signify assumptions about "power, status and what it means to be educated" (Maguire, Hoskins, Ball, & Braun, 2011, p. 599). Across their texts schools constantly emphasise growth, prosperity and affluence as signifiers of success and achievement of student potential. For example, schools promoted the acquisition and amplification of their sites: extension of new campuses, construction of grand buildings and publicising of existing facilities. Medina, like Peace Academy, provides a historical sketch of the school, backdating to its first day of establishment, always making a point of highlighting the contemporary, state-of-the-art buildings and modern facilities as necessary items for preparing students with the necessary disciplines and skills for a modern world. When compared to the old establishment, Medina's newly thriving eight "wings", "10 other buildings", and newly acquired campus depict a promising educational future.

All the new buildings are far superior to the original buildings with much higher standards of noise and thermal insulation and energy efficiency.

These new facilities complement our existing science and ICT laboratories while adding dedicated language development classrooms. (School website)

Peace Academy's prospectus makes explicit associations between the expansion of buildings and students' encounters of success in these buildings, showcasing a crescendo of possibilities thereby leaving the reader to imagine an educational symphony of bigger and better possibilities, as depicted in the quotes below:

The College acquired the buildings and grounds of the former Banksia High School Campus in 2000, and since then has modernised and expanded this campus into a dynamic learning environment.

Primary students will flourish in our lovely new primary building.

Students of all ages benefit from our state of the art media room, interactive whiteboards and our nine ICT labs.

These texts framing the schools' architecture as innovative and flourishing juxtapose with texts representing student learning across disciplines and achievement to create an overall impression of schools in a race for a competitive edge, to leverage advantage in the contemporary neoliberal market. By boasting of their growth and achievements, these schools are keeping up with the times to produce accomplished, adaptable and innovative worldly individuals equipped with the necessary skills and *savoire-faire* to stay abreast of 21st-century demands. By reinforcing the schools' representations of their learning endeavours, the modern and lush buildings in are therefore guaranteed to prepare students to actively engage with a modern society. In spite of these claims, the teaching and learning of skills alone, however scientific, do not constitute knowledge (Al-Attas, 1980). Referring to Islamic education, Cook (1999) propounds: "if the goal of education is the balanced growth of the human character, the heart (*qalb*), the seat of the spirit and affection, conscience, feelings, intuition should receive equal attention to the intellect (*'aql*), reason (*mantiq*) and man's rational dimensions" (p. 346).

4.3.2: Constructing an unrivalled education: knowledge and faith-consciousness for uncertain times.

Excellence in academic pursuits divorced from faith-consciousness, a worldview cognizant of the Creator's existence in all aspects of life, was conveyed in the schools' articulated statements to be at odds with what they conceived to be their role as schools. Rather, the promotional documents place great emphasis on the advantages to be gained from the academic and spiritual dimensions constituted as a complementarity, as conduits for addressing the identity of their students and the development of "the whole" learner (Daun &

Arjmand, 2015, p. 147). Having explored the representational practices and underlying meanings of the schools' academic trajectories, this section proceeds to explore the second item in constructing an unrivalled education in the schools' advertising campaigns and the two issues emerging from them: *teaching Australian Muslims for uncertain times*, and *'enabling' the conditions*.

Bringelly's philosophy uses the dual advantages to be gained from attending the school as fundamental selling points, asserting: "a high quality of secular and religious education in an Islamic environment, thus enabling our students to succeed in a constantly changing world". Similarly, as the school's principal eloquently summarises in the pages of Peace Academy's prospectus, the impetus for success and happiness is premised on "two areas of achievement that stand out at PA", its "unique qualities" which involve "focussing on the academic and spiritual dimensions to development" (p. 4). To this he adds:

> Success for us is not defined purely by high academic achievement or material gain solely. While these features are a contributing factor, we believe that religious development, human relations, high morals/values and a genuine sense of belonging and concern for each other contributes to the success of an individual.

> These factors in turn create a sense of contentment and happiness – something that cannot be achieved with material or worldly gains alone.

The extract above corresponds with Daun (2009), Daun and Arjmand (2015) and others, who noted that one chief feature shared by many Muslims is the desire to have their children trained in Islamic morals, values and norms. Peace Academy does not distance itself from the market or the excellence discourse of individualistic and consumption concerns. Rather, it conjoins excellence with the Islamic development of students, where the latter is explicitly attributed with the traits of fostering belonging and community. In choosing and stressing a select group of words to emphasise its commitments, which it believes to be maximally transparent to the experiences of its clients, Peace Academy appeals to the social conditions of its constituency.

Wyn (2009) identifies identity as one of the two elements deserving greater attention in educational approaches that promote social inclusion in Australia. It is only by assisting students achieve a comprehensive understanding of their "*deen*", "their own Islamic way of life", contends Hussain (2004), that Muslim schools can help generations of young people comprehend and contextualise Islam in their Western environments; this view is highly

resonant in the texts of the schools. Acquaintance with their heritage, knowing Islam and developing an identity commensurate with its values, just like being academically successful, is abundantly accounted for across the texts. Medina, for example, commits to upholding "Islamic values" by stressing religious teachings as a "life skill" in its Philosophy:

Quran and Islamic studies are the subjects that we most value as a life skill for our students. (Mission Statement)

Our Islamic Studies classes guide students through a comprehensive and challenging exploration of our Islamic faith to develop a strong sense of their Muslim identity. (Principal's Message)

The same message is reiterated by Peace Academy's principal thus:

It is a firm belief of the college that students truly reach their full potential only through addressing their faith and its values.

For parents scanning the educational market space, images complimented written texts, constructing scenes relating to fundamental religious practices, and thus providing a snapshot of the teachings of Islam. For example, a simulation depicting one of the five pillars of Islam is one of the eight images on the homepage of Bringelly foregrounding religious practice. The animated photograph signifies a fundamental ritual of the *Hajj* pilgrimage conducted by millions of Muslims around the world annually in Mecca. Viewers' attention is drawn to a replica of the *Kaabah* (the black stone) as the centre stage of the image, to which other elements in the composition are made marginal. In the photograph, students', parents' and teachers' enactment of the *taawaf*[4] are represented within a "subservient" role to the spiritual "nucleus" (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006, p. 196) which holds spiritual signification to the participants. The subordination of the human element through the collective 'circular' motions performed by members of the culturally diverse community as they circumambulate around the sacred stone implies a sense of unity, of collective submission to the one God and a spiritual journey of continuity. Accompanying this image in Bringelly's homepage is a quote which explores the teaching and learning leading up to this ritual:

This Thursday… hundreds of students donned the *Ihraam* and participated in the *Hajj* Enactment program organized by the Islamic and Arabic team and supported by the

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[4] *Tawaaf* is one of the prescribed rituals of *Hajj* where Muslims circumambulate the *Kaaba* (the most sacred site in Islam) seven times, in a counter-clockwise direction.

Parents committee … Teachers and Parents were in tears when we were taken for a tour to Medina *Munawwarah* and seen the art impression of the holy Mosque in the time of the Prophet *Sallalahu Alayhi Wasallam*. Our students took us on an emotional journey with their rendition of the *nasheed Ya Tayba Ya Tayba* in praise of this peaceful city of our dear Prophet.

The visual and written texts of the *Hajj* simulation synergise (Cranny-Francis, 2005) to evoke reminiscent stories, tales and hymns. The *nasheed* (hymn) *Ya Tayba Ya Tayba*, often ingrained in the hearts and minds of youngsters, simultaneously connects its audience with accounts often recapitulated by elders, *imam*s and teachers prior to the second of the two major holy periods in the Muslim calendar, the *Eid-ul-adha* festivities.

Moreover, beyond occupying a central position in the logo, the Holy Quran was an image often inserted as a standalone visual in Medina's homepage and integrated into pictorial representations of teaching and learning experiences in Peace Academy's Prospectus. For example, another image picturing a hand holding a thick vintage-looking book is integrated side by side with other school priorities in Medina's homepage. Thus, the religious dimension is represented as an integrated part of the priorities of the schools. Cranny-Francis (2005) asserts that in viewing online or in traditional texts, a targeted audience encounters an assortment of values and attitudes in the process of reading and viewing documents that they negotiate by reference to their own cultural history and values. These representations of worship experiences—rituals of the *tawaaf*, learning the Quran, allusions to *seerah* (prophets' stories) and *anasheeds* (Islamic songs)—connect with the viewer's heritage, to their fundamental beliefs and values (Cranny-Francis, 2005), by virtue of "saying the right things" (Ahmed, 2012, p. 59). These intertextualities invite participants to partake in the unique evocative religious experiences of the school.

In using the literacy, the idealistic vocabulary and idealistic images, oriented towards that of a religious discourse, the schools construct a distinctive ethos. Hence the schools reinforce their commitments in their ideological narratives, capitalising on their position as providers of an ideal Islamic education in a competitive educational market.

4.3.2.1: Teaching Australian Muslims for uncertain times.

As stated, contestations over Islamic schools, which coincide with increased Islamophobia, form the conditions in which the schools' texts are represented. In the case of "institutional speech acts", Ahmed (2012) posits that schools as educational institutions are

not only the "subject" and "object", "but also the situation in which the speech act takes place" (p. 56), their "circumstantial reality" (Said, 1983, p. 4). Human agency in translating "Islamic" education is epitomised in the three schools' advertising materials by engaging with the socio-cultural conditions of their localities, in which their clients are part and parcel. The human voice of institutional actors emerges in the schools' promotional materials communicating issues pertaining to the concrete realities of Muslims (Panjwani, 2004). Teaching 'about being Muslim', an underlying principle of the *Tarbiyah* Project (Tauhidi, 2001), and preparing students for its lived realities, purpose, interactions and contributions, was represented as the necessary bonus to the dual educational package—an area with high stakes in a context where the former is suspect and under enduring speculation and surveillance (Breen-Smyth, 2014; Abdel-Fatah, 2015).

For Al-Attas (1980) the purpose of seeking knowledge, *'ilm*, is to ensure that knowledge "is being put to good use in society" (p. 15). Schools asserted an education underpinned by ethical behaviours, values and attitudes commensurate with a Muslim identity, concertedly tying these articulations to students' responsibilities as a human subject in the social order. Across the three schools' texts, faith-consciousness was buttressed with key words and concepts synonymous with morality and exemplary conduct. The schools' promotions closely aligned "Islamic education" and "Islamic consciousness" at Medina, "religious education" at Bringelly and "Islamic values" and "Allah-consciousness" at Peace Academy, with the development of a moral character for civic responsibility.

Peace Academy and Bringelly made claims to upholding "morals", "behaviours" or "attitudes", with added "Islamic values" at Peace and "Islamic manners" at Medina, consistently linked with developing confident proactive individuals, to positively and effectively facilitate constructive social action.

> Peace Academy endeavours to ensure a future generation of students who will not only graduate with high academic achievements, but also with a strong identification towards the well-being of society underpinned by values such as the power of knowledge, respect, responsibility, forgiveness, truthfulness, cooperation etc. (Prospectus)

Centring the gaze on Muslim children, Osler and Hussain (1995), Hussain (2004), Hewer (2001), and Zine (2007) stress that by producing students who have a good self-concept, fully-affirmed and comfortable in their religious and cultural identities, schools are

preparing integrated individuals who can take their place in wider society. For racialised subjects in non- Muslim societies, confidence for a Muslim emerges as a salient concern and continues to hold contemporary resonance (Osler & Hussain, 1995; Muslim Students Association (MSA), 2015). To engender belonging and produce an affirmed identity, emotional competencies (Boyatzis, Goleman, & Rhee, 2000), including confidence, managing behaviour and leadership, coalesced with Islamic teachings in the schools' texts. Building confidence and pride in students as they formed a religious and cultural identity with the embodied values and virtuousness was depicted to be as equally important as the "spiritual" and "academic" focus. At Medina, pride in their religious and cultural identities is taught and promoted as a speciality: "children are taught to be proud of their Islamic identity and Australian identity…" (School Mission).

Whether Islamic values or religious education is subscribed, the persuasive rhetorics applied to these in manifesting belonging are loaded with meaning when applied to the context of documents. For Peace Academy, 'values' are explicitly transmuted into the language of belonging and when applied to the context of the schools, bring to the fore current conversations about the experiences of exclusion of young Muslims in schools and other public spaces (Mansouri & Trembath, 2005; Imtoual, 2006; Burridge, 2009; Social Cohesion, Offshore Detention, 2015; Shah, 2017), as well as misperceptions of their behaviour in classrooms as deviant (Santoro, 2009) and criminalised, thereby appealing to Muslim parents' growing concerns (Shah, 2017). It was not uncommon for schools to present a case where the fruition of religious knowledge is actualised in students' acquisition of good conduct and behavioural skills, in order to prosper socially. Just as important for belonging and for achieving a well-rounded, affirmed identity are presentations of student survival in more personal ways. For Peace Academy the issue of behaviour and infusion of religious teachings, couched in the phrase "Islamic values", is inextricably bound with fostering a sense of belonging:

> [Goal] Our students' demonstration of EXCELLENT BEHAVIOUR and ATTITUDE in addition to outstanding leadership qualities.
> Their sense of belonging is evident through the successful establishment of Islamic values in all facets of College life. (Principal)

> Our objective is to integrate Islamic values with Australian curriculum, so our next generation will be lifelong learners and equipped leaders. (Mission Statement)

Always preceded by "academic excellence", "Islamic values" makes an appearance in later pages of Peace's prospectus:

> Values integration is about teaching students how to use their knowledge for the betterment of themselves and the society, Islamic values integration teaches that *Allah*-consciousness and morality are the foundations of a healthy society… promoting "ideals in life" such as "studying and working hard..: love and forgiveness. Goodness, friendship, modesty in dress and actions…" of knowledge, respect, responsibility, forgiveness, truthfulness, cooperation etc. The end outlook encouraged is for students to seek what they can offer society –not what society can offer them…These efforts reflect the Colleges' view of the 'holistic' development of its students, both academically and spiritually.

Noteworthy is Peace Academy's reinscribed discourses of providing a religious education as "values" education, making few references to "Islamic education" or "Religious education", as the other two schools' promotional materials do. Reiteration of "values" as a catchphrase is used repeatedly and conveniently as an all-encompassing concept to represent the school's teachings as universalistic, suggestive of shared ideals with all societies and in common with other schools. By reinscribing discourses of 'values', the school aligns itself with wider national goals (Department of Education, 2005), subscribing to locally and universally embraced values of respect and responsibility, and it is made clear that values which are taught across Australian schools are cornerstone to Islamic teachings. Given the discursive panic in Australia and other Western societies about Islam and its perceived threats to civil society, and the schools themselves as "exclusionary and threatening, in a way that new Christian schools are not" (Gulson & Webb, 2012, p. 704), Islamic schools want to be seen to promote good behaviour and alignment to norms of conduct (manners, etc.) and practices of citizenship that Anglo society repeatedly reinforces in its fear campaigns against Muslims and their institutions. The right conditions were necessary to engender the type of competencies and values needed.

4.3.2.2: 'Enabling' the conditions: the added value.

The development of competencies or virtues, behaviours and values as life skill assets, made possible and facilitated by "enabling conditions" (Merry, 2015, p. 147), were espoused to be scarce commodities unique to the schools. For example, the conditions, including: a competent and supportive staff, an inclusive environment and, as stated, the formal

curriculum, were paramount to achieving successful outcomes, specifically that of facilitating self-esteem, confidence, leadership, learning, desirable behaviour and as Peace Academy posits "belonging". Yet, what texts do in relation to what is communicated and what is understood by their targeted audiences varies. As Ahmed (2012) notes, it is impossible to distinguish between utterances at the level of the sentence, as "what those words do depends on the circumstances in which they are said" (p.56). When applied to schools which are linked to marginalised groups, promises of 'safe and supportive environments', as espoused in the National Safe Schools Framework (Department of Education and Training , 2016), have a "different force" (Ahmed, 2012, p. 56), conjuring alternative possibilities in the documents of Islamic schools. These texts create platforms for the imagination to roam, tacitly engaging the client in assessment of the status quo, the conditions in which they exist, to provide accommodating alternatives. Whilst in the contexts of Australian schools more broadly, words such as 'safe', 'caring' and 'supportive' do as they say, while in the context of Islamic schools they have broader implications associated with the creation of school environments capable of mitigating harms associated with "racism and stigma" (Merry, 2015, p. 147). Across the three schools' documents, "a caring and friendly atmosphere…", as Peace Academy claimed, is on "offer". Moreover, having a 'safe', 'supportive', 'Islamic' environment, as the three schools claimed, together with the adjunct value of being 'disciplined' at Medina and Bringelly, is often represented as a defining constituent for the explicit fulfilment of potentiality, in building certain emotional intelligence capacities and behaviours amongst students. As two principals assert:

> The aim of Medina is very simple; we seek to equip students with enough knowledge and confidence to put Islamic beliefs, values and morals into practice in their own lives. The college aims at the development of the whole person, intellectually, spiritually, socially, and physically and the development of talents and abilities…By attending MG, all students benefit in their academic and spiritual progress and in the development of their self-esteem, in a caring educational and Islamic environment. (Mission Statement)

> We… build a community of learning and a positive environment for all students… (Medina, Principal)

> When your son or daughter leaves Bringelly Islamic College we want them to be confident, articulate, resourceful and able to cope with the complexity of modern life. (Bringelly, Principal)

The notion of *akhlaq*, denoting morals and good manners, is stressed in the promotion of Bringelly's school environment, and is asserted thus:

• caters for individual differences among students.

• supports each student to develop to his/her optimum potential – physically, mentally, socially, and spiritually.

• promote a positive self-image and self-discipline, a high sense of responsibility, respect, and consideration for others and respect for authority (Bringelly, Website).

Medina adds:

We will provide the support for students to reach their ultimate goals in a safe, stimulating environment with opportunities to explore their special interests. (Principal)

The above quotations suggest that self-esteem and emotions relating to it, such as confidence, pride, and managing behaviour, worked tactically in concert with knowing and living "Islam", a promotional stratagem to foreground the schools' added value to leverage market advantage. Such quotes appeal to and construct subjectivities, providing solutions for what is represented as widespread uncertainty over children's futures, resulting in the renegotiation of the viewer's positioning. As Cranny-Francis (2005) suggests, the client's corresponding emotional responses are reinforced and potential actions confirmed or opened to question. By showing they have solutions for Australian Muslims to engender inclusion, schools claim a unique market advantage. Belonging, self-esteem and confidence in an embracing environment are therefore commodities that can only be unravelled in the schools' embracing crevices.

Moreover, the teaching and mentoring of vital skills were made possible by supportive and "experienced" staff at Peace Academy, and "inclusive" curriculums. Indeed, the environment, the curriculum and staff who were aligned with and support the schools' ethos are projected as enablers for producing well affirmed, disciplined and knowledgeable members of society.

Teachers and senior staff are always available to mentor and counsel students to foster students' self-esteem and self-confidence so as to provide the best possible chance of a mature, informed and healthy life. (Peace Academy)

To ensure productive learning in classrooms, the teachers make concerted efforts to create a firm, fair and friendly learning atmosphere. (Bringelly, Philosophy)

Peace Academy is able to gain high academic standards which can be attributed to the effectiveness of its teaching programs, the dedication of teachers… (Prospectus)

In the texts thus far, tradition and modernity are integrated as a unified discourse, constituted by an ideological discourse and a modern discourse of knowledge, to encapsulate intelligence. Here, the faith-consciousness discourse, prescribing religious values and ideologies, is conflated with the emotional intelligence discourse of competencies of leadership, managing behaviour and attitudes, confidence and self-esteem, alongside a "safe and supportive environment" (DET, 2016) policy discourse. Being confident, competent and a leader, virtues which conflate with contemporary emotional intelligence, are thus inextricably bound with religious principles, corresponding with suggestions made by Meadmore and Meadmore (2004) that religious ideals can be taken up to leverage market benefits. Parents who are seeking to acquire self-esteem or other intelligences bearing close relation to it in an educational package can be captured "through the judicious articulation of religious rhetoric in which the spiritual and the emotional are closely relational" (Meadmore & Meadmore, 2004, p. 384). Religious values, then, are flexible enough to be yoked in partnership with emotional intelligence principles and national policy frameworks, but are also constructed as being responsive to the national social order, thereby achieving "a contemporary gloss and inclusive appeal from this association" (Meadmore & Meadmore, 2004, p. 384). In combining commitments to "a high quality secular and religious education in an Islamic environment" (Bringelly, Mission Statement), and "academic and spiritual growth" (Medina, Mission Statement) in an inclusive environment as constructs for achieving active social participation, schools thereby present themselves as having an unmatched market edge. Juxtaposed with educational institutions who are grappling with the identity "struggles" of young Muslims (Burridge et al., 2009), the schools' representational practices position them as being responsive to the needs of their charges, but also conceptualise them within a very important role of serving national interests. In a "toxic social order of racialised hyper-surveillance, hate and marginalisation of Australian Muslims" (Abdel-Fatah, 2015) where Muslimness and the values commensurate with this identity are suspect, the promise of an education underlied by virtuousness and morality, gloved hand in hand with enabling conditions, presents as a highly prized selling point for an excluded minority—one that is akin to survival.

Consolidating written texts are visuals that construct an environment constituting its charges as social, spiritual and intellectual participants depicted as smiling and having fun whilst learning, where religious practices are commonly integrated into photographs, including dress practices of boys and girls in such items as *hijab*s, *kofi*s and *abaya*s. Across the images analysed, students are consistently visually depicted in 'interpersonal' compositions, in close distance, frontal angle shots, gazing directly at the audience to engender intense viewer involvement with participants, their actions and subsequently their worlds (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006). An idealised image on the screen of Medina's homepage, for example, illustrates this, focussing viewer attention on a group of two senior girls – one facing an unseen participant whilst the other, in the background, faces the viewer, a visual composition of the school's offerings. Positioned to the right of the composition, at close personal distance, attention is drawn to the figure of a senior girl who is laughing with the unseen participant. An apparatus is centred in the middle. Captured in a close-up, medium shot where the light accentuates her light clothing, the senior student is the most salient, eye catching (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006, p. 166) figure. In contrast with the unseen participant she is talking to, the student draws attention to collaborative and fun learning experiences, the 'real' product on offer (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006, p. 166). Strong viewer engagement is created by the 'demand' gaze of the senior student positioned in the background of the composition, also reinforcing the position of her peer. The latter is depicted as involved, smiling with the two participants and audience as she offers 'practical' information, emotively appealing to clients, displaying possibilities of "what is" (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006, p. 166), welcoming the viewer into "the promise of the product" (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006, p. 178). Thus, interactive group work, collaboration, support and having fun are foregrounded as being essential to learning, a product that is normalised in the environment of the school. Read alongside other prominent images in Peace Academy's prospectus, where girls and boys are integrated into photographs and depicted as active, confident, competent and happy learners, the environment was signified as a natural backdrop for drawing out girls' and boys' potentiality: spiritually, academically, physically and emotionally.

In particular, the *hijab* further served to reiterate the inclusive appeal of the school, as a symbolic signifier of the underlying ideologies, a mechanism of 'recognition' and 'particularising' the schools (Synott & Symes, 1995, p. 150). For example, in Medina and Peace's promotional documents, the uniform, particularly the *hijab* for multi-purposes—

prayer clothing, standard uniforms, sports jerseys and scarves—is normalised across photographs. Peace Academy gives the impression of the school as a girl-centred space in its repeated representation of girls across disciplinary domains or just relaxed across its spaces. For example, in the prospectus a vignette of culturally diverse, primary-aged girls are all wearing white prayer head coverings or *jilbabs*. The face and hands are the only body parts visible. Occupying a prostration position, the young girls, some smiling, others laughing collectively at the camera, invite viewers into welcoming spaces. In the same prospectus, images are shown that place emphasis on the school as a culturally congruent, inclusive space, where images of girls, contemplating and at peace, far outweigh those of boys, inviting clients into an inclusive, accepting environment. The choice of girls across photographs and their representation in the promotional materials as engaged learners—pens in hand, heads bent while writing, holding books, participating in sport or in deep contemplation, at peace and consistently smiling—negotiates with the clients' subjectivities. Such images showcasing girls in Key Learning Areas (KLA) with appropriate *hijab*s for different aspects of school life, construct a space that juxtaposes with the politics of the *hijab* in France and its ongoing debates in other secular societies. In a context where the visibility of the *hijab* places girls under the questioning gaze, as an object of submission, "terror" or "radicalisation" (Abdel-Fatah, 2015) these images depict the schools as places of belonging, as "safe havens" (Zine, 2007), where the girls safely and happily reach their potential. Schools as culturally congruent environments appeal to parental instincts to educate, as Bringelly reminds clients, their sons and daughters in an atmosphere which is consistent with the faith and values of the home. As one of the principals rhetorically questions:

> What school provides the environment, which will enable them [students] to develop their potential and also continue to compliment the learning environment and value of your home? At BIC we work in partnership with you, the parent, to provide opportunities for your children to prepare for the future… By choosing to send your children to this school, you can be sure that you have given them the opportunity to develop the skills and abilities necessary for a lifetime of learning and the fulfilment of their dreams and to be successful individuals in Dunyah (this world) and Aakhirah (the hereafter), Insha'Allah (God willing). *Wassalam*, Dr. Delic, Principal (website).

Drawing on the similarities of values discourse between that of the schools and students' homes as exemplified in the above quote, the underlying message evoked within parents' imagination is that of external influences, practices which are contrary to Islam, such

as alcohol and drug consumption, premarital dating and sexual relationships, legitimated by what is understood by Muslim parents as permissive societies. In working together to maintain their heritage, weaving similarities between the values of the home and school, schools therefore protect students from being influenced through the formal and hidden curriculum by values which might undermine the concept of Islamic family life (Halstead, 1997). Such rhetoric is also consistent with the representations of shared values between home and school that other elite private schools offer in general. The rhetoric for school selection targets parental choice and corresponds with their feelings and actions (Cranny-Francis, 2005), and is one that is concerned with an education which shows coherence between the values being promoted at home and those taught at school, an inherent commonality which can be achieved through 'partnerships'. Provisions of "culturally congruent environment where family-centred values are reinforced" constitute the schools as inclusive in "protecting their [parents'] investment in the future of their family and community" (Zine, 2007, p. 86). Therefore, constructing that alignment is a significant device for appealing to prospective parents.

4.4: Chapter Four Conclusion

In their promises of enabling conditions, the schools used rhetorical mechanisms to appeal to concerns of Muslim parents who look for an education which is commensurate with their heritage. In a national context where Islam is problematised, the schools employed persuasive mechanisms conceptualising their responsibility towards their charges, their local community and societal commitments. Schools prepare their students with the knowledge, values and skills to set them up for a productive life undergirded by faith and morality, as responsible and confident citizens concerned for their own being and those of others. In considering the 'conditions' (Ahmed, 2012; Panjwani, 2004), school documents explain and legitimate all manner of situations ranging from academic performance to identity issues, such as religiosity, self-esteem, confidence, dress code, belonging and importantly, schools as spaces of civil society working in 'partnerships' with their local community and local authorities. By promising solutions to enhance the educational opportunities of their charges, schools are responding to the heritage of their clientele but also serve "an emancipatory function" in responding to stigma, disadvantage and exclusion (Merry, 2015, p. 147).

These schools' rhetorics are therefore mechanisms to counter the biggest criticism charged against faith-based schools: that of leading to social fragmentation (Cush, 2005). By

creating a perception of mutual and shared loyalties, the schools' representational practices construct an image of being socially cohesive, placating concerns of the 'ghettoisation' theory extended to Islamic schools (Zine, 2007). By re-conceptualising themselves as civil society sites, where schools constructively engage in the larger society's issues common to Muslims and non-Muslims (Niyozov & Memon, 2011), the schools' rhetorics not only attempt to allay societal suspicion but compete for market position. Nevertheless, in light of the "formidable" challenges most Islamic schools confront, "this is no trivial achievement" (Merry, 2015, p. 148).

A review of promotional materials such as this is 'necessary' (Ahmed, 2012, p. 105) for its valuable contributions to understanding the politics of education. As "forms of action" such reviews are incomplete, in that what documents "do" are dependent on how they are "taken up" (Ahmed, 2012, p. 105). Ahmed asserts: "To track what texts do, we need to follow them around" (p. 105). Such reviews guide the analyst to collect data from the field, from the cultural group to explore the congruence between "saying" and "doing", that is, the purpose and effect of "official description" and practitioners' actions (Apple, 2006). Chapters five and six undertake an analysis of data collected from documents and stakeholders of Islamic schools.

CHAPTER FIVE: PURPOSE IN THE INFORMAL PRACTICES OF ISLAMIC SCHOOLS

5.1: Chapter Five Introduction

Chapter four reported on the data of phase one of the research concerning Islamic schools' institutional speech acts (Ahmed, 2012), their constructs of purpose. It concluded by presenting the findings relating to the schools' core purpose and the three key goals which make purpose construction possible. This chapter and the next draw on data from the Stakeholder Survey and analysis of documents to report on experience and practice (Apple, 2006). This chapter responds to research question two and shows how broader contextual factors and stakeholder experiences contribute to the construction of espoused purpose. It also responds to research question three, drawing on data from the Leadership Questionnaire to report on those practitioners who "labour every day in schools" (Apple, 2008, p. 249), taking an interest in what they actually do to construct purpose in the informal curriculum. Data then becomes "a technology" for revealing the gap between rhetoric and what the organisation is doing (Ahmed, 2012, p. 55).

In the analysis across the case schools' documents, stakeholders' and leaders' responses, there was consistent articulation of statements and voicing of thoughts and opinions, showing interconnections, invoking and making references to building character, ethics and good conduct across the schools' everyday informal educational practices; this corresponds with Berglund (2014), who asserted that Islamic schools emphasise ethics regarding how 'good Muslims' should conduct themselves in society (p. 292). Standards and etiquettes existed in the schools, galvanised by the values and morals of Islam, which transpired in religious practices, in order to meet, as a stakeholder from Peace Academy asserts, "the requirements of a Muslim school" (S14). Stakeholders from the same school explicate their experience of school purpose by repeatedly referring to "praying, good behaviour and *akhlaq*" (S16), adding to this the "daily school assembly, embedded within a context of Islam" (S27), and elaborated thus:

> [The] daily Morning Assembly procedure that emphasises *Qur'an* recitation and the
> promotion of morals and values[;] on our school logo to achieve success in this life and
> the hereafter[;] Streaming of classes and others to cater for academic subject success[;]

Mandatory *Qur'an* and Islamic Studies lessons[;] Delivery of [the] *Jumuah Khutbah* [in the] Student Islamic Studies Society. (S43)

The initial image set would be through the uniform, where female students wear scarf[ve]s and full sleeve shirt[s] and pants. The morning assembly allows students to start the day in the name of [G]od. Students are then given the range of subjects found at other schools along with Arabic and Islamic studies. (S15)

It's an Islamic school so we follow Islamic etiquette. This is evident throughout the school through all the girls['] uniform and our established prayer building, [the] Mosque. The students are also very well-mannered and we respect our teachers in accordance [with] our school rules as well as Islamic standards. Overall we have met the requirements of a Muslim school and it[']s evident. (S14)

Similarly, at Medina "the manner of the staff and the students, the general environment of the college and the portrayal of the Islamic values around the school" (S37) alongside "Programs that teach PARENTS and students Mannerisms, Etiquette, Rights and Responsibilities, Parental Skills etc… *Adab* and *Akhlaq*" (S6) are integral to stakeholders' everyday experiences. Another stakeholder adds:

Our efforts as a team to beautify our school's Mosque. Raising funds regularly to inject back the money collected to benefit the students. Our Islamic programs scheduled during Ramadan and Eids. The Quran recitation competitions organised by the Quran Department. Surat and E[a]thaan recitation competitions. Recognition and organisation of gifts and certificates for students who have passed [the] Quran. Beautiful Islamic quotes and Art displayed around the school. (S24)

Islamic etiquette is then an all-encompassing term being realised through religious practices: observance of prayers, Islamic/corporate appearance, symbolic representations, morals and values which guide behaviour, as well as formal teachings. In the discourse, to borrow from a stakeholder, of "morals and values" (S43), there exists interconnections across the "values integration" project at Peace Academy, and a privileging of "*adab* and *akhlaq*" in the other two schools, with institution-wide processes, habits and mechanisms. How everyday practices link with the schools' take on their structures, procedures, routines and operations is responsive to both the school's ethos and its interconnections between external policy and situated context, manifest in two salient issues. The first issue, referring to those aspects of local context and the distinctive qualities that are traditionally linked to the schools and their

clients, is *Connecting a Community of Believers*, and the second is *Building Civic Connections*. The two issues interconnect the schools' ethos with the external context. Leaders' contributions and their practices in both are linked to a notion of transformation grounded in the values of knowledge, community and justice.

5.2: Connecting a Community of Believers: Islamic Values in Everyday Practices

Apple (2006) asserted that religious conservatism holds the promise of community. He noted that conservative visions of homogeneity underscored by faith not only assist in the construction of real social communities, they also help create imagined communities, "structures of feeling" that offer membership and connections within one's nation or globally (p. 168). This feeling of belonging to a community of faith, asserts Ramadan (2004), is not necessarily a withdrawal or an intellectual and/or ethnic isolation and, on the contrary, may produce extra spiritual energy available to the society as a whole. Across the data, a discourse of morals and values underlies religious practice concomitantly with a concern for welfare and discipline, one that is underscored by structures, processes, teachings and symbolic representations constituting practice, which give form and definition to a community guided by the Islamic ethos of the schools. The views above, showing strong resonance across the schools' policies and also reported by the great majority of stakeholders, suggest that the "initial", surface "image" (S15) are serious enactments in the schools, referring to communities connected through religious practice: appearance, worship rituals and values. Connecting a community of believers through practice is framed by the ethos and history of each school and engages with three issues that are specific and contextualised: *"Structures of feeling": worship rituals in everyday practice*; *Disrupting valorised traditions: equitable educational possibilities for new times*, and *Leadership embodiment and enactment of institutional and personal values*. Although connected to the spiritual, social and community development of learners, the three issues show interconnections with the schools' and their constituencies' complex socio-political position and internal cultural practices.

5.2.1: "Structures of feeling": worship rituals in everyday practices.

Concern for the spiritual dimension of Islam is inseparable from concern for ritual observance and, for Syeed and Ritchie (2006), vital observances in themselves practiced in accordance with the Quran and the *sunnah* constitute a form of spiritual experience. Deliberating on factors which influence school culture, Deal and Peterson (2009) stress the significance and meaning rituals provide, noting that: "when such events are intimately

linked to a school's mission and values, and linked to the calling of teaching rather than the obligations of content coverage, they summon spirit, energise one's professional soul, and reinforce cultural ties" (p. 90). Across the schools, the collective performance of Islamic ritual featuring as a prominent constituent in the creation of an Islamic environment corresponds with Memon's (2011) assertions that Islamic schools integrate Islam mostly at the informal level. The now contested issue of the observance of one of the fundamental pillars of Islam, the performance of prayer ritual, in NSW state schools (Olding, 2015) is paid homage in the discourse of the participating schools' local policies and structures, the narratives of stakeholders and by those who lead the schools. Stakeholders, for example, strongly emphasised the three schools' religious practices, citing and reiterating: the "morning *dua'*, [supplications], lunch prayers, Islamic greeting…" (S5) or "[the] early morning Quran forum" (S39). Moreover, that "[purpose is] everywhere, starting from morning *dua'* until the end of the day" (S2) is reinforced by another stakeholder from Bringelly, making connections between values and worship rituals explicit:

> Daily Morning Assembly procedure that emphasises Qur'an recitation and the promotion of morals and values… On our school logo 'to achieve success in this life and the hereafter'… Streaming of classes…and others to cater for academic subject success… Mandatory Qur'an and Islamic Studies lessons[,] delivery of Jumuah Khutbah [and] Student Islamic Studies Society. (S43)

Syeed and Ritchie (2006) stressed the social aspect engendered by religious practices, noting that a certain "consistency and conformity in practice enhances cooperation and spiritual feelings of brotherhood and sisterhood" (p. 297). Just as the daily *dua'*, Quran recitations, morning values talks were strongly conflated with the three case schools' existence, their performance "together" in congregation was emphasised numerically and in words. "[A]attendance for *Zuhr* prayer…" (S39) and "prayer at the school hall during lunch time… (S3) performed in congregation, was another tangible manifestation of purpose at Bringelly:

> Islamic uniform [for] both boys and girls and in primary and secondary, greetings by children in [an] Islamic way, Prayer hall 1005 attendance for *Zuhr* prayer [and] early morning Quran forum. (S39)

Elsewhere, observation of the "daily prayers" (S30) in congregation is stressed in the claims made by Medina's stakeholders: "the students all pray together every day" (S35) and "grades 4 upwards going to the mosque for prayer" (S34).

Consistent with Jones (2012) and consolidating the above responses are documents providing reinforcement of the value placed on practicing the pillars of faith for everyday enactments of citizenship. Indeed, prayers and Islamic events such as the holy month of Ramadan are emphasised in school-wide organisations and the schools' academic calendars, listed and highlighted as organisational priorities. Across Peace Academy and Bringelly's structures can be located substantial time allocation for morning assemblies, the ritual of *wudu'* (cleansing) and the *zuhr salaat* during lunch breaks. At Peace Academy, for instance, the congregational *salaat*, an issue referenced 29 times in the School's *Induction Policy* (IP, 2014), is strongly emphasised, whereby school timetables and teacher rosters are tailored around its accommodation, thus reinforcing the importance of this Islamic pillar for socialising learners.

Morning Assembly		
Period	**Time**	**Durations**
Morning assembly	8:25 – 8:45	**20 minutes**

Boys' Prayers and Lunch Times		
Monday–Thursday		
Period	**Time**	**Duration**
Boys' lunch	12:45–1:10	25 minutes
Boys' wudu	1:10–1:25	15 minutes
Boys' prayer	1:25–1:40	15 minutes

Girls' Prayers and Lunch Times		
Monday- Thursday		
Girls' wudu	12:45–1:00	15 minutes
Girls' prayer	1:00–1:15	15 minutes
Girls lunch	1:15–1:30	15 minutes

Friday's Prayer is extended to allow for the *jummuah* (Friday) sermon:

Friday Khuttbah Prayer		
Period	**Time**	**Duration**
Wudu	1:05–1:15	10 minutes
Khuttbah and prayer	1:15–1:50	35 minutes

(IP, 2014, p. 31).

As indicated, teachers play a significant role, responsible for ensuring student participation by either partaking or supervision:

> While all staff is welcome to be involved in and support prayers, it is not compulsory for Non-Muslim staff to join the students. Attendance is an expectation of all members of staff. Non-Muslim staff may be asked to participate in the supervision of student behaviour while prayers are undertaken. (IP, 2014, p. 42)

Just as prayer rituals and, as revealed in the rosters above, gender segregation were commensurate with Islamic teachings, the inclusion of another article of faith was integrated into policies and communicated widely. The holy month of *Ramadan*, commonly renowned for increased worship activity, followed by *Eid* holidays, gave impetus to school wide re-organisation to allow for early departure. "During the month of *Ramadan*" asserted Peace Academy, "bell times and duration of class times are reduced by an hour" (IP, 2014, p. 32).

> A 'special timetable' will be put in place during the month of *Ramadan*. Therefore, students will start at 9:00am and will be dismissed at 2:35pm and secondary students will be dismissed at 2:45pm....Parents should be aware that their children will be arriving home approximately 50 minutes earlier than usual. (Medina, Bulletin, 2012)

Syeed and Ritchie (2006) noted that the performance of the five pillars, of which prayers is the daily ritual followed by fasting during *Ramadan* as well as charity and service, enhance inner spirituality and connect students with an outer community of believers—an "*ummah*"—as well as with *Allah* (SWT). Reflecting on what the school identity constitutes, one student pinpoints the emotional and social promises, the structures of feeling underpinning community:

In morning assembly you'd witness the whole school reading aloud simultaneously to our one belief giving a sense of belonging and that community atmosphere. Also around lunch time you'll see how the majority of the student population head to prayer on their own accord, and teachers and prayer monitors motivating a few students here and there to go to prayer, allowing the school climate to fulfil religious needs. (S22)

What the data indicates is that when conducted in uniformity and collectively, the morning assembly's rituals and prayers conducted in congregation, the dress code and the upholding of Islamic etiquettes prompted a sense of togetherness and unity amongst stakeholders. More than that, the inclusion of enabling practices which uphold and allow religious observance, "to practice Islam in many ways [on a] daily basis", as a participant claimed, is a source of "freedom" (S41). Thus, privileging religious practice honours these stakeholders' heritage but also serves an emancipatory function. As Merry (2015) argued, for members of groups who are subjected to various harms and stigmas, in segregated communities they often experience greater equality of recognition, treatment and self-respect than they do in mixed environments, and persons can still act willfully and in solidarity with others in turning segregation to their advantage. For schools, it is these faith-based practices which are taught to and practised by young Muslims that enable enactments of citizenship (Harris & Roose, 2014; Johns et al., 2015).

5.2.2: Disrupting valorised traditions: equitable educational possibilities for new times.

As a form of religious practice, the *hijab*, a heavily contested function in mainstream society (Al-Mahadin, 2013), has subjected Muslim girls to explicit hostility, negatively impacting their image within mainstream schools (Imtoual, 2006; Mansouri & Trembath, 2005; Shah, 2009). These perceptions of a lack of acceptance raise questions relating to wellbeing and identity (Burridge, 2009). The rhetoric for the Islamic dress across the case schools counters cogently popularised Western discourses that are internalised in the mainstream consciousness, particularising the *hijab* as an instrument of oppressive signification (Al-Mahadin, 2013) and as irrefutable evidence of unassimilable difference (Gulson & Webb, 2013). Integrated within the responses above, an issue of equally strong salience for stakeholders and leaders across the documents as that of observing prayers and fasting, is the schools' semiotic policy and everyday practices relating to "appearance", placing great emphasis on an "Islamic" dress code for a competitive, elitist educational

market. As described by a stakeholder: "[In]… our religion, dress [is] taken very seriously" (S33). Abdallah (2016) asserted that Islam allows for the infusion of any aspect of any culture which does not contravene its teachings. In the three schools' policy productions of the dress code, it is shown yet again that "context" is an "active force" (Braun et al., 2011, p. 590) as the schools give their take on 'Islamic' appearance in the production of their own versions of dress, combining tradition and modernity, religious and academic trajectories, and combining the *hijab* with corporate wear to [re]present and produce a scholastic dimension in the schools.

Consistent with Meadmore and Symes (1996), the dress code was instrumental in generating a "distinctive school spirit and a sense of communitas" (p. 222), and like worship practices, "achieves a 'unifying' function" (IP, 2014, p. 22) as Peace Academy claimed. At Bringelly it is said to "encourage pride in our school and assists in the development of a strong school identity" (PIB, 2014). At both, Peace and Medina dress requirements appear across dress and behaviour policies that apply to staff and students alike. Compliance with the dress code for various occasions, such as sport, creative performances, etc., was strongly emphasised in Peace Academy's staff Induction Policy (2014), with fifty references to "dress" within it and across relevant attachments. Compliance was conditional to both employment and student enrolment, encoded in sets of synonymous words that are unambiguous: "required", "obey", "responsibility" at Medina, and "must", "will", "expectations" and "adherence" as indicated in the quotes below.

> **Medina:** According to Islamic teachings, modesty in dress is an important tenet of one's faith. All clothes should be loose fitting, non-transparent and modest. All students, parents, teachers and staff members are required to obey Islamic teachings regarding dress while on school premises. (Dress Code)

Across the schools, appearance is being constructed as an indicator of morality, of which teachers are expected to provide an embodied example. Constructions of dress as a signifier of an exemplary teacher at Peace Academy indicate "appearance as a touchstone of quality" (Meadmore & Symes, 1996).

> **PA:** 2.5…As teachers are role models for pupils, the following dress standards will apply. Adherence to the dress standards below achieves a 'unifying' function in addition to promoting respectful and professional interaction. It should be stressed that

these reflect minimum standards of dress, not preferred standards. (Please refer to the '*Hijab*' Attachment – APPENDIX 1). (IP, 2014, p. 22)

Medina: Teachers in an Islamic College must in their private and professional lives adhere to the accepted practice of Islam. Any appearance and manner that does not respect these teachings and practices places a teacher in conflict with their employment conditions and what Medina stands for. (Dress Code)

Unlike worship observance, which was underscored by a religious discourse, an entrepreneurial discourse and a religious discourse are sutured together in the dress enactments of the case schools, each legitimating the other in constructing the successful Muslim entrepreneurial student. The dress code showed considerable adaptation, adding a "corporate" dimension to the "infinite interpretations of Islamic dress" (Al-Mahadin, 2013, p. 209). At Peace Academy, the "Islamic" co-exists and is supplemented with "[P]professional dress standards", "corporate standards" at Medina and eliteness at Bringelly (L4). Seen from the outside, the semiotics of dress constructs elite school identities that are befitting of the market. Thus, neoliberal ideals are given religious warrant (Apple, 2006). Just as the *hijab* in China looks Chinese (Abdallah, 2016), in a neoliberal educational context it becomes entrepreneurial.

PA: Staff attention is drawn to the fact that Generic School expects a professional standard of dress for all staff. High standards of dress are expected from students; likewise, staffs are expected to maintain a standard of dress which is indicative of that expected of students. (IP, 2014, p. 23)

Medina: Males: Clothing standard (including footwear) is to be suitable to wear in a corporate office environment. Business shirt and formal trousers must be worn. Jeans and jean style trousers and/or shorts are not permitted. i.e. Suit and ties are encouraged. Jubba style dress and pants are not permitted. (Dress Code)

The suturing together of entrepreneurial dress with Islamic categories and concepts fashioned in the extracts above debunks the traditional Islamic long dress (*juba*), suggesting that schools are investing the secular in sacred ideas. Whilst Peace and Medina promote Islamically corporatised dress, Bringelly demonstrates how the diversity of the frameworks of being a Muslim (Yasmeen, 2008) can have a bearing on the Islamic dress code, in the

adoption of the *sunnah* (traditions of the Prophet (PBUH)) for some and aligning with notions of educational market success for others. Alongside written texts, photographic images visualised the prescribed "Islamic", "corporate" dress protocols in the three schools' documents. Captured in single close-up images, the administrative team, including the chairman of the board, the principal and deputy principal of Bringelly, are shown in corporate clothing, a dress code which is in stark contrast with that of the HPE Head of Department, who in spite of his role (as shown across images in sports activities, with official delegates, guests and so on) chooses to privilege, as he says, an alternate dress code:

I wear a beard and dress in an interpretation of what might be considered *Sunnah* (prophet's tradition). That is, I wear a Juba / thurb (long white dress). (L4)

Of significance in the dress description above is this individual's choice of dressing within the prophetic tradition, one which contravenes and is in breach of Medina's dress code, indicating that it is not just schools but staff that also give their take on policy work in their interpretation of "Islamic" for the context. In spite of not occupying a role as *imam*, this leader disrupts the "professional" or even "Islamic" dress etiquettes that are prescribed as the norm in the case schools.

What emerges from policy productions and their enactments is that school leaders took frequent action to enforce the dress code. As one leader asserts:

Awareness of Islamic ethos, [is] embedd[ed] into every practice from dress code to prayer and care in all activities to ensure it does not contradict Islamic values. (L3)

Contrary to the schools' constructions of an Islamic/professional appearance, stakeholders framed the dress within an Islamic discourse. Tapping into their most recurring experiences of school life, the practice of the "Islamic dress code of both teachers and students" (S50) was pivotal to the experiences of stakeholders' at Peace Academy. This was constituted as "Islamic uniform, [for] both boys and girls, [for] primary and secondary" (S39), the "dress code of teachers" (S3) at Bringelly, and similarly, "school dress code for both students and staff" (S20) at Peace, and consistently featured in the majority of stakeholders' reports.

Medina: Physically, the students, teachers and staff should be in Islamic-appropriate attire. Male staff should be allowed to wear the Islamic long garment on Fridays only. Students and staff should also show good Islamic manners. (S36)

The capitalisation and bulleting of the text by an official leader and others from Peace Academy provides further reinforcement of the ideas verbalised by the administrative staff member above:

1. SCHOOL DRESS CODE FOR BOTH STUDENT AND STAFF
2. DAILY PRAYERS [AND] FACILITY[IES] FOR BOTH STAFF AND STUDENTS
3. DAILY RELIGIOUS *DUAS* IN ASSEMBLY
4. ISLAMIC POSTERS ALL AROUND [THE] SCHOOL. (S11)

Praying together at *Zuhur* and boys and girls separated. Dressing modestly. (S26)

1. The modest dress code implemented in the school.
2. The availability of prayer facilities. (S52)

[Purpose is evident in our] freedom to practice Islam in many ways [o]n [a]daily basis such as praying, reading Quran, all females in the school wearing Islamic clothing. (S41)

The focussed attention on one item of clothing by a range of stakeholders is significant and signifies a shared cultural concern; a teacher, a student, two official leaders and others frequently singled out "females", specifically "all the girls' uniform…" (S14) and "girls wearing *hijab*" (S28), at Peace and elsewhere. As indicated, alternative possibilities were provided for dress requirements and gender segregation, two Islamic practices which present as barriers for girls' participation in sport (Dagkas, Benn, & Jawad, 2011; Al-amri, 2013). In addition to the standard uniform, visuals attest to the assortment of Islamic attire for enabling participation in educational experiences. Not only are PE uniforms adapted and made compatible with the ethos of the three schools, but the *hijab* itself is reconstituted to facilitate cross-curricular participation, taking into consideration the safety measures of the KLAs without neglecting modesty. Consistent with Peace's rhetoric, they ranged from the sport slip on scarves, formal square scarves and standard prayer *jilbabs.* This is clarified in Medina's sportswear:

In our school students are required to wear a proper change for Physical Education classes. They have a school PE uniform, if the uniform is not ready for the certain class, they may have to wear the school sports uniform. (Curriculum Handbook)

Gender segregation has also presented as another area of critique by the public, the media and government authorities (Hewer, 2001; Hussain, 2010; Schottmann, 2013). "Girls and boys [are] separated" (S26), an issue which has always been fundamental to the teachings of Islam and normalised in the practices of the case schools, as is revealed in Peace Academy's timetables. That separation of genders is a responsibility of teachers and one that a leader commits to is stated thus:

Each morning the students should assemble for prayers and an informative talk….

Class Teachers are responsible… making sure that, students:

a) Are lined up on time in their respective grades and genders.

b) Are all present in correct uniform. (IP, 2014, p. 38)

Failure to enforce and monitor gender segregation is also failure to live up to aligning Islam in the school culture. Medina's school principal puts it thus:

It is a co-ed[ucational] school and very difficult to monitor interaction of boys and girls in the school which is not as reflective of the etiquette of Islamically interacting with the opposite gender as we would like it to be. (L3)

A concern with enforcing the dress code and the etiquette of segregation clearly aligns schools with their ethos, however if practices impinge on educational participation then they are open to critique and interruption. Whilst organisational factors relating to Islamic practices emerge as a priority across the three schools in facilitating girls' and boys' full cross-curricular engagement, cultural infringements which encroach on the schools' practices and as a consequence limit girls' participation are issues with potential concern. Besides reconstituting the *hijab*, the creation of alternative possibilities to enable girls' participation in swimming, a sporting activity which frequently presents as a problem, specifically for Muslim girls (Dagkas et al., 2011), is factored into the structures of Peace and Bringelly. At Peace Academy, being equipped with an array of facilities including a swimming pool and gymnasium (IP, 2014, p. 11) overcomes the difficulties and inconveniences presented when requesting a female- or male-only staffed public pool.

Bringelly is an interesting case of a school where in addition to the focus on "excellence" and community engagement, there exists a concerted focus on integrating Islamic precepts in HPE for effecting school-wide change. In this school sport offers a viable entry point, the terrain to critique, challenge and debunk deep-rooted cultural myths passed on from one generation to another which give preference, deeming appropriate, active participation of students in certain disciplines rather than others (Dagkas et al., 2011). The head of HPE (L4) is not oblivious to the injustices of cultural ways which camouflage as Islamic education and their cascading effects into gender inequities. Taking action to disrupt them, this leader demonstrates how faith and values influence his day-to-day leadership responsibilities (Striepe, 2016).

> … [I] challenged cultural practices that were overshadowing religious principles. For example, girls' participation in sports; established a swimming carnival at night in a closed pool with separate genders; changed male sports uniforms to go beyond the knee; redesigned girls' sports uniform in a lighter more functional fabric; imported sports *hijab*s from the Netherlands (requires no pins); designed elite girls' and boys' uniforms in a wide consultation process with the southern cross and Arabic script (*Ummah Waheeda*) to reflect our Australian Muslim identity on the sporting field. …*Insha'Allah* to be seen as a form of worship and not wasted time. (L4)

Although dress and segregation, seemingly routine organisational factors, are being tackled, Leader 4 makes explicit an "encounter" demonstrating the yoking of cultural heritage with education (Waghid & Davids, 2014b). Once culture is infused into Islamic education, observe Waghid and Davids (2014b), it can "debilitate desirable educational encounters" (p. 125). By hosting two separate swimming carnivals at night, for boys and girls, this practitioner creates alternative possibilities for educational participation that do not contravene Islamic observances. More fundamentally, he demonstrates that restrictions around things such as the dress and gender segregation do not have to equate to not having opportunities to swim, compete and fully participate within schools and outside.

Nonetheless, it appears that human interpretations of Islamic education which entertain patriarchy appear to continue their gripping rhythm, nourished and sustained in the practices of some Islamic schools (Cook & Preiss, 2015). As the last quote reveals, these do not go unnoticed nor are they not championed. However, if left unchecked, that is, if practices are not seriously critiqued, interrogated, strategically addressed and accounted for, as demonstrated by the actions of Leader 4, then in the words of a graduate from *Al-Taqwa*

(Hamouda, 2015), they are systems which relegate the needs of women as secondary, thereby presenting as unjust systems of oppression rather than liberation. What is certain is once these injustices are overcome they become liberatory symbols. At Bringelly, for example, a fixed image of the swimming carnivals has salience on the school's webpage in cementing new ideals. Reiterating others, a senior student asserts:

> We also had our first-ever swimming carnival and what a splashing event it was! This year we continued many traditions set by our predecessors such as the Pre-Ramadan picnic, Harmony Day and Jeans for Genes Day, and each event brought about a sense of unity and pride which form the foundation of the school values. (AM, 2012)

Therefore, prayers, fasting, appearance and even new traditions, whether religious or emerging from a secular education system, coalesce to bind a community. According to Merry: "a strong sense of identity that has established roots and finds support in a much broader community…can be a wonderful resource for combating prejudice, stereotyping and maltreatment" (Merry, 2007, p. 97).

As practices which validate and valorise certain subjectivities (Meadmore & Symes, 1996), Islamic practices hold, to use a phrase by Kress (2011), a certain 'conventionality' of what is going on. Given that those who work in schools have understandings of their "meaning" and their "resources" to and amongst stakeholders and clients, policy makers concerned with creating culturally congruent conditions then fully recognise their "use and significance" (Kress, 2011, p. 370). Nonetheless, the concerted focus on "appearance" or "physicality" (S36) and the operationalisation of religious ritual puts forth the question of whether the schools, in placing so much emphasis on the tangible and visible, are in fact employing mechanisms to accentuate themselves as inclusive spaces to gain market advantage. What is certain in light of the current socio-political context is that by virtue of their shared recognisability, "Islamic" practices work on the wider consciousness, on parental fears and anxieties of schooling (Mansouri & Trembath, 2005; Shah, 2017). Given parental insecurities for their children's future, the concerted references to and creation of enabling conditions begs the question of whether the invoking or projecting of a "'world' which is known to them", and in procreating "similar experiences" (Kress, 2012, p. 373), the schools in the study are using socio-political conundrums as a platform to gain market advantage. Given the recent reports of unethical governance surrounding allegations of profiteering emerging in a cluster of Islamic schools in Australia (Bagshaw, 2016), this merits some

consideration. In spite of this, for Islamic schools that are providing inclusive spaces, as the data strongly suggest, then the stigmatisation of this minority group by wider society has worked in their favour, giving them an unchallenged market appeal, as does leadership intervention.

5.2.3: Leaders embody and enact Islamic values.

Alongside policies which prescribe compliance with behavioural protocols, individual commitment emerges as an important supplement to institutional policy work precisely given how easily "institutional commitment can be made without being a given" (Ahmed, 2012, p. 130). While the three schools' behaviour policies bear out the idea of team work and relationships in their welfare statements, the experience of relationships was, in the expressed thoughts of participants, often conflated with the commitments and actions of leaders. A parent, Islamic studies teacher, student, official leader, class teacher and the participating leaders often reflected on the importance of committed individuals who enable and influence institutional purpose, such as "in the way he deals with teachers and students" (S40), as a student from Peace Academy says. Actions attributed to leaders constituted by such concepts as "*adab*" and "*amanah*" (the trusteeship), with specific references to modelling, displays of care and drive, were constructed in the sentiments of a spectrum of voices, thereby consolidating Striepe and O'Donoghue (2014) and Striepe (2016), who noted that leaders used Islamic-based values to guide their practice and interpreted leadership as a service to others. Setting "a good example for students" (S25) and being "a role model" (S21) were most often complemented with building relationships, indicating that leaders not only drew on a relational and symbolic mindsets (Bolman & Deal, 2003, 2008) but displayed understandings of the notion of *adab* with reference to learner/teacher-leader relationships (Shah, 2006).

5.2.3.1: Constructing purpose symbolically with adab.

Begley (2003) noted that values are vital sources of influence on leadership practice. Alongside policies, the support, values and work of leaders were necessary in creating the schools' distinctive ethos. If commitment is located in the body of a leader then it must spread to others through forms of influence and promotion (Ahmed, 2012). One of the specific ways school leaders shape culture is symbolically, by observing rituals and traditions to support the school's heart and soul (Peterson & Deal, 1998; Deal & Peterson, 2009). For participants, the most frequently referenced strategies leaders used to integrate Islam every

day were representing Islam in everyday "speeches" (S20) through "talks", "weekly sermons at mosque[s]" (S24) and their own personas. For example, a concern for organising and leading worship rituals, presenting "Friday sermons and Islamic speeches" at Peace Academy (S41) and motivational talks were actions commonly perceived to be influential:

> **PA:** Every speech she makes she's always reminding the students about how Islam is the way of life. (S49)

> **PA:** He also gives us occasional lectures related to Islam which are effective and refreshing. (S14)

> **PA:** He gives Islamic teaching[s] during assembly every Wednesday morning and follow[s] up with a motivation to a different year group every Tuesday morning. (S12)

Influence for a parent and administrator from Bringelly involves:

> **Bringelly:** Organising inspirational talks and seminars for students during class [and] motivating them in every aspect. (S37)

> **Bringelly:** The *imam* leads prayers and always helps students to clarify any questions or discussions they could have. (S1)

Justice as a central aim for enacting Islamic education, characterised and subsumed in symbolic representation of such values as respect, fair treatment and respect for the dignity of others, was further constructed in the narratives of participating leaders in their evoking of the schools' ethos to life in words, through talks and stories. Similar clusters of words and phrases were applied by leaders to reinforce Islamic values to constituents during prayers and face to face interactions, both in the classroom and outside, referring to: "teach", "mention" (L2), "remind", "frequently state" (L4), "tell" and "motivate". At Medina, for example, the headmistress ensured opportunities for continued and ongoing "*hadeeth* discussions and Islamic talks" (L3) as did the school's deputy, stating: "[I] ensure talks are organised throughout the year", "[I] mention our Islamic values during school assemblies" (L2). In contrast, a preference for personal intervention was commonplace amongst Bringelly's leaders, making their "hands on" involvement explicit: "I am always motivating my students

to this purpose in classes, assemblies, *Jummuah Khutbah*s and other opportune platforms"
(L5). Another leader points to the sacredness of seeking knowledge, asserting: "I teach
students about *Mari'fa* (gnostics) and how we are created to achieve or pursue *Mari'fa*. I
challenge students to prepare themselves to be *Allah*'s vicegerent on earth…" (L4). The same
leader adds:

> With students, I frequently state the intentions behind our learning, constantly directing
> myself and my students to our purpose….In almost every classroom discussion; every
> pre-sporting speech or post-sporting reflection; or whole school assembly; or formal
> speeches, graduation speeches, awards night speeches, I remind students of our
> purpose. (L4)

By using Islamic rituals and traditions to communicate values as one of their strategies,
leaders shape their schools' cultures (Peterson & Deal, 1998). In the process of developing
the individual, the examples provided by stakeholders suggest that either the schools or their
leaders also show a concern for the emotional and social development of their charges. A
distinction is made in the quotes above of the fulfilment of basic human needs that can be met
through shared beliefs in the formation of a community, reiterated by key words:
"simultaneously", "togetherness", "community". More than that, the significant role of
leaders in forging these sentiments on a collective and personal level shows a concern for
affirming students' identities (Shah, 2006). Given the socio-political challenges besetting
Islamic schools, these heightened concerns for worship rituals elicit a restoration of
confidence, dignity and self-respect, by virtue of engendering acceptance and belongingness.

Secondly, a highly salient issue in the observations of participants was the actions of
leaders in making visions and values tangible (Kouzes & Posner, 2004) through their
interactions, as talking and walking exemplars, as living symbols of and embodiment of *adab*
(Al-Attas, 1980):

> **Bringelly:** He enforces the Islamic way of life to all the students, teachers, teacher-aids
> and parents. (S6)

> **PA:** He forms a good Islamic role model for the students. (S48)

> **Medina:** She sets an example both to the staff and students, demonstrating a good
> example of how to be an Australian Muslim. (S30)

Speaking of their schools' heads, teaching staff referred to displays and practice of values, modelling but also enabling others, as influence:

PA: By practicing Islamic values: prayers [and] *duas*, allowing for staff and students to have the facilities to practice day-to-day Islamic virtues. (S11)

Medina: Her mannerisms constantly reflect on her Islamic *adab*, values and behaviour at all times. (S28)

Medina: She displays a humble approach to all of her duties and represents Islam in both physical and verbal speech throughout the college. (S33)

Symbolic representation of the schools' values, of bringing the schools' ethos to life through their personas—in words and action—was similarly constructed in the stories of leaders. The five participating leaders invariably associated their nominations as being influential to their practice of modelling just actions, exemplified in the building of respectful and supportive relationships and positive interactions. Stressing the importance of exemplary conduct, Medina's deputy principal refers to "be[ing] a good role model, be[ing] calm and positive, be[ing] open to suggestions from staff, parents and students" (L2), adding:

[I am considered influential] due to the 20 years of experience I have working in schools as a teacher and a school leader as well as being a good role model for students, staff, parents and the wider school community. Furthermore, being very supportive to staff, positive, hard working and displaying professionalism in all facets of leadership. (L2)

Another middle leader asserts:

I leave my house every day and make the intention that aside from earning *halal rizaaq* [sustenance] for my family, that Allah will allow me to the best of my limited ability to display the *Aqkhlaq of Rasuloola* (SAW); that I will call people to Islam via my conduct, actions and transactions; and that Allah will grant me the best of *Iqklas* [sincerity], so that all things He allows me to do are for him; further, that these efforts may benefit the students, school and community and myself in this life, the grave and the life to come; that I will look for opportunities to increase my Iman; that should any

student or anyone need help that I will help them to the best of my ability for the sake of Allah. (L4)

Notably, in the reflections above, Allah-consciousness becomes the measure of "accountability" (Zine, 2004, p. 186), the ethical guiding compass, steering Leader 4's attention and actions, so as not to lose sight of the trust.

The *imam*s will often approach me or work with me or lead my projects… Non-Muslim teachers tend to feel comfortable to approach me about religious points they may be curious about or perceived contentious Islamic principles impacting upon their learning environments. Sometimes I act as a go-between for them and the *imam*s, who may be seen as more daunting to approach on some issues…. (L4)

Aside from modelling and care, this last quote places importance on a leader's role in filling the gaps between words and effects. Moreover, the example demonstrates the importance of leadership action in addressing the challenges that potentially arise for teachers in an environment in which they have little training and which is in dissonance with the dominant ideology, an area worthy of further investigation.

5.2.3.2: Constructing purpose relationally.

Like Hussain and Read (2015), who noted that "frequent, sustained student–teacher interaction" and further to that, "a pseudo-parental role" were the greatest strengths of Islamic schools" (p. 562), stakeholders spoke of forging relationships, guiding students and upholding respect and courtesy as rules leaders lived by, expressed in the key words supporting, encouraging, caring and respecting. As a student claims:

PA: She seems to be a beautiful teacher, gives motivating speeches to her students, also motivates students to fulfill their religious and moral requirements around school (during breaks, etc.). She has a good relationship with students and is a wonderful role model for most. (S21)

PA: [He] present[s] an Islamic perspective to the students about life and their engagement in various activities in school and outside the school. (S20)

Focusing on leaders' relationships, others assert:

Bringelly: In his interaction with students, teachers, parents and other members of the school community he reiterates the purpose. (S4)

PA: As a dean of students and coordinator for a long time before, he got to be so close to the students as he has an effective personality that is well presented with very strong influence on others. Hope he can use this skill to enhance the communication with the students and their parents towards better results. (S35)

A few participants perceived leaders' relational influence to be channelled by the consistent displays of support, motivation, encouragement, as well as "regularly counseling students" (S18) at Medina and "advising students about their Islamic responsibilities to themselves and to others" (S46) at Peace, adding:

PA: She always encourages me to do my work and sit down and study. She always gives me motivational words and tells me the benefits of studying and how it's all going to pay [off] in the end. (S47)

PA: The Principal – he/she [is] motivating us to do better in our studies and Islamic behaviour. (S44)

PA: In the Islamic Department, students have shown a great interest in learning Religion and life and the rate of students taking it has doubled. There [is] a daily influx of students in the department seeking some kind of assistance. Islamic staff and Heads of Learning Areas have established a great relationship with parents that led to the establishment of Parents [and] Friends' Association. The main aim of the Parents and Friends is to develop a sense of community with parents, teachers and students, [who] work together to deliver the best academic outcomes for our children within an Islamic environment. (S22)

Two stakeholders perceived leaders to be influential for their affiliative and caring nature, as stated of the Principal of Peace Academy: "She cares for Islamic values in the school community, looking after the school for the last 18–20 years" (S38). Moreover:

Medina: Through checks and balances ensuring the school is staying on the path of righteousness and is following the ethos and fundamental principles [by] which it exists. (S31)

It was apparent from the quotes above that the motive for connecting with students—what is implied to be uppermost in leaders' consciousness—is supporting students to achieve the schools' priorities of academic success and morality. Beyond that, the quotations suggest that leaders' day-to-day practice revolved around students. They formed connections with students at a deeper nurturing level as counsellors, mentees and helpers, clarifying, answering questions and guiding students not only to help them overcome obstacles to achievement caused "by a lack of familial human capital" (Hussain & Read, 2015, p. 563) but to fulfil their responsibilities towards themselves and others by engendering *amal* (responsible action). Whilst reasserting the vital role of leaders in aligning words with action, such quotes casting students as vulnerable, in need of inspiration but more so in need of "assistance" and guidance, place great importance on practitioner responsiveness to the prevalence of an "influx" (S22) of needs. Although Waghid (2011) places importance on the development of critical capacities of evaluation and modification for engendering care, given the exclusion of Muslim youth, it can be extrapolated that educators' displays of affection towards their charges by virtue of providing a safe space to air their grievances (Charkawi, cited in Social Cohesion, Offshore Detention, 2015) engenders harmonious relations and peace. Importantly, for students this heightened development of strong relationships increases confidence and likewise impacts academic outcomes (Shah, 2006; Hussain & Read, 2015; Merry & Driessen, 2016).

Reinforcing stakeholders' observations, modelling *adab* and treating constituents justly is re-echoed in three of the leaders' responses:

Medina: [Strategies I employ which seem to work best include] treating people fairly and being courteous to everyone and ensuring I listen to their point of view and never degrade any opinion no matter how small it may be. (L3)

Medina: People may have identified me as exercising this influence because I am always polite and respectful when dealing with them; consequently they listen to me. (L1)

Elsewhere, Leader 1 restates the above position:

Medina: Respecting people and listening to them attentively can help [in] creating a trustful relationship. (L1)

Bringelly: In facilitating this workshop, I respectfully questioned whether after 10 years of working in [an] Islamic school, could any of us, Muslim or Non-Muslim, articulate what it means to work at an 'Islamic school'? …I then respectfully stated, you can't share what you don't have! (L4)

In the responses above, the stress on key words such as "ensuring", "always", "never" and reiterations of "respectfully", show that leaders were influenced by their faith orientation when assuring the rights of others.

Furthermore, the "*amanah*" (trusteeship), the essence of leadership in Islam (Al-Attas & Wan Daud, 2007; Beekun & Badawi, 1999) supplemented *adab* as another concept for mapping and guiding leadership behaviours emerging as the overarching code for guiding leadership activity, a notion that is made explicit in the written statements of participants. Like accountability (Zine, 2004), seen from an Islamic position *amanah* relates to a responsibility to a Creator and therefore shapes the ethics of leaders' commitments and actions. This Islamic-based principle then not only shapes leaders' thinking and behaviour but gives definition, steering the way leaders presented themselves. Providing an assessment of a leader's influence, Medina's school nurse illuminates this responsibility: "Brother Nuh feels the responsibility to try and influence, to correct any incorrect attitude or behaviour displayed around the school" (S23). Indeed, for stakeholders a leader's presence not just in connecting with students but actively listening to parental concerns as well as collaborating with colleagues, is in essence guided by the trusteeship as leaders go about their everyday business as protectors and guardians of the trust. The two middle leaders from Bringelly understood the *amanah* to be inextricably bound with their influence:

If I see anything against the Islamic purpose on any level I immediately ad[d]ress it. I motivate my team to always keep the Islamic objectives ahead of them. I am always motivating my students to this purpose in classes, assemblies, *Jumm[u]ah Khut[t]bah*s and other opportune platforms. (L5)

Framing his role as trustee within a religious and scholarly discourse, another states:

Teaching as well as leadership is an *Amanah*. Being a teacher leader is thus a weighty *Amanah* and one I try to remain aware of and one that I feel very accountable to *Allah* for. As an extension of this and based on interaction with students and parents, I am very aware of the potential to exercise influence, Insha'*Allah*. Scholars remind us that a Muslim teacher is not only a transmitter of knowledge but a nurturer of souls. This makes the relationship between student and teacher somewhat heightened as it is spiritual as well. This heighted relationship point taken from scholars and reappearing now in the discourse on Islamic education by prominent academics in the field is something that I have experience directly day in day out in my role. (L4)

Again, the focus on students in the leader-student interactions is reinforced in the passages above. Like *adab*, not only does the *amanah* saturate leaders' consciousness framing their common sense but influences their relationships with stakeholders. More than that, for these practitioners it gives definition to their role within an educative and spiritual duality, not just as "tutor[s]" (L5) or as "transmitter[s] of knowledge" (L4), but it elevates their positions within a sacred dimension, constructing their roles as guardians, as "nurturer[s] of souls" (L4). Awareness that setting an example presupposes that leaders align personal actions with shared beliefs and values was articulated by Bringelly's *imam* thus:

At every step I am aware of this influence I have. I do not want to say or do anything that will set the wrong example for students to follow. I have to be mindful of how I present myself at all times. A small slip up on my behalf could be a wrong influence on some learner for a lifetime. (L5)

The last response provides reinforcement of the *imam*'s understandings of the importance of words and actions, of the "*adab*" that is particular and specific to trustees, reinforcing its importance as a leadership practice.

To align rhetoric with action, these leaders then sense and distil values that run deep within the context of the organisation (Bolman & Deal, 2003, 2008), embracing and displaying spiritual and moral qualities (Bolman & Deal, 1994). Words such as "immediately", "always" (L5), "weighty", "accountable", "spirituality", "heightened" and "souls" (L4) provide reinforcement of the underlying values these leaders live by, saturated by religious impulses that are more conservative. Not only do these underlying assumptions speak to a religious conservatism but also connect with scholarship providing the tools for

"progressive" practices (Apple, 2006). The data thus far is in rhythm with Dantley's (2005) claims that:

> The creative and positively constructive operations of faith cause a leader to actualise other human beings from a moral standpoint. Such an ethical actualisation demands a moral way of interacting and engaging with those on whom leaders have impact and influence". (p. 9)

Another leader spoke explicitly of how being present and accessible to parents and students creates trust and long-lasting rapport, suggesting that it is these ongoing supportive and close interactions which position him as a figure of trust and influence.

> I enjoy, by the grace of *Allah* (SWT) a good rapport with the student body, which is perhaps easier to achieve in the sporting, informal and community settings [where] I meet and interact with students. My influence extends well beyond the classroom, as I am present and accessible in the Mosque and in the community. It is perhaps more obvious to me given that I spent the first 5 years of my teaching career as a Non-Muslim teacher and now 10 years as a Muslim teacher. In my time at the College, many students and parents have chosen and continue to choose to talk to me about a wide range of personal issues and life decisions. Many students maintain contact after leaving school and will seek advice via email or at the Mosque, etc. Parents will often speak to me about their children or decisions they are negotiating together and ask for my support based on what they perceive to be the level of influence I hold with their children. Both parents and students frequently talk to me about issues regarding Deen. Perhaps it is because I am one of a number of examples of people in their life practising Deen (Insha'Allah) in front of them and in context. (L4)

To this, Bringelly's *imam* adds:

> Firstly [people may have identified me as exercising this influence] because I am the Head of Islamic and Arabic studies at the institute. It is expected that I will be the key person playing this role. Secondly, I have a special relation with all the students at our College. It tran[s]cends from just being a tutor to being a role model and a leading figure. (L5)

Importantly, the notion of support comes up again, casting students as susceptible and in need of guidance. The need to be counselled (S18), motivated (S21), encouraged (S47) and assisted (S22) implies that this issue is uppermost in participants' consciousness, suggesting

that the added value for those who sign up for these schools lies in the nurture and care offered by practitioners, in helping "make their lives better" (S29). This critical age of identity formation, with the added "stereotyping, negative assumptions, social exclusion, racism, media hostility, association with terrorism, harassment, religious hatred, and discrimination" (Shah, 2007, p. 3) that students confront on a daily basis (Halford, 2008), heightens the need for the type of guidance and stability needed to counter feelings of inferiority and rebellion. Thus, leadership gestures commensurate with a heightened sense of affection rather than the development of critical evaluation links with students' contextual needs. If a sense of community evolved from structures of feelings generated by shared "Islamic etiquettes", then leadership drive in modelling the way and forging caring relationships ties a binding knot, spurring a heightened sense of belonging within a community. In shaping the conditions of learning, leaders' commitments are then of fundamental significance in transforming students' lives, thereby giving the schools an unprecedented advantage of selection desirability. By virtue of their moral presence: the guidance, support and care they offered, leaders asserted themselves as powerful agents of social and political transformation.

Policies, the informal curriculum and leaders worked in unison to evoke the Islamic ethos of the school. By ranking the schools' Islamic ethos high on their lists of priorities and stressing the centrality of faith in everyday rituals, such as morning Quranic recitations, supplications and *Zuhr Salaat*, Friday *khuttbah*, *wudu*, gender segregation and Islamic dress code, schools cater to devout parents who wish to reinforce their Islamic heritage (Merry, 2015). These qualities are no mere selling points but inhere to give Islamic schools a distinctive niche in the market. In particular, by virtue of facilitating inclusion through religious practices concomitantly with faith leaders and "enabling" resources like readily available facilities, time and supportive staff, schools assert themselves as an unrivalled force. Importantly, Islam is experienced as the norm rather than the pervasive suspect state it has come to occupy in public institutions and the state. As Merry (2015) noted, being able to select an authentically religious school is for some clients a marker of distinction (p. 139).

5.3: Building Civic Connections: Applying Values and Life Skills in Everyday Living

Ramadan (2004) considers religious education to be paramount in connecting with the personal lives of students. He posits that programs which develop connections with students' daily lives and the wider community as well as facilitate independent thinking and autonomy,

are fundamental to Islamic education in multicultural societies. Schools in the study have always committed to producing students for "full participation in the affairs of the Australian and world community", deeming it "critical to being a good student and citizen" (Medina, Mission Statement). Alongside the individual and social development prompted by religious practices, peace and human coexistence is another issue made highly explicit in the data. The concerted drive for developing life skills framed within a moral compass is embedded in the extra-curricular programs, for "words that are spoken" by the schools "then circulate" (Ahmed, 2012, p. 56), taken up in supporting welfare policies, communication materials and translated by leaders. Peace Academy's Bullying Policy (BP, 2012) and Bringelly and Medina's communication documents, for example, draw heavily on institutional identity to create a supportive and orderly environment underlined by values, by a disciplinary tradition promoting respect, responsibility and God-consciousness concomitantly with the building of knowledge and a repertoire of explicit skills for active and responsible citizenship.

Johns et al. (2015) noted that participating in interfaith dialogue and community events enabled young Muslims to embody values and principles informed by religiosity whilst also opening up an avenue to become more connected and actively involved citizens. In the study schools exist policies and programs which attest to the salience of discourses surrounding the importance of developing the necessary knowledge, attitudes, behaviour and skills for developing civic responsibility and increased participation with other students from the state imbued by a conservatism that is more religious. Opportunities provided for student application of the acquired repertoire of life skills, including literacy and oral skills, service work and inter-school sports, worked hand in glove with the application of the virtues taught. Consolidating the findings of Jones (2012), outreach programs featured extensively in the informal practices of the three cases. Peace Academy glosses over such initiatives:

> Extra curricula activities:
>
> Poetry Competition; Creative Art Competition; Harmony Day; Inter-School Sports Competition; Cricket Clinic; Library Scholastic Book Fair; Visits with Catholic Colleges… PA Open Day; Numeracy Week… Athletics Carnival; Visits from Malaysian and Indonesian schools; Curtin English and English Literature Conference; Leadership Forum hosted by the Muslim's Women's Support Centre; Public Speaking and Debating; and Spelling Competition. (Annual Report, 2012)

Similarly, ongoing communal links with the local police, nursing home and local football team were highlighted amongst the multiple student initiatives at Medina (website). Bringelly's *Annual School Magazine* (2012) and website likewise feature an extensive coverage of 27 cross-curricular experiences whereby the school facilitated events to engage students within the local school and national community. Student recounts of their interactive experiences in nationwide events featured in written texts and were captured in single and large group photographic images, including for interfaith projects; Anzac Day ritual, whole school dress up for Harmony Day; and Clean Up Australia Day. Notably, the initiatives highlighted above, and others, were not isolated experiences. Rather, the in-school and inter-school sporting programs, interfaith dialogue and debating skills are strongly resonant, reported in both written texts and supported by visuals. For example, Bringelly's development of oral skills through debating or *shura* asserted in conceptual words and phrases: "rebuttal", "think on our feet", "both sides of the argument" (AM, 2012) emerge as a fundamental educational practice across the three schools. Referring to its debating programs, Medina asserts:

> The aim of the program [debating] is not only to promote the college through engagement with other schools in the state, but also to enhance the ability of our students to speak in front of their peers and adults. (Website)

Similarly, at Bringelly there exists a whole-school debating initiative which fosters skills in writing, presenting, critique and understanding alternative perspectives, as indicated in the statement made by a student:

> …These debates really tested our persuasive writing talents, and made us think on our feet in order to come up with rebuttal during the debate. This is the hardest part of all the debating skills to learn!... Debating is a wonderful skill to learn, as it enables you to look at both sides of the argument even if you do not necessarily agree with the topic and the side you have been given. (AM, 2012)

By developing in students the willingness to listen to each other's "conflicting views and differences", with an attitude of "openness" and "non-coercion", *shura* (mutual engagement) connects to '*adl* (justice) (Waghid, 2011, p. 30).

Unlike Peace Academy, Medina and Bringelly practiced more extensively the development of emotional intelligence as an approach for developing civic responsibilities. Where Medina stressed the modern-day curriculum title of "Social Development",

Bringelly's initiatives, as stated, were navigated by a moral framework commonly referenced across documents and by stakeholders as *adab* and *akhlaq*. Two stakeholders from Medina put it thus:

> [School Purpose is experienced in] the Quran classes, Islamic studies and LOTE (Arabic) classes… At the same time the generalist teachers encourage the students to build their values and instruct them in civics and citizenship. The school counsellors also play a big part in helping students to develop their social and emotional skills. (S34)

> The classes will be filled with young Australian Muslims, wanting to aspire and become the future leaders of this country…The school helps, supports and caters for the lower socio-economical Muslim parents through various programs and initiatives. Eg, re-educating parents on the social norms of Australian society, free tutoring available to all students at the College, etc... (S35)

To elaborate, initiatives to facilitate emotional intelligence ranging from the Personal and Social Development Programs (PSD) at Medina or the annual Acting Against Bullying Project at Bringelly are geared towards building such skills as resilience and leadership, managing emotions, empathy, positive relationships and responsibility.

> PSD is designed to promote important life skills in students as it involves students acquiring and effectively applying the knowledge, attitudes, and skills necessary to understand and manage emotions, setting and achieving positive goals, feeling and showing empathy for others, establishing and maintaining positive relationships, and making responsible decisions. (Medina website).

> The Acting Against Bullying Project is an annual event at the College which increases students' resilience through the fostering of empathy which is a natural by-product of the drama. Students also experience different roles and perspectives and witness the impact that this has on others through the neutrality and safety of drama. The project further aims to equip students with personal skills in order to empower them to be active bystanders. (Bringelly, AM, 2012)

Whilst the quotations above place importance on the value of building skills concomitantly with values, initiatives foregrounding social participation in such scope and depth dispel the charge that students from Islamic schools are provided with an Islamic

education that cuts them off from the surrounding society: "ill-educated and ill equipped in the real world" (Ramadan, 2004, p. 132). More than that, they challenge the charge of divisiveness, ghettoisation and fragmentation of society made against Islamic schools (Halstead & McLaughlin, 2005; Zine, 2007).

Done differently to Peace, at Bringelly concern and responsiveness to societal issues were also rendered key determinants, eliciting the planning of interventionist initiatives and meaningful learning experiences. Identification of students' low levels of social participation is an issue made explicit, giving impetus to programs which engender student interaction with the surrounding society. In this school where "sporting activities" (S8) are asserted to be a vehicle to realising purpose, one leader comments on the development of a number of school projects like sport, service learning and charity work, specifically, his work and engagement in *shura* or collaboration alongside students and colleagues:

> [I] worked with students to devise a code of conduct for our students when representing the school/community/Islam on the sporting field (highlighted the *Adab* and *Akhlaq* that is in due proportion and fitting for the occasion) [and] established intentions (*Niyah*) for our involvement in sport so it could, Insha'*Allah* be seen as a form of worship and not wasted time. … As part of my role in health education, I have facilitated and supported students in a variety of whole secondary school projects. The Acting Against Bullying is a major annual student-led project that has been successful in assisting students to manage conflict and up-skill students and staff about bullying and how to reduce the incidence and severity. Other projects included a whole-school waste project; a stress project which was instrumental in restructuring prayer times, timetable timings, study periods, Wednesday sport and time spent on electives and non-elective subjects. Most recently, we have been involved in a major project geared towards increasing civic engagement and social participation (young Australian Muslims exhibit some of the lowest levels of social participation and civic engagement). To do this we initiated an outreach project in which we joined Banksia's Street Retreat and visited our friends on the street (local homeless), feeding and sharing time with them. (L4)

Consistent with Vergani et al. (2017), assuming responsibility for building bridges and addressing the challenges that Muslims face today is revealed in the quotations above. Primarily, for Leader 4 learning that links to the context and teaching the etiquette of conduct was just as important as the politics of representation (Hall, 1997), of teaching and having

students try and contest discourses demonising Islam in the public sphere. This leader is showing his students how lived civic engagement can be a form of activism in redeeming the public image of Islam (Vergani et al., 2017). Countering the production of racialised knowledge around Islam and the school itself or "rebranding" the public image of their group of belonging (Vergani et al., 2017, p. 74) was for this leader a key skill to instil within his students. Notably, *adab* and *akhlaq* become as relevant for application as an educational model, but also as an anchor strategy for addressing contemporary issues, to contest and challenge the existing reductionist images and stereotypes around students and their communities. Whilst practices such as the ones employed by Leader 4 above, argues Hall (1997b), may not reverse stereotypes, they can substitute the negative imagery and stories which dominate popular representation, to construct a positive identification.

Secondly, and of fundamental importance in the example above, is the facilitation of *shura* (Waghid, 2011) and discussions (Zajda, 2009; Waghid, 2011) over values and conduct. Such words and phrases as "instruct", "helping students to develop" (S34) at Medina, and "supported", "worked with students" and repetition of the pronoun "we" in the quote above, elicit notions of commitment and team work. They indicate shared sustained planning and executed process by practitioners, alluding to the importance placed on such initiatives concomitantly with the support given to students as they connect with others.

Moreover, across the three schools' documents student involvement in "interschool sports programs" featured strongly. Where Medina reported student participation in 19 different interschool sports, at Bringelly sport featured as a conduit for embedding and applying *adab* and *akhlaq* into actions and social interactions.

> Our students engage in a wide variety of sporting endeavour so as to embody Islamic principles and values (*adab*), the sublime character of the Prophet Mohammed (SAW) as well the shared values that have become part of Australia's national identity. The proud sporting tradition established at our College showcases the infusion of these lofty intentions as well as adding to the ambience of our College community ethos. (Bringelly website)

Adab and *akhlaq* then provided the terrain for addressing the shared concerns of young Muslims, Islamic schools and society for transformation. More than that, they offer, as the views above pinpoint, an example of a shared conceptual framework for communicating and acting upon the ideals of conduct and team spirit. For this school community, *adab* and

akhlaq provided the "roadmap" for interrupting hegemonic projects in education (Apple, 2005, 2006, 2015). Leader 4 and the student counsel at Bringelly put it thus:

> There is little doubt no matter the results, all BIC teams will once again compete for every second of every match and will do us proud with their teamwork, conduct and '*akhlaq*', a reputation they are fast becoming known for… (Head of HPE, AM, 2012)

Reflecting on their years at Bringelly, senior students conflate the values they live by with the school's values, demonstrating how *adab* and a*khlaq*, with their underlying concern for doing the right thing, saturates their consciousness, stating:

> One thing that I have learned throughout my seven years at the college is that it's not about being the coolest kid or having the most friends – rather it's about being the best role model for the younger kids who look up to you, and displaying best *Akhlaq* (manners) to those in and out of the College. (School Prefect, AM, 2012)

> Every student should think about how they can contribute positively to the College through their actions, words and *Akhlaq*. (Vice Captain, AM, 2012)

Like *adab* and *akhlaq*, Peace's "values integration" is cited and reiterated across texts, providing the road map for guiding learning and consequently behaviour. As a school which adopts categories of the dominant ideology in partnership with Islamic principles to respond to external policies, Peace Academy reveals the dominance of its religious ethos and how it influences its take on local policies, at a number of levels. Beyond codes and rules, this school takes the opportunity to amplify its local policy enactments in the engagement of teachers and heads in the planning of, as well as student participation in, extra-curricular experiences framed by Islamic morals, ensuring their integration in the informal structures. As stated, the impetus for "values integration" at this school was always highlighted and consistently reinforced as a measure for preparing just students with the standards of interaction and desirable states of existence (Zajda, 2009), for "proper conduct" characterised by "respect", "responsibility", "forgiveness", "truthfulness, "cooperation" and knowledge:

> Values integration is an integral part of the school ethos;
> Values integration is about promoting within the students ideals in life …
> Through values integration our next generation of children will know how to deal with the world using proper conduct and morals… Islamic Values integration teaches that God-consciousness and morality are the foundations of a healthy society. Peace

Academy endeavours to ensure a future generation of students who will not only graduate with strong academic achievements, but also with a strong identification towards the well-being of society. (Website)

The passages above show a link between "Islamic values" and "good" and "proper" "conduct", placing emphasis on "God-consciousness" and morality as its precursors.

Moreover, Peace Academy's *Bullying Policy* (2012) also featured 'intersections' (Braun et al., 2011, p. 591) of external policy mandates with the local context, placing increased emphasis on the values integration with the prescribed provisions of a safe and supportive environment. An ethical framework grounded in the teachings of Islam, consistently referencing Quranic chapters and verses, *ahadeeth*, as well as poems and stories were revealed to be valuable strategies for meeting learning outcomes relating to bullying. How practices of pietisation interlink with respect and responsible behaviour is reinforced thus:

Human beings are all equal and there is no room for teasing or bullying any one on any basis. (*Suraht Al Hujurat*, 49: 11)

Prophet Mohammad (PBUH) said: "A strong person is not the person who throws his adversaries to the ground. A strong person is the one who contains himself when he is angry". (p. 12)

O ye who believe! Let not some men among you laugh at others: it may be that the (latter) are better than the (former): nor let some women laugh at others: it may be that the (latter) are better than the (former): nor defame nor be sarcastic to each other, nor call each other by (offensive) nicknames: ill seeming is a name connoting wickedness, (to be used of one) after he has believed: and those who do not desist are (indeed) doing wrong. (*Al Hujurat*, 49: 11)

يَـٰٓأَيُّهَا ٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا۟ لَا يَسْخَرْ قَوْمٌ مِّن قَوْمٍ عَسَىٰٓ أَن يَكُونُوا۟ خَيْرًا مِّنْهُمْ وَلَا نِسَآءٌ مِّن نِّسَآءٍ عَسَىٰٓ أَن يَكُنَّ خَيْرًا مِّنْهُنَّ وَلَا تَلْمِزُوٓا۟ أَنفُسَكُمْ وَلَا تَنَابَزُوا۟ بِٱلْأَلْقَـٰبِ بِئْسَ ٱلِٱسْمُ ٱلْفُسُوقُ بَعْدَ ٱلْإِيمَـٰنِ وَمَن لَّمْ يَتُبْ فَأُو۟لَـٰٓئِكَ هُمُ ٱلظَّـٰلِمُونَ ﴿١١﴾

The above ayah tells us at least four things about bullying:

1) "No" to laughing at each other

2) "No" to defaming each other

3) "No" to being sarcastic to each other

4) "No" bullying. (p. 13)

Throughout the *Bullying Policy* (2012) select Quranic verses which intersect with the learning outcomes being achieved are extracted concomitantly with a special methodology, "strategy and chronological order" of teaching them. In this instance, *Suraht al-Hujurat* (49), amongst others, as indicated, provided the school a valuable foundation for extracting morals and lessons to counteract bullying, taught through, as the policy asserts: the "4 stages of acquiring knowledge", including: "1. Learning; 2. Reflection; 3. Application; and 4. Passing it on". For example, once students recited and "memorised *Surat Al-Hujurat* at Morning assembly", they are then taught the morals and behaviours to adopt to counteract bullying, then reflect "upon their meanings and significance" and apply this knowledge to their behaviour. Virtues extracted from this Quranic chapter, including: "respect", "truth", patience, fairness, justice, humbleness, "honour" and "righteousness" are highlighted as important behaviours for application in students' everyday interactions, equipping them with resilience, discipline and self-restraint.

> Students are reminded to be mindful of the meanings of *Suraht al-Hujurat*… They are invited to reflect on its meanings… apply it to their behaviours and …pass its messages to others.

> Behaviours to Adopt (from *Suraht al-Hujurat*)
>
> 1. Always have respectful behaviour
>
> 2. Always ascertain the truth
>
> 3. Be patient and content
>
> 4. Always be fair and just when dealing with people
>
> 5. Being humble extinguishes arrogance
>
> 6. Your honour depends on righteousness. (p. 22)

The extracts above reveal informal teaching strategies of repetition and reinforcement through memorisation (*hifz*), explanation (*tafseer*) and the application of values, and show the integration of *ta'rbiyah*, *ta'ilm* and *ta'dib* for engendering *amal* (Waghid, 2011). Just as

importantly, they provide insights into the ideals that give significance to stakeholders' lives and how they are sustained by the everyday practices of schools and the work and common sense of actors. Given that values are further reinforced in the classroom through follow up structured lessons and programs, allowing for student deliberative engagement and critique (Waghid, 2011), engendering discussion (Zajda, 2009), or rather to use Webster's (2010) phrase, "democratic dialogue" (p. 468), then they potentially engage students with the dilemmas and complexities of everyday life. This type of engagement, says Webster (2010), allows participants to share the rationale, purposes and reasons why they believe their own worldview has merit and why the associated values are considered to have value and to be willing to have these critiqued by others. Of importance in this argument is the practice of developing students' confidence to interact with other communities who believe and are committed to worldviews that might appear at odds with their own (Webster, 2010).

The daily morning morals program at Peace Academy, accruing to 1:40 hours a week, which is compounded by learning involving repetition, recitation, memorisation and application of morals, ranks this procedure as a priority. More than that, the daily rituals concomitantly with the values-based talks align Islamic beliefs and morals with educational experiences of relevance to students' lives, both personally and socially. These are delivered by, as a stakeholder from Peace asserts, "educated" (S29) practitioners who provide not just counsel and assistance but, as the schools stress, the right Islamic teachings and guidance rather than the type of indoctrinatory views students may come across through peers or as noted by Becker (2011) in chat rooms. If the fostering of a highly specific moral orientation in everyday practices yields a sense of security for parents wanting to shield their children from certain materialist and secular influences (Merry, 2005) as well as racialisation, then initiatives to equip students with the tools and confidence to deal with everyday social issues prepares students to engage constructively with modern-day conundrums. The data thus far speaks of an education which is steeped in morals grounded in the Islamic tradition, corresponding with Berglund (2014), who asserted that teachers of Islamic schools respond to modern, everyday issues impacting on students' lives and the social issues of our times.

Ramadan (2004) noted that students are likely to be far more responsive if they feel that an "issue" has emerged from a real context. In either inter- or intra-school activities students in the three case schools are given the knowledge, values and skills but also the opportunities to apply them by participating with students from other schools, on an equal footing. In doing so, inequalities of power are restored. Voluntary separation in the form of an Islamic school

then provides a compelling solution to the multiple problems confronting Muslim students (Merry, 2015). By instituting faith-commitment across school-wide operational processes, schools and leaders work towards preparing students for responsible and active citizenship. Whilst it seems that the social order is against Islamic schools, these schools are working for and towards establishing a just and cohesive social order.

5.4: Chapter Five Conclusion

Consistent with Apple and Beane (cited in Apple, 2015) the data thus far suggests that schools and their leaders are striving to create educational programs that are both pedagogically and politically emancipatory. Leaders not only indicate a deep understanding of the educational and larger issues that affect students but exert influence by negotiating the two landscapes as they shape the schools' informal operations to inspire learners to achieve moral success and responsible action. By providing culturally congruent extra-curricular experiences centred on Islamic practices with supportive practitioners that enable these, Islamic schools transform students' lives, thus playing a critical role in the restoration of justice. In doing so, these schools give themselves an unchallenged, competitive edge in the educational market.

As Al-Attas (1980) asserted, without the proper knowledge (*'ilm*) one cannot be a good and responsible person, and indeed a person of *adab*. While schools do function to distribute ideological values and knowledge, this is not all they do (Apple, 2004). By carefully inspecting curriculum documents and what leaders say and do, the next chapter turns to an analysis of the ideological assumptions ingrained in the three schools' formal corpus of knowledge.

CHAPTER SIX: CONSTRUCTING PURPOSE IN THE FORMAL CURRICULUM: WHOSE KNOWLEDGE? WHOSE INTERESTS? WHOSE WAYS?

6.1: Chapter Six Introduction

The previous chapter revealed that a concern for producing responsible students with the moral means to share and proactively engage with national and global issues was of strong resonance in the informal activities of three Islamic schools. It was found that *ta'dib*, teaching just and responsible action, was not a standalone goal but weaved into the Monday to Friday informal Islamic teachings, across: worship and spiritual observance, the values taught, behaviours enforced, and dress enactments. Constitutive concepts of justice, including respect, responsibility, co-operation and courtesy, guided behaviour and when practised in interactions with peers, teachers and society formed connections with an inner and outer community. Inspired by the comprehensive and universal principles of Islam (Ramadan, 2004), faith leaders' interventions were instrumental for translating commitments and policy work into the schools' informal programs.

To maintain a strong educational market appeal, it was concluded that an authentic religious ethos must be high on the list of the schools' priorities (Merry, 2015). This not only helps students learn about justice but restores equitable outcomes, thus contributing to the restoration of justice for marginalised minorities. Nevertheless, it remains that the everyday informal practices are not enough to fulfil the schools' representational claims of being "Islamic". School-wide cohesion cannot be afforded by embedding religious practice merely into the informal curriculum but through integrating fundamental Islamic teachings into the corpus of knowledge. As a fundamental layer of school culture, the formal curriculum (Starratt, 2003) cannot only aim to meet the high academic inclinations of the heterogeneous clientele but also to incorporate Islamic doctrines in all subjects (Merry, 2005, 2015) simultaneously with meeting the needs of their disenfranchised constituencies in the societies they live in (Ramadan, 2004). Tensions arise as movements to ensure that action aligns with the schools' theory, as schools or certain individuals speak up on behalf of and lead alternative policies and programs,and engage in critical work of interpretation and re-translation (Panjwani, 2004) to reshape common sense (Apple, 2001). This chapter draws on the data from an analysis of documents and the Leadership Questionnaire to answer research questions two and three. These are: How do broader contextual factors and stakeholder

experiences contribute to the construction of the espoused purpose of Islamic schools? and, how do leaders construct the espoused purpose of Islamic education in a complex backdrop of educational choice, markets and Islamophobia? As the Stakeholder Survey also harnessed participants' views in relation to how leaders promote espoused purpose, this data is also presented.

Apple (2004) argued that educational institutions function to distribute ideological values and knowledge, but their ultimate function is to distribute dominant political, economic and cultural arrangements. Just as the everyday Islamic teachings were prevalent, another key matter which has been expressed in the sentiments of stakeholders and widely canvassed in the policies of schools is the centrality of knowledge, both the sacred and secular. In particular, the corpus of knowledge emerged as a thorny issue, challenging the conceptual framing of "excellence" from the perspective of an Islamic education (Al-Attas, 1980; Thomas, 2002). Attached to the whats (content), whys and hows (pedagogy) of knowing are dual competing discourses around what the body of knowledge is and should be – creating a site of contestation, negotiation and struggle for revisiting, contouring and reshaping the content and forms of knowledge that are deemed to be worthy for educating Muslim children in an Australian society. Yet Islamic education has always sought for the harmonious complementarity of the religious subjects and the secular disciplines.

In the analysis of data, the formal curriculum revealed the prominence of dual but competing discourses. It is underlied by a religious conservatism and a discourse of neoliberal technologies: efficiency, excellence and performativity (Ball, 2016). Therefore, the orientation which dominated the curriculum, in my analysis, manifested in a "bifurcationist" discourse and a "non-bifurcationist" discourse (Waghid, 2011, 2012). The first ("bifurcationist") discourse is linked with the teaching of sacred knowledge that is harnessed by traditional methods (Ramadan, 2004) and the cultivation of cultural ways alongside the appended pervasive body of "technical knowledge" (Apple, 2004, p. xxi). The second ("non-bifurcationist") discourse is an orientation towards a unified "values integrated" formal curriculum. Three salient issues are presented: the first is *markets, excellence and God-consciousness in a bifurcated curriculum*, the second is *the problematics of a bifurcated curriculum*, and the third issue is *moving towards a contextualisation of Islamic education: one curriculum for negotiating the "double space"*.

6.2: Markets, Excellence and God-Consciousness in a Bifurcated Curriculum

Apple (2006) pointed to conservative movements that emphasise the tense but complimentary marriage of religion and the economy, noting as a common trend of such movements the pulling together of all the elements of "markets and the restoration of character and "real knowledge" (p. 19). Success across the three case schools is captured by a version of doing education which is contained in a bifurcated approach to producing and embedding knowledge (Waghid, 2011), navigated by market logics, with "God-consciousness" as the road map, as stated by Peace and Medina. This is consistent with Memon (2012), who asserted that Islamic schools employ a dichotomous curriculum approach to transmitting religious knowledge, or, as summed up by a school leader at Bringelly, "the appendage model of tacking Islamic studies on to a general curriculum" (L4). A bifurcated body of knowledge is framed by dominant priorities and the traditions of the schools and engages with two main issues that are both external and localised: excellence and its appropriation by a neoliberal educational discourse as well as an appended Islamic Studies curriculum that is gripped by tradition. Both present as obstacles for the realisation of a context-relevant purpose.

6.2.1: Whose excellence? appropriating a neoliberal educational discourse.

The success of an Islamic school cannot be measured by success in tests and examinations (Ramadan, 2004). Conception of excellence or *ihsan* as being based on the Quranic criteria of intelligence, knowledge, and virtue (Al-Attas, 1980; Hanson, n.d.) would suggest that Islamic institutions, who exist to institutionalise these criteria, should not be seduced by bureaucratic conceptions of "excellence". Rather, Davids and Waghid (2016) contend:

> To fulfil…what it means to act with human excellence is to honour…the responsibility of trustee of Allah on earth (*khalīfatullāh fī al-ard*) [vicegerency], and… the responsibility to humankind and the environment through the extension of honesty, respect, tolerance, compassion and justice. (p. 126)

In the analysis, the dominant discourse of "excellence", conceived as the most efficient way to transmit and reproduce the dominant culture, displaced the discourse of excellence from an Islamic point of view, which is stated and reiterated thus in the expressed sentiments of a leader from Bringelly: "We seem to have sacrificed the Islamic purpose for a very narrow interpretation of 'excellence' in modern schooling in an 'Islamic' environment" (L4).

A key issue that is widely explored in the policies of schools in this study and in the frequent voicing of thoughts by key stakeholders is that of taking the "external contexts" (Braun et al., 2011) very seriously, thereby consolidating Apple's (2006) assertions that those with the most economic, political and cultural power have convinced schools and their constituents that the maps of reality circulated by them are wiser than their alternatives. Across texts, in extracts, visuals and figures, exists a prominent discourse of neoliberal educational policies which have become the common sense of an emerging international school consensus aimed at creating the ideal citizen (Apple, 2006). In their constructions of success, the three schools delineated their position of being at the "top" of the game. More specifically, claims Peace Academy, is its goal of ranking amongst the "top ten schools" (Prospectus), whereas the other two schools assert their positions amongst "the top ranking" schools (Websites). Similarly, the experience of excellence for stakeholders of Peace Academy is synonymous with the "streaming of classes… and others [programs] to cater for academic subject success" (S44), stressing "the importance [placed] on these classes" (S10). Another stakeholder elaborated thus:

> Most of the students are very devoted to their studies. This will be obvious to you [visitors] when you enter a classroom and see the amount of effort and concentration put into the students' work. (S51)

Furthermore, influence at Peace was conflated with practitioner encouragement of "studying" (S47), doing "better" (S44), stressing "the importance of our education to achieve the top results" (S33).

Consistent with its espoused commitments, at Peace Academy academic excellence was always articulated as "the ultimate goal" and further expanded in the body of policies through the emphasis placed on the arrangement of texts (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006), the "visuality of writing" (Cranny-Francis, 2005, p. 12) and the repetition of core words and key concepts. Throughout its Induction Policy (2014), for instance, this school is explicit in its commitment to "excellence", visually capitalising, italicising and colour coding, to specifically focus teachers' attention to one of the two central projects of the school:

> *ROLE OF COLLEGE:* The College commits to the provision (within their capacity) of all necessary resources that will aid in the academic success of its students. (p. 44)

Elsewhere the school reiterates the above in its Quarterly publication (QP, 2012, Issue 183):

We aim to set high standards at the college. We are doing everything possible to prepare our students academically and intellectually for their future lives.

It seems for this school there exists, in the words of Cranny-Francis (2005), a "need for laboured verbal or written explication" (p. 14). For example, for a teacher being inducted at this school the first heading introduced in the Induction Policy (IP, 2014), immediately after the preamble, is "academic excellence" (p. 5), which is then compounded by 35 additional references to the College's academic orientation in the same document.

Academic Excellence is of utmost importance to us…. In every field, in every venture they [students] should aim to excel and consequently be of great benefit to Australian society. Being average is not good enough anymore…. (p. 44)

What the school refers to in the last extract speaks to the "dominance" of neoliberal policies in education (Apple, 2004, 2006, 2015; Davies & Bansel, 2007), of values predisposed towards economic productivity, performativity and efficiency. Underpinning the school's position is a vision of students as "human capital", as future workers equipped with the requisite skills and dispositions to compete in a "vast supermarket" (Apple, 2005, p. 273). On the other hand, by engaging deeply with performance, schools are working towards bridging the socio-economic disparity of this minority. According Hussain and Read (2015), Islamic schools strengthen the integration of Muslim communities by arming young students with qualifications to compete for places in mainstream higher education institutions and the labour force.

Across the three schools' homework policies, private studying and working hard were often linked to instilling virtues of responsibility and success. Extension of time outside school hours is a necessity in the interest of "future academic pursuits", claimed Bringelly (PIB, Year 4, 2016) or "in order to achieve success", as asserted by Medina. Indeed, there was no shortage of information concerning study/homework, detailing: the purpose of study, how to study, the amount of study time and consequences of not studying. Study and Homework Policies accompanied by comprehensive guidelines and timetables guided and redirected students' and parents' focus to the colleges' unwavering directives, compelling them, as Bringelly attests, "to maintain a high academic standard" (PIB, Year 6, 2016). Linked to this are the schools' emphases on regulatory mechanisms as a vital constituent for encouraging students to be "responsible", "very active" and in appreciation of the "value of

homework" (Medina). These values of schooling must then be facilitated by giving schools the scope and flexibility to regulate students outside school hours through such control mechanisms as: extension of the school day, study schedules, reading programmes, memorisation, assignments and testing regimes. As well as extending the school day to maximise face-to-face time at Peace Academy, commencing school from 8:20am till 3:30pm, the College's Homework Policy, for example, foregrounded the rationale for establishing good study habits and types of study tasks, as well as specifying frequency and amount of homework for all grades, to maximise "academic success", as indicated in the Year 8 study hours below:

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday	Total
1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5	4	4	15.5

(IP, 2014, p. 54)

Furthermore, the total school hours, estimated at 38 per week, was combined with a study schedule of a minimum of 15.5 hours allocated for such tasks as: incomplete classwork, "assignments", "revision", "summary" for each lesson covered in the day, "reading" and studying for examinations (IP, 2014, pp. 53–54). Excluding the extra remedial and enrichment supplementary classes offered outside school hours, a year eight student at this school undertakes an average of 53 hours study/learning time to achieve the prescribed "excellence" criteria. When compared elsewhere, to the allotted 21 hours of independent home study time at Medina, this work presents as a smaller load for a student from within the same cohort group, increasing significantly during examination times.

> **Medina:** Year 12 VCE students are more than halfway through the year with only 14 weeks left until the final exams. I would like to advise all year 12 students' parents to continue their support and discuss the VCE Program with their child regularly. VCE students, this is the time you need to study more and put in 100% effort to achieve a high ATAR score. (Bulletin, 2011)

> Nothing less than the study measures in place are good enough for Peace Academy:

> If students are not consistently putting in this many hours, they are most probably not doing enough. (IP, 2014, p. 53)

Consolidating these documents were the expressed opinions of a few stakeholders and a leader, not only reinforcing the schools' strong academic orientations, but more than that, discussing their subsequent effects on pedagogy and practice and making connections with the political climate explicit. An "OP focused" (S56) curriculum placing "great importance on the academic subjects" (S10) is a concern for an administrator and student from Peace Academy and Bringelly. A leader from the latter sheds light on the school's concerted focus "on academic excellence, outstanding test scores and comparative school ranking" (L4), making explicit links with a relentlessly negative political climate. Leader 4 is aware of the vulnerable situation of Islamic schools and sees the excellence orientation embraced by Bringelly—and by implication other Islamic schools—to be inextricably tied to what Gulson and Webb (2012) assert as a "complex racialised politics surrounding education" (p.697). Leader 4 argues that:

> Islamic schools in Australia were established in a political climate that questioned their legitimacy from the beginning despite the fact that other faith-based schools had been well established for decades. In order to counteract this negative climate, Islamic schools focused on academic excellence: outstanding test scores and comparative school ranking. This reaction has had significant negative consequences on pedagogy, with exam preparation, extra tuition, coaching in national competition papers, and the exclusion of underperforming students the strategies adopted. This 'vision' has sidelined more important teaching and learning activities. Deep and critical learning, effective teaching in the Islamic tradition and a focus on assisting students realise purpose have all been neglected.

The thoughts above correspond with the position of Islamic schools within the wider cultural politics in education. In persevering to raise performance and rankings, schools participated in the production of a type of "commodified knowledge" that is needed to reproduce existing arrangements (Apple, 2004, p. xxi) but also to legitimate their presence in the market. The decision to adopt local models with what has been asserted as Islamic "veneers on top" (L4), to be seen as institutions breeding excellence with the added-on religious practices, corresponds with issues of power and control, domination and subordination. Schools who do not embrace the performance economy are seen as "unprofessional", even "irresponsible" (Ball, 2016, p. 9), and in the case of Islamic schools, suspect. Like "values", excellence as a response to the wider politics becomes a legitimising institution in an unequal context which has always perceived these institutions as a threat

(Dunn et al., 2007). Schools therefore participate in a type of double-edged tactic. Alignment with a competitive economy thus serves a dual purpose of legitimating the schools' existence as an equal in the popular consciousness whilst simultaneously marketing a product to guarantee parents' future investments. In doing so, they are working towards dampening the pervasive moral panic without neglecting customer satisfaction. According to Ball (2003), schools in a fragile 'market' position may well submit to becoming whatever it seems necessary to become in order to survive. Therefore, performance improvements form the basis for decision-making.

Whilst emphasis on the secular academic subjects is not a new phenomenon in Islamic schools (Sanjakdar, 2001; Hussain & Read, 2015), what the data problematises are inequitable practices and, in so doing, the institutions' neglect of the lifeblood of the school. Constraints arising from the achievement practices the schools subscribe to are in contradistinction with the "freedom" (S41) and sense of community (S22, S6) elicited by the schools' religious practices. Yet in spite of the overriding tensions, the discourse of academic achievement, with its highly developed disciplinary regimes, speaks of not just commitments but assuredness and confidence in its functionality, one less often associated with the embedding of Islamic teachings in the formal curriculum.

6.2.2: The appended Islamic curriculum: imported from "there" to "here".

As well as placing emphasis on a curriculum that is more in tune with the dominant neoliberal market ideology, the discourse of excellence was not without a moral and value-laden anchorage constituted across documents and in the experiences of stakeholders as "Islamic studies" or "Islamic education". In keeping with tradition, documents and stakeholders explicitly stress the schools' practices of producing and embedding additional "religious classes" (S30) at Bringelly or the "mandatory Qur'an and Islamic Studies lessons" (S43, S30). Others asserted that: "students are then given the range of subjects found at other schools along with Arabic and Islamic studies" (S15) and "LOTE (Arabic)" (S34, S15) as an additional subject. The appended model is therefore a commonplace practice.

Where the instrumental curriculum was more invested in the market interests of the times, it was increasingly claimed across documents that Islamic education provided the type of transformative knowledge needed for preparing students for their society. Similar words and phrases reinforce this position, including "prepare", "lives", "answers" at Peace, "good",

"pure", "guidance", "proper knowledge" and "rewarding life" at Medina, alongside "confidence" and "future benefit" at Bringelly.

PA: We teach students Arabic, Quran and Islamic Studies in order to facilitate this religious development. Receiving this Islamic education will prepare students for all events in their lives because they can find the answers to all their questions in the Quran and teachings (Hadeeth) of the Prophet Mohammad (pbuh). (Newsletter, March 2014)

MG: [The school] is responsible for ensuring its students receive the proper Islamic knowledge and guidance beginning from prep and continuing all throughout their primary learning. Medina College has separated the primary and secondary faculty of Islamic Studies. We base our teachings around the areas of *Aqeeda*, *Fiqh*, *Seerah* and most importantly *Adaab* and *Ahklaq*. (Curriculum Handbook)

BIC: Benefits and Aims for the students who learn Islamic:
- Increase confidence in Islamic living
- Increase social development
- Expand knowledge and understanding of Islam
- Future benefit to the wider community. (PIB, Grade 6, 2016)

The rationale for transmitting Islamic teachings as a guide for engendering active and responsible contribution to society, canvassed in the statements above, is reasserted and summed up thus: "Islam has the answers and the road map for complex ideas and problems that are part and parcel of increasingly more complex lives" (L4).

Showing a concerted commitment to the appended Islamic curriculum approach, the rationale for the teaching of the religious subjects for Medina is, like Peace and Bringelly, governed by a moral compass, always aimed at preparing students for their lives. In line with its stated commitments to fulfilling potential, Medina places much emphasis on embedding its formal Islamic studies curriculum, foregrounding in explicit detail the teaching content, pedagogy and organisation. In the *aqeeda* (beliefs) strand, for example, kindergarten's Islamic studies program comprises learning about God's attributes and God's creations. Islamic practices and rituals instituted in the informal structures are supplemented and reinforced through structured, face-to-face instruction in the classroom. The teaching of the

five pillars, which comprise the daily worship rituals and religious observances, were integral components.

> They [students] will learn to appreciate their existence and beauty. These would include animals, plants, people and nature in general.

> Children will also be introduced to the 5 Pillars of Islam, which are Shahadah, Salah, Fasting in the month of Ramadan, Zakah, and Hajj. They will have hands-on experience with taking wudu and performing Salah.

> …Prophet Adam and Prophet Muhammad. They will be taught and encouraged to model upon the Prophet's behaviour. (Curriculum Handbook)

Similar outcomes, also foregrounded in Peace and Bringelly, reinforce the centrality of the inherited facts about Islam (Waghid, 2011) but reveal little of how students critically engage with the content taught. As Waghid (2011) noted, early initiation requires that learners are introduced to minimalist understandings of Islamic education, that is, those aspects associated with rote learning and what is important for a Muslim community to engage with, as demonstrated in the extracts above.

Yet it seems that even in the senior years when students can engage with Islamic teachings at a more critical level, the bifurcated methodology of delivery is privileged. At Medina, resources, both time and staff are invested and unlike Peace's allocation of one hour a week (Islamic Studies Programs), eight hours are allocated towards formal Islamic teachings, as indicated in the Year 8C timetable below.

Year 8C Timetable							
	Period 1	*Period 2*	*Period 3*	*Period 4*	*Period 5*	*Period 6*	*Period 7*
Monday	*Humanities* *D6*	*Arabic* *D6*	*Science* *D6*	*Mathematics* *D6*	*Islamic Studies* *D6*	*English D6*	*Quran D6*
Tuesday	*English D6*		*Physical Education*		*Arabic D6*	*Quran P1*	*Mathematics D6*

			Gym				
Wednesday	*Physical education D6*	*Humanities D6*	*Science D2*		*English D6*	*Quran E11*	*Arabic D6*
Thursday	*Mathematics D6*	*Humanities D6*	*English D6*	*Personal & Social Development D6*		*Science D6*	*PC D6*
Friday	*English*	*Islamic Studies*	*Humanities*	*Mathematics D2*		*Information Technology D7*	

(Website)

Moreover, differentiation, a practice applied to catering to the needs of students and employed in the key disciplines at Medina, is similarly applied to the teaching of *Quran*:

Each class is assigned two (2) teachers for Quran throughout the year. Students are in 2 groups. First group refers to students of Level 1 (IQRA 1-2-3), Second group refers to students of Level 2 and 3 (IQRA 4-5-6 and Quran Holy Book). (Curriculum Handbook)

Importantly, the Islamic studies curriculum at Medina is provided the same content depth as the academic subjects, centrally located as the "nucleus" (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006, p. 164) in the Curriculum Handbook. By comparison, these subjects are deferred to the end of documents at Bringelly and entirely separated from the academic curriculum documents at Peace. The assigning of time allocations and the comprehensive approach to the embedding of formal Islamic teachings alongside the central positionality of texts suggests the "appended" Islamic education curriculum as a serious educational priority at Medina. More than that, the differentiated approach, implying the employment of extra human resources to support the delivery of the Holy Quran concomitantly with innovative technological tools, indicates that Medina is applying student-centred pedagogies in the appended model of delivery.

Another fundamental subject, Arabic, is critical to knowledge seeking and acquiring in the cultures of Islamic schools (Moes, 2002). Like the Islamic Studies program, morals are integrated into the "Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing" outcomes of the Arabic

program. In fact, morals are singled out, integrated within all "programs and activities…
[they] are aimed at encouraging students to learn good Islamic and social manners" (Medina,
Curriculum Handbook). Study, homework, and assessments were also essential to fulfilling
the appended course requirements at both Medina and Bringelly.

> **Bringelly:** At times projects and assignments also form part of the homework. These
> projects and assignments need to be done really well since they form part of your
> child's assessment. Islamic Studies and Arabic teachers also expect homework given by
> them to be completed to a high standard. (PIB, 2014, Grade 4, p. 22)

In common with its upstanding status as the *sine qua non* of knowledge for Muslims
and reiterated across texts to be of high relevance for students' contemporary lives,
"memorisation", "translation" and "recitation", concepts associated with the teaching of the
Holy Quran are of central importance within the framework of Islamic teachings at Bringelly
and Medina. Bringelly's "Quran and Islamic Studies" scope and sequence for each grade
(PIB, 2016), for instance, reinforces the "benefits and aims" of expanded "knowledge and
understanding of Islam and the Quran" within the school's curriculum, foregrounded in the
aims, content and assessment:

> Rationale:
>
> - Allow the easy understanding of the Quran recitation with all the *Tajweed* rules
>   and memorise (*Hifz*) the small and needed surahs…
>
> Quran (grade six scope and sequence):
>
> - Recitation: from Surah Al Fajr to Surah At-takweer with the rules of Tajweed.
>   Hifz memorization: Revision of all previous works and memorizing Surahs to
>   Al- Balad. (PIB, 2014, Year 6)

As indicated, schools choose forms of expression from scriptural sources which they
believe to be highly transparent, drawing heavily on transliterations of the Arabic rather than
the translations of *surah* (chapter) titles for readability, providing "maximal understanding"
(Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006, p. 13) and even engaging the subjectivities of stakeholders.

Of significance, dependency on textbooks was of strong salience in the implementation
of the schools' formal Islamic subjects. The lack of Australian teaching materials, says Jones
(2012) mostly produced in South Africa or the United States are not always relevant to young
Australians. Besides serving their primary role of informing and structuring the formal

Islamic curriculum and providing evidence that outcomes have been met, textbooks engage subjectivities. For instance, Peace Academy's Islamic studies content and assessment was revealed to be derived solely from the *I Love Islam* textbook, and like Medina's *Iqra'* and Bringelly's *Islamic Studies* series, invites binding attachments in the continuity of personal and emotionally charged spiritual familiarities for stakeholders. By evoking emotive meanings, this kind of intertextuality reconnects participants to shared ideological worldviews and traditions, taking stakeholders back to the first revealed Quranic exhortation: *"Iqra"* (96:1) (Read) and its subsequent attachment to knowledge seeking. By using shared conceptual maps, including codes, Arabic terms and key concepts, compounded with the traditional text book method of delivery, schools evoke the familiar, long-established ways of teaching to enact Islam's edicts and philosophy. Thus they assert their teaching content and practices to be commensurate with, as Medina claims, "the principles of Islam" (Website).

6.3: The Problematics of a Bifurcated Curriculum

Extrapolated from the data thus far is that the methods used to embed Islamic teachings are inextricably bound with the religious heritage but also appeal to parental understandings, connecting with the ways parents were taught, such as through the verses learnt and educational tools used. This thereby corresponds with Ramadan's (2004) suggestions that schools participated in *"taqlid"* (imitation) models to prove their faithfulness to principles (p. 133). Such a tradition may, if displaced, be conceived to compromise Islamic education in the collective consciousness of the stakeholders who have always held it and seen it at work as the ideal. Two stakeholders lament the way Islamic teachings are transmitted. A student from Bringelly sheds light on this:

> The school needs to improve the Islamic syllabus since it is weak and doesn't help Islamic students to be able to use the teachings in their own lives. The school is very OP focused, and does not even teach Arabic language in the higher grades. Islamic lessons are fewer than subjects that go towards OP. The school uniform is also very different to the uniforms of Islamic schools in South Africa and the subcontinent. Also, Islamic studies is one subject, instead of being divided into different categories like Quran and ahadeeth and others. Generally, there is nothing special about the school from an Islamic perspective. (S56)

At Peace Academy, a divergent school that has loosened its grip on the bifurcated method, a school administrator poses some concerns:

What part of school purpose are we talking about? The academic or the religious purpose? If it is based on [the] academic subjects, you will actually see it with the running of the classes and the importance on these classes. However, being [an] Islamic school apart from the obvious (Morning assembly, uniform and daily prayers) I would not be able to say there is a fantastic set in the daily life of Islamic studies. I would have thought greater importance should have been put on Islamic studies, sadly not. (S10)

The responses above reaffirm the idea that schools who counter the common-sense norms by disrupting traditions are perceived to be non-compliant with the teachings and traditions of Islam. Consequently, a move towards integration is no easy task, challenging schools and their leaders who may be perceived to have forsaken their heritage, principles and betrayed the *amanah* should such a move be pursued. For leaders who are entrusted with ensuring continuities, the transition towards an integrated curriculum orientation can potentially threaten the schools' appeal.

In contrast, the rhetorics for close attachments to the continuity of a separate "appended" curriculum are not convincing, nor lost on some participants. Where schools and stakeholders recognise the value the appended tradition presents, it is not without critique nor is it immune to an overhaul. Competing discourses of knowledge, the ways knowledge is distributed and those charged with making the decisions are critiqued for their role in sidelining the purpose of Islamic education of achieving "wholeness and excellence", by adhering to knowledge and methods which have lost effectiveness for today's Muslim youth in their Western societies. Speaking up, one teacher/leader persistently interrogates the construction and transmission of the binary body of knowledge for its decontextualised realities and its consequent detrimental outcomes on "the psyche of young Muslims" (L4), elaborated thus:

If a person sought to infuse Islamic purpose, the first questions you would have aimed at you is reference to how will this affect NAPLAN, or QCS or our OPs? If you mentioned explicitly Islamic aims, the reply might be, well that is the Imam's role! The appendage model of teaching 'Islam' is a major obstacle. We require teaching in the 'Islamic' spirit (Douglass & Shaikh, 2004). (L4)

Reinforcing the observations of a stakeholder (S56) earlier, this leader elaborates the impact of nationwide testing such as the National Assessment Program – Literacy and

Numeracy (NAPLAN), the achievement of Queensland's Core (QCS) skills and their bearing on student performance and Overall Positions (Ops).

Pursuant to the above, how the privileged method of teaching Islam disengages students and its failure to equip them to use its principles in their everyday lives is asserted thus:

> However, Imams try to replicate the way in which they were taught in Madrassah in school. Many don't know the difference between a syllabus, a curriculum, a work program, a unit plan and a teaching resource or [a] text book. This means the IQRA book or similar resource becomes all of those things and when students rebel in high school or get bored or switch off, it is their fault! When they can recall awesome pieces of Islamic trivia but cannot negotiate their Islam at university, it is also their fault. (L4)

These quotes reinforce the tensions arising from institutional failure to keep abreast of the principles of Islamic education. Rather than taking whole-school responsibility for embedding Islamic teachings, as the schools do with performance, Islamic education is shifted to religious teachers. Here another dilemma is located. Religious knowledge disconnected from educational training means that *imam*s cannot cater to the contextual needs of students. The quotes show that Leader 4 is looking beyond the official and normative discourse, championing alternative faith-anchored educational possibilities for Muslim students for "here".

In contrast to the head teacher's problematisation of the bifurcated body of knowledge for failing to achieve the "true purpose of Islamic education" (L4), another view from Peace Academy does not undermine the school's academic pursuits but the limited availability of academic subjects, reinforcing the understanding that the choice for Islamic schools by parents is driven by academic trajectories for some, just as it is by authentic religious offerings (Merry, 2005, 2015).

> Students are learning all academic subjects including practising religion. However, religious practice is exercised in great extent but students are not offer[ed] [a] variety of options for subject selection according to [the] Australian curriculum. Thus I would say there is a lack of evidence of the school's purpose. (S54)

These sentiments raise some of the contradictions and complexities associated with how schools engage with and must be seen to engage with Islamic education. As stated, tensions arise from the schools' unwavering commitment to an education that has been passed on to them as the ideal and their consequent failure to align it with the principles the schools promote. At the same time, schools that show a propensity to interrupt dominant practices and enshrined habits as they transition from the familiar or mandated are not immune to intense critique. What is certain is that even with the dichotomous approach to knowledge production, schools construct an educational package that not only equips children for competitive market edge success but to live a moral life. For some critics this is not sufficient for the pressing challenges of the times. What seems to be needed is both faith and deep leadership reflection, commitment and activism to contest the pressures on these institutions, actions that cannot be swayed by the pull and push forces of hegemony— practices made little mention of by leaders overall.

6.4: Towards a Contextualisation of Islamic Education: One Curriculum for Negotiating the "Double Space"

Alongside the embedding of a bifurcated curriculum existed an orientation in either the schools' commitments or leaders' practice towards an alternative method of producing, implementing and defending a body of knowledge where both the religious and the rational are emphasised in a complimentary way. A new discourse of statements, alongside new rules, practices and key subjects, charts a redefinition of Islamic education. It illuminates knowledge that is deemed worthy for empowering students in order to more fully engage them with the complexities of everyday life, aimed at connecting them with the societies they live in. The point here is to assist students on how to be Muslims, critically engaging (Waghid, 2011), affirming identities, building leadership and empowerment. It is a method for connecting with students' lives, and one which inspires students to transform themselves (Tauhidi, 2001). Conceptualised thus, Islamic education becomes relevant and holds meaning for students in their home environments, thereby rendering the construction and transmission of contextualised knowledge imperative.

The discourse of integrating an Islamic worldview into the formal curriculum, as a precursor for defending and pushing an agenda of cultural change, is not without negotiation and compromise, confronting key obstacles. Two issues – reconciling the formal curriculum with the context, and engendering collective commitment – engage with the tensions arising

from negotiating a contextualised curriculum. In taking these tensions to task, the formal curriculum presents as a site of active local struggle as schools and one leader slowly dismantle the "stuckness" of "walls" (Ahmed, 2012, p. 129), participating in a process of retranslation of knowledge and reconstruction of common sense (Apple, 2001). Whilst addressing contextual concerns creates a space for heightened leadership engagement with the structural and political frames (Bolman & Deal, 2003, 2008), the renegotiation of a different discourse of knowledge creation was less "audible" (Ahmed, 2012, p. 9) in the voices of participants, charted across Peace's documents and contested by a key actor.

6.4.1: Reconciling the formal curriculum with the context.

Across snippets of texts and, for some, aspirations, whether "willed" (Ahmed, 2012) by institutions or leaders, the formal curriculum provided a threshold of possibilities and constraints for realising purpose. Apple (2006) argued that across institutions of education there are counter-hegemonic practices being built and defended, but they are often isolated from each other. This, he maintains, creates difficulties for them in organising themselves into coherent movements and strategies. Working on similar projects in two different states, Peace Academy and Bringelly's Leader 4 are explicit in their views on the worth of reconstructing the content of the national curriculum so that it genuinely serves progressive social needs, asserted thus:

> There is so much scope in education in Australia to meet local standards and, above and beyond this, achieve our Islamic purpose. The national curriculum is so broad, equitable and malleable, it is tailor-made for the type of integration we need to realise [this] purpose. (L4)

At Peace Academy, for instance, the priority of "values integration", like that of its "excellence" priority, shows increased momentum, frequently cited in the Induction Policy (2014) as an educational model for effecting school-wide cultural change. Indeed, cultural cohesion cannot be achieved without integrating Islamic values and morals into the mainstream curriculum, as Peace claims (IP, 2014). However how "values integration" may in fact translate into the mandated curriculum, exhorted as the "responsibility" of all staff at Peace (IP, 2014, p. 51) is obscure; making a singular appearance in the school's advertising documents:

> Until the beginning of last year we had Arts integrated in all learning areas, we now have opened our Art learning area …They (students) also focused on Islamic Art…

Symbolic paintings may cover religious scenes… The calligraphy and decorations of the verses in the Quran is an important aspect in our lives, but other religious art such as glassed mosque, lamps and other mosque fittings such as tiles, woodwork and carpets usually have the same style and designs as the modern earthly art, although with religious inscriptions [that] are more noticeable. (QM, 2012, Issue 184)

Unlike Peace Academy, at the other two schools integration is not steered by institutional speech acts. Instead, it is substantiated as a key goal, acknowledged by the Deputy Principal at Medina (L2) and defended by the Head of HPE at Bringelly (L4). Leader 2's acknowledgement that "Islam is integrated into other subject areas", an area where he takes explicit action to embed the Islamic purpose, is reasserted elsewhere:

The proper Islamic ethic has been embedded in all areas of the curriculum allowing students to acquire the necessary skills and knowledge in Islamic Studies. To establish this throughout all year levels we have newly purchased more Islamic books for students to borrow as readers and read within the home environment. (Curriculum Handbook)

In the one extract located foregrounding integration, Medina, like Peace it would seem, sees the reconstruction of content as an important step in addressing the needs of students. Yet, the fact that Medina omits its commitments but clearly integrates, whereas Peace concertedly showcases "excellence" across multiple policies and by comparison foregrounds curriculum integration in a few paragraphs, provokes interrogation. Implementing a pioneering project of such magnitude as that of "integration" against competing priorities inevitably comes across unforeseen constraints. However, given their vulnerable position in the educational market, the possibility that schools may in fact be purposefully downplaying integration exists. After all, schools who cultivate performance are responsible, on top of the game, whereas cultivating Islamic ethics summons suspicion and ongoing calls for scrutiny (Hanson, 2016).

Apple (2006) asserted that in contexts of invested compliance, some practitioners present a potentially powerful force that is always at work, changing the nature of schooling. The fact that some have "not been integrated" under the hegemonic and cultural "alliance", pushing to exceed the norms and routines of everyday life, transforming existing conditions, shows "local examples of the very possibility of difference" (Apple, 2005, p. 288). Amidst

constrained conditions, external, structural and political struggles, there is a force "pushing", "feeling and thinking for the institution aiming to transform what the institution stands for" (Ahmed, 2012, p. 140) and the everyday realities for students. There are those whose words and actions share a deeper concern for going beyond the everyday routines into the deeper structures, with a view to bringing students from the periphery to the heart of the agenda, unwaveringly serving the *amanah* (trust). Bringelly, in contrast, is a case where tensions augment as a practitioner (L4) takes the role of "internal critic" (Apple, 2008, p. 248) using a vocabulary that speaks to a different politics of official knowledge. This leader of "fifteen years" at the school takes a critical stance, placing under scrutiny and openly questioning the assumptions which guide the school's purpose. As revealed, a central problematic for Leader 4 concerns the schools' approach to knowledge production and transmission, expressing grave concerns over its value for students in their contexts. When taking action to re-vision and reconstruct knowledge, not only does this leader contest the "rigours and disciplines of performativity" and the "responsibility…to perform and professionalism" (Ball, 2016, pp. 9–10) but claims these to be hallmark to his leadership influence in breaking from customs and traditions that are culturally based. His investment in what Ball (2016) coins as a "pedagogy of experience and context" (p. 11) is revealed in key words and statements: "advocated", "promoting", "championed", "consult", as well as learning, developing and finding solutions. Primarily, construction of an integrated curriculum comes up at the heart of "realising purpose" (L4), which is consistently repeated as this teacher/leader attests: "I am advocating for a revised mission to drive an integrated curriculum as a stepping stone to a holistic curriculum". Bringing the "contextual concerns in the lives of students" (L4) from the periphery to reverberate in the pulse of institutional commitments, he attests, forms the rationale for this course of action:

> Allah used me in the capacity of the founder of the Sports Department at our College, which I renamed the 'Health & Sport Science Department'. In mainstream settings, sport and the Sports Department is a major vehicle towards creating a positive ethos and environment in a school and for driving school purpose. Sport was not viewed in the same way upon my arrival at this Islamic school. I therefore made intention that this Department would be a means of infusing and achieving our school's purpose. Attempted to establish the Department and made changes to the curriculum in order to reflect what I interpreted from scholars and academics to be the purpose of an Islamic

education…Challenged cultural practices that were overshadowing religious principles…. (L4)

The response above indicates that the process of curriculum integration inevitably draws practitioner interaction with the scholarly and academic realm to form reinterpretations and reconstruction of knowledge. Consistent with Hassen (2013), who indicated that for graduates of Victorian Islamic schools culture has been packaged synonymously with religion, in the cultures of Islamic schools the insights reported above illuminate the strains that cultural customs and traditions present. According to Waghid and Davids (2014b), "culture can reinforce a desirable practice. Yet, culture can also undermine educational practice" (p. 125), by contributing to oppressive structures. Challenging deeply held institutional habits and ingrained traditions where they pertain to inhibiting girls' participation in sport or cultural positions locating sport as inferior to other subjects (Dagkas et al., 2011) are fundamental prerequisites for "pushing" (Ahmed, 2012, p. 140) the integration agenda, expressed as follows:

> I am now, Insha'Allah, taking a lead role with the curriculum committee calling for a review of the school mission. One which includes an Islamic worldview and makes reference to aims of Islamic education and purpose. One which rejects this dichotomy between what is considered sacred and secular. The long-term goal after posting such a vision would be to create a thematic holistic curriculum in which enduring understandings act as mapping elements for infusing the purpose in every subject of the school. I see this as the solution to the appendage model of tacking Islamic studies on to a general curriculum and expecting students to live, embody, understand and love Islam. (L4)

In effecting school-wide change with purpose, a key learning area such as HPE provides a point of departure for interrupting ingrained ideological assumptions, inevitably involving this leader in intellectual inquiry as he engages with the structural work of integration. Simply put, this is not only to facilitate a process of detachment from a prevailing culture of "excellence" but just as importantly for "disrupting" (Apple, 2004, p. xii) cultural practices and traditions. In essence, context-specific knowledge engages this practitioner as he stated, in "taking a leading role" in the reconstruction of existing approaches to knowledge production and transmission; melding educational theory and practice with Islamic theory and practice. Realising purpose, therefore, cannot be separated from the legitimisation of the

content and form of knowledge, involving practitioner interaction with Islamic scholarship. Again, the gap between the school's theory and the concrete are restated by Leader 4:

> It is very easy to practice Islam in this school…Our mission and vision could be set to reflect our purpose. Our purpose, the 'why', could inform the how (pedagogy) and the what (curriculum). According to Memon (2007, 2009, 2011, 2013) this would result in an 'Islamic pedagogy. I interpret that this Islamic pedagogy requires that we set a vision that imbues our purpose. This means we teach in the Islamic spirit and the result would be human transformation. Students would learn to live Islam and all stakeholders could be mobilised to achieve this aim including the non-Muslim teachers who want to engage with the core beliefs to improve the learning in their classrooms.

By resituating the focus on revisioning with the intent of linking purpose to the curriculum (the what), pedagogy (the how) and teachers, concomitantly with theory, this practitioner pushes the "agenda" for a "more contextualised teaching in step with society and with a culture that is Western and not imported" (Ramadan, 2004, p. 133). As Ramadan asserted, the universality and "comprehensive character" of the Islamic message requires knowledge of the context in which individuals have to act in order that they may have the means to live consistently with the demands of the morality of their religion (p. 128). It would seem that not only does Islam adapt to the practices of different cultures (Abdallah, 2016) but Islamic education shares this elasticity.

At the crux of student "transformation" (L4), cited by Medina's deputy (L2) and further reinforced in the statements of Leader 4, are those who signed up for the school, noting: "I enjoy the most success with focusing on students, at a grassroots level where there are fewer barriers" (L4). Strategies that are employed by Leader 2, including "modelling and a lot of reinforcement", stress student centredness as a priority. He adds:

> Furthermore, explicit teaching with the use of electronic devices such as Interactive Whiteboards, iPads, etc. Positive reinforcement and rewarding students for educational success and for good Islamic appropriate behaviour. Planning programs and activities that engage students and reflect on their experiences and interests. (L2)

Here, students are always at the heart of leadership intervention, standing to gain. Although a concoction of issues is outlined for embedding purpose, a detour towards contextual matters concerning the realities of students is underlined in the commitments of two leaders.

From my perspective, having ongoing dialogue, *mashura* with *Imam*s. For the students, having access to *Imam*s. Subjects like Health Education where high-order thinking as well as spirituality is seen as part of the whole; where critical analysis and critical evaluation is encouraged and Islamic principles and knowledge from Islamic and other sources is drawn upon to devise strategies and positions on contextual concerns in the lives of students. (L4)

I tell my students that Health and Physical Education is the most important subject after Islamic Studies based on the Hadith, the essence of which is, after faith, the greatest gift is health. Thus, HPE is a means of teaching students and myself to better achieve our purpose. (L4)

Beyond the ethic of care that is part and parcel of forming structures of feeling, challenging and engendering critical analysis elicits a form of care which engenders a maximalist Islamic education (Waghid, 2011).

The data from the two leaders shows awareness that Islamic education must reconcile with their charges' developmental, educational and contextual needs with a view to maximising the participation of those who are most disadvantaged. If one considers cultural formation as "a striving toward patterning and integration" (Schein, 2010, p. 11) then it is insufficient for those looking to lead to be selective in what aspects of school culture to embed. It follows that the re-construction of knowledge is as critical as the prioritising of the tangible layers of a school's school culture. Indeed, practitioners who set out to reconstruct commonly held assumptions that undergird the concerns of curriculum represent a potentially powerful force for transforming curriculum practice (Apple, 2006). As Dantley (2005) observed, when educational leaders, who operate by faith, problematise their work context, that is an act of hope. These leaders, he noted, have reflected on social issues of marginalisation and undemocratic practice in schools and have courageously decided that change can indeed take place.

6.4.2: Engendering collective commitment: professional learning for cultural cohesion.

To successfully manage an organisation's culture, Schein (cited in Mike, 2014) places great emphasis on leaders' embodiment of "cultural sensitivity", that is, "talent and the knowledge of how to do things" (p. 324). An appraisal of what is happening in the larger

field of education (Apple, 2001) is equally important for Islamic schools. To disrupt dominant policies then it is important to change the common-sense thinking, altering the meaning of the most basic categories, the key words employed to understand the educational and social world and one's place in it (Apple, 2006). If purpose is to be translated into action then individual commitment must translate into collective commitment (Ahmed, 2012), an issue treated as problematic at Bringelly:

> You can't share what you don't have! In the first Muslim world conference in Mecca some 40 years ago, teacher professional training and learning was highlighted. To this day, very little has been done to fill this gap. Most teachers and worse still, most leaders are lacking the knowledge or the professional learning to post, share and achieve such a mission. (L4)

Implicit in the voices of participants earlier is recognition of the role of leaders in bridging the tensions between cultural and educational divides, making explicit the importance of the embodiment of dual knowledge as a leadership skill and a strategy. One parent from Peace associates leadership influence with having the requisite knowledge, specifically, a leader's talent and skills in integrating the two bodies of knowledge into the one corpus, stating: "[He exercises influence] by his enthusiasm and the ideas. He is trying his best to implement Islamic teachings. He knows how to integrate Australian curriculum with Islamic Studies" (S42).

Another teacher from Bringelly emphasises a leader's embodiment of a dual knowledge base:

> [He] is… therefore… familiar with both Muslim and non-Muslim roles/expectations, etc. Is able to communicate effectively with ALL stakeholders. Is also an effective teacher who communicates well with students/staff and administrators. Is well versed in both religion and education, and can access and instigate this knowledge in an enlightened and positive way in all aspects of school life. (S8)

Building grassroots knowledge, that is, the dynamic relationship between leadership, learning and building organisational capacity, was strongly asserted to be at the crux of constructing purpose by influential actors. Strategies explored, expanded and delineated in Leader 4's written statements include the employment of a toolkit of learning strategies that connects with and is informed by theory and intellectual work, including: consultation, networking, personal learning and sharing knowledge. Preston and Symes (1992) pointed out

that practitioners tend to shy away from theory, "perceiving it as "antithetical" to their practice" (p. 5). Acknowledging his "own deficiencies" (L4) in integrating a faith-centred worldview in a secular curriculum, Leader 4 ensures the programs he produces are tethered by scholarship, reflecting new interpretations from "scholars and academics of the purpose of an Islamic education" (L4). Foremost in guiding this Leader's practice across projects, programs and discussions was engagement in a more profound consideration of theory-interpretations of Islamic sources (Davids & Waghid, 2016) as well as drawing on best practice to discover whether there exists scope for interpretation that the context may open up (Ramadan, 2004). This type of praxis, reiterated in groups of words and phrases, such as "Islamic principles", "primary sources", "pedagogical approaches", "scholars" and "academics" (L4), thus informs personal leader learning, giving licence to contextually adapted practice in order to be true to students and other stakeholders (Ramadan, 2004). Connecting students with their realities inevitably presses teachers and leaders into revising not the content but the way they teach the *Qur'an*, the *Sunna*, and Islam (Ramadan, 2004), a view consistent with the practices of Leader 4:

> With Health Education I also led a new Sexual Health Education initiative. Based on my own deficiencies, I needed to engage with a very wide array of stakeholders within as well as outside of the Colleague to set up a sexuality education course that fits a 3-point criteria:
>
> 1. Draws on Islamic principles as taken from primary sources;
> 2. Meets parental expectations; and,
> 3. Meets Australian Muslim adolescents' developmental and contextual needs.
>
> This involved the integration of Health Education and Islamic Studies subjects, inclusion of *imam*s and the outsourcing of *alima*s to work with female-only classes. It also drew on very different pedagogical approaches to aid teaching and learning than those typically employed to 'teach Islam'. (L4)

The views articulated coincide with Sanjakdar's (2004) assertions that a successful sexual health education curriculum for Muslim students must be concerned with "content, classroom learning strategies, pedagogy and the establishment of more collaborative working relationships with curriculum practitioners and the Islamic community" (p. 13). Furthermore, the extracts suggest that revisiting Islamic scholarship from primary sources together with

educational theory become critical to informing an individual actor's practice. Importantly, constructing a curriculum taking the three-point axis highlighted above—parental expectations, primary sources, and students' contextual realities—as its premise implies that practice cannot wield an either/or approach to learning, afforded by dichotomies. Separating "*deen*" (religious) knowledge from educational skills and context specific knowledge yields ineffective educational practice. Rather, for those looking to create and teach, like those who look to envision possibilities and lead, necessarily requires the complementarity and integration of both, an issue alluded in the responses of stakeholders above. For leaders, the embodiment of this binary knowledge, of having "*deen*" knowledge combined with educational expertise is not just a necessary criterion for forging relationships with "both parents and students" (L4), nor curriculum development, but is equally critical for engendering collective commitment:

> I find myself very much as a neutral point of contact for a range of stakeholders. I …[have] had considerable experience in education. I was raised in this cultural context but perhaps I have some form of cultural literacy in other cultural contexts. I am in middle management and one of only one other Muslim voice in this leadership group. I am often looked for to provide that Muslim voice… Non-Muslim teachers tend to feel comfortable to approach me about religious points they may be curious about or perceived contentious Islamic principles impacting upon their learning environments. Sometimes I act as a go-between for them and the Imams who may be seen as more daunting to approach on some issues.

At Bringelly, appraisal of what has not taken place in teacher professional training provokes a carefully considered approach to overcoming the problem of educator "misrecognition" (Apple, 2004, p. 143), thus leading to the saturation of educators' consciousness with new vocabularies and key concepts. To make action catch up with rhetoric, the reconstruction of both leaders' and teachers' common sense is a strategy that is equally applied to disrupting underlying ideological assumptions. Coming to terms with their own lack of expertise and wisdom is amongst the toughest problems for learning leaders, noted Schein (2010). Primarily, critiquing his "own deficiencies" prompts Leader 4 to pursue personal learning prior to facilitating "teacher professional training" (L4). Alongside collaboration with scholarship and community networks, this leader often spoke of his concerted willingness to seek consultation, making explicit its equivalent in the Arabic transliteration, "*mashura*", as an important strategy for not just overcoming his shortcomings

but as a fundamental tool for the alignment of staff with purpose. "Wide consultation with people of knowledge is critical", he insists (L4).

Besides instruction, leading assemblies and prayers, Jones (2012) noted that school *imam*s are consulted on "all manner of issues, ranging from dress codes to the suitability of the curriculum and texts or films" (p. 42). Like Peace Academy's accessibility of local talent, "dialogue, consultation with *imam*s" and the presence of people of knowledge is an aspect Leader 4 considered best reflects Bringelly's purpose.

> The *imam*s will often approach me or work with me or lead my projects as I respect their community leadership position and the knowledge they embody. I also frequently make *mashura* (consultation process) with them about almost anything that I do in the College.

> Within Health Education I advocated with the leadership group to become a health-promoting school. I then championed this with my students and colleagues via a health-promoting school approach. This is a 'whole school' consultative, social[ly] just approach to decision making and health promotion. I felt that it resembled the *Mashura* process and modeled many 'Islamic' principles.

Increasingly, the importance of using Islamic principles such as "*mashura*" in emulating the Prophet's (PBUH) leadership habit of seeking and accepting advice is stressed in Leader 4's rhetoric above, indicating willingness to consult in everyday affairs (Beekun & Badawi, 1999). *Mashura*, cited and reiterated six times, becomes a foundational leadership strategy for dealing with contextual issues relating to students as well as practitioner learning, by virtue of promoting civic engagement links with the achievement of wider social goals. Leader 4's "*mashura* approach" to learning and work ethics with students, staff and leaders "also initially clashed with the hierarchical leadership that is the norm in many Islamic schools including ours" (L4). As an understanding of school leadership is something often lacking in Islamic schools (Lawson, 2005), the consultation principle interrupts the intrinsic assumptions of unquestioning respect for positions and roles of revered authority. More than that, it threatens to disrupt the status quo by making those in positions of authority accountable.

Whilst "critical" (L4) for leader learning, drawing on internal talent and wider networks were insufficient for countering shortcomings, nor could they equip progressive individuals

with the knowledge to train staff, without the added formal training. Leader 4 encapsulates this idea below:

> I requested permission from the principal to complete the Islamic Teacher Education Program at Toronto University and in-service staff. On the back of this professional learning and working within the curriculum committee I have an article and prepared a workshop calling for a more considered approach to our purpose as we as a school move past the establishment phase of Islamic schooling in Australia.

Extrapolated from the quotation above is the significant place of knowledge seeking and imparting for progress. This is consistent with Shah (2007) who provided important insights into an educational leader's role "as a constant seeker and giver of knowledge, who acquires the right and responsibility to lead through knowledge, in the tradition of the prophets" (p. 372). Consultation and external learning, concomitantly with leading through knowledge, were important strategies for embedding "the purpose of Islamic education" and "the purpose of the school" (L4).

Besides critiquing his own shortcomings, influence for Leader 4 is seen to be bound with challenging existing structures openly as an approach to engage and incite staff curiosity of the school's purpose. Fundamental questions to staff and the formal leadership are posed to elicit their reflections on the assumptions undergirding the educational practices of an Islamic school. Towards this end, a school workshop provided an opportune platform to initiate the re-construction of thinking.

> In facilitating this workshop, I respectfully questioned whether after 10 years of working in Islamic schools, could any of us, Muslim or Non-Muslim articulate what it means to work at an 'Islamic school'? Could any of us state what the purpose of an Islamic education is? I then questioned that if any of us worked in a Catholic [school] for 10 years do you think we would be able to articulate what it meant to work in a Catholic school or what the purpose of a Christian education is? All agreed that in this instance we would know and be expected to know. My next question was, why then do we feel shy to expect this in an Islamic school? How can we work toward something we don't know? To further illustrate the point, I asked the group which included primary year level coordinators, the entire secondary staff as well as all of the Islamic staff and the leadership team and apart from the principal, not one of the 50 staff members could state accurately or confidently the school mission statement or vision. I

then respectfully stated, you can't share what you don't have! Whether we know our current mission or not, I believe it fails to honour an 'Islamic purpose'.

Lack of clarity over vision, or even knowledge of the "Islamic" guiding purpose, is reinforced yet again, openly acknowledged as a barrier to practitioner action. Problematisation of the status quo through critique, holding conversations and the raising of key questions makes it obvious to key stakeholders that not only are they not altogether privy to what "Islamic" is in the school's rhetoric, but that the school is not serving the identity it espouses to live up to. This reflective "in-service" activity, with the view of moving towards a collective purpose becomes a pivotal initiation exercise for reconditioning "mind-sets", for moving beyond the establishment stage towards "contextualisation" (Ramadan, 2004, p. 133).

By adopting a critical and proactive stance, leading the reconstruction of "theories" and learning for new practices, the teacher/leader from Bringelly helps to raise the consciousness of himself, his colleagues and his students. He therefore participates in transforming the conditions for learning to achieve truth, equity and justice. Hence, the reconstitution of leader/teacher knowledge is instrumental for those looking to lead, institutionalise and implement an alternative philosophy. However, mobilising teachers towards cultural cohesion, specifically in creating and implementing a body of knowledge of the same liberatory status as that experienced in the "daily routine" (BMP, p. 25), to ensure the learning of new rules and practices, is also incumbent on those figures looking to represent and have authority to make decisions on behalf of the schools, their trustees.

In contrast, commitment and drive can be a way of coming up against resistance and the possible reality that those who display sincerity are not immune to institutional politics, as an administrator at Peace Academy laments:

> **PA:** I chose to leave the above question unanswered as I have yet to meet a person who has that great influence in our school. Sadly, if anyone has tried there have been massive obstacles they had to face. The only person would have been the respected *sheikh* Yunus who has had 100% sincerity with Islamic and social development of this school till he was run out by politics. Ever since he has left I have not met an individual who had the same passion, sadly. (S10)

For a top-down leadership influenced by external and internal ideological structures, a new agenda which unsettles the existing one, power struggles are not unforeseeable.

Individual actors who envision new possibilities, enlisting others and leading the way towards their realisation (Kouzes & Posner, 2004) provide fertile ground for opposition and resistance, an issue emphasised in Leader 4's voiced frustrations:

> Amongst the senior leadership and to a lesser degree my colleagues I often feel a level of frustration as to the amount of influence I am allowed to exercise. I feel with the hierarchal leadership model dominating and the impact of colonisation on the minds of those in formal senior leadership positions and the non-educational governance leaders of the school, we are driven by external priorities rather than what should be our school's purpose. When I try to influence the leadership team or present strategies for infusion of our school's purpose I am often met with opposition or, in the face of mass support from all other stakeholders, a general lack of support from those who people look to lead, articulate and share the purpose.

These thoughts restated elsewhere suggest, as Ahmed (2012) aptly puts it, that "when one tries to cross a limit" (p. 128), "to speak up and stand up on behalf of certain policies" (p. 131) unexpected forces, even those expected to align with purpose, present as a major obstacle.

Moreover, reinforcing a subject of renewed public interest (Bagshaw, 2016), an additional voicing of thoughts brings into focus an issue of little mention by participants overall. Such words and phrases as: "disjointed", "non-decolonised", "non-educational leadership", "opposition", "lack of support" (L4) present the governance of Bringelly, and more broadly Islamic schools, as problematic. At the same time, the critical role of influence in the form of strategic political intervention is revealed in the actions and words of Leader 4. His critique charged at the school is compounded with critique charged against those who are held responsible, both the governance and the formal educational leaders, for lacking the knowledge and tools to govern as well as their inability to espouse a purpose and evaluate it:

> Most of our leadership which affects detrimentally the leadership activity have not been decolonised. The majority in governance, if not the direct educational leadership, are not in fact educators or educators in this context prior to their position here. Many are disproportionately influenced by the external context, meaning perceived compliance policies or general discourse on Muslims and belongingness. There is so much scope in education in Australia to meet local standards and above and beyond this achieve our

Islamic purpose… Only a decolonised mind could see this and only a sound heart could lead this. The above points paint the context. (L4)

The fact that senior management are not educated in the Australian context, lack the grassroots contextual knowledge, and more than that are captive to colonising impulses, implies that they may not fully grasp contextual issues nor provide the type of leadership required for cultural cohesion. As the above suggests, the overriding decision to privilege external mandates compromises issues of identity formation, the very reason many parents select these schools.

My experience with Islamic schools reflects what I have read in the literature regarding Islamic schools in the West. That is, that they lack clear direction and sound educational practices [and are] hampered by nepotism and short-sighted ad hoc decision making. Also, the establishment phase frustration stemming from what has been termed the 'village approach' causes much harm to the psyche and identity of this generation of young Muslims. A generation of young Muslims have experienced the results of disjointed leadership and interference from stakeholders who are non-educators. This 'work-in-progress' style of development, whether it be construction, pedagogy, assessment and even 'school vision', all negatively impact academic excellence, wholeness and spirituality (*ihsan*), especially in achieving the true purpose of Islamic education. (L4)

Unlike Striepe (2016), who noted that leadership practice is not influenced by bureaucratic policy, the problem which rises above all else in the quotes is the struggles of the formal leadership and non-educated governance to break free from external control and systematic discipline, of "dominating, restructuring and having authority" (Said, 1977, p. 3) over schools and its administrators. The hegemonic and discursive form of power alludes to the shaping of discursive practices by external institutions, forming an unequal power/knowledge relationship, which "seduces, solicits, induces, wins consent" (Hall, 1997, p. 261). In the minds of those with formal authority, of those who act or speak on behalf of the school, it seems that imperialism has never ended. Indeed, it appears to be internalised in the collective consciousness, in the governance's decision making and actions, to the detriment of effecting what counts as legitimate knowledge and effective teaching and learning practices.

The data thus far would suggest, to borrow from Ball et al. (2011), a "narrative failure" concerning a lack of capacity or even courage, confidence and willingness on the part of key authority figures to "maintain narrative coherence" (p. 627) with the school's identity in the mission, programs and staff learning, thereby crippling the purpose of Islamic education. An entry point for deliberative consideration as a disabler of school mission is professional learning and the formal leadership which sets great store on external mandates. More importantly is the "harm" to the identity formation of their trust, which trumps the realisation of purpose. Rather than creating the conditions for leaders, teachers and students to potentially govern by adhering to conditions of being governed, trustees present as key obstacles to purpose. In particular, by resisting those who provide alternative and relevant theories with practice, pushing the agenda of "purpose infusion" (L4), trustees are not rising to the criteria of contextualisation (Ramadan, 2004).

As well as opening up conversations and engaging in advocacy, negotiation and promotion of purpose, another useful interventionist strategy for encountering resistance and ensuring that purpose does not remain an "illusion" coincides with Bolman and Deal's (2008) recommendation of setting an agenda as an important primary first step for an effective political leadership. Researching and presenting a "blueprint" (L4) which recognises "major forces working for and against an agenda" (Bolman & Deal, 2008, p. 215) is stated thus:

> I learnt the need to build a tight case as sometimes in our context it is easier to do nothing than something. One system to present ideas or strategies which is my blueprint for building that tight case is the following:
>
> Exhibit A – Here is how it relates to the syllabus
>
> Exhibit B – Here is what the Qur'an says
>
> Exhibit C – Here is how Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) handled this situation
>
> Exhibit D – This is what has been done in an Islamic school in Melbourne, Sydney or the United Kingdom
>
> Exhibit E – Here is a sample of what parents thinks about the proposal
>
> Exhibit F – This is what students will gain and this is how they feel about it. (L4)

Yet it would seem that both the vulnerable conditions of Islamic schools alongside the internal tensions arising from approaches to knowledge creation are of little concern to families, who continue to enlist in droves in their search (Buckingham, 2010). Despite being

caught up in a web of discourses, these schools stand competitively and incomparable for families who continue to seek them. At the same time, these very parents, it is argued, like others in the private industry, are engaging with a competitive educational market. That Islamic schools are a target of neoliberal technologies of schooling (Ball, 2003, 2016) and further to that, that the educational expectations of parents also resonate with these ideologies, is conferred in clusters of words and phrases: "better market position"," business", "competitors", "product", "rich" and "higher socio-economic families" (L4) etc., corresponding with suggestions that the market is a constituent element in the formation of the ethos of the private school (Davies & Bansel, 2007) and indeed Islamic schools. In the provocative words of Leader 4:

> [T]there is no compulsion at the moment. The demand for Islamic schools is still great and families are still knocking down the doors to enter….Those that leave our Islamic school are at the moment the higher socio-economic families who are leaving for perceived better social capital and better market position by signing up for elite private schools. So the battle is still to attract more government funding and build more buildings to get more student numbers. If we were a business we would be very rich. We sit in a market with no competitors producing a substandard product, not honouring the original reasons for establishment yet not accountable… (L4)

At some point, Islamic schools' offerings no longer suffice as affluent families, whose primary concern is securing their children's futures within the economy in societies which are hostile to their faith and cultures, seek elite schools with an enhanced entrepreneurial market profile. Having benefited from an education underlined by Islamic values in the formative years, future investments, it seems, are for some to be found in prestigious schools, as parents navigate educational packages that are deemed more entrepreneurial, to better position their children for market-edged success. These are but some of the ways neoliberalism is partly taken up by this racialised group as a strategic form of identity construction and interruption (Apple, 2006).

Yet it remains that excellence has been dismantled as the Islamic schools in the study not only expand but must be seen to expand. Rather than showing concern for an altogether balanced, contextualised education for new times, privileging knowledge and identity formation as their primary concern, for some, students have been reconfigured as a product— more enrolments, more funding, more building, growth. After all, if families are "still knocking the doors to enter" (L4) then there is no compulsion to disrupt, nor revise existing

models, methods or habits, a supposition that faith and moral leaders endowed with intellect cannot live with.

6.5: Chapter Six Conclusion

To commit to creating Islamic schools that are closely connected to their ethos and larger projects of social justice and transformation, it becomes clear that the curriculum as a representation of culture must be settled. Essentially, the embedding of Islam in the informal practices, being with other like-minded learners alongside the guidance provided by values-driven practitioners coalesce to rank Islamic schools highly in market appeal; nonetheless, these factors are not enduring. To move beyond foundational establishment trappings, Islamic schools and leaders are tasked to navigate the challenges besetting the formal curriculum to achieve cultural completion. The analysis suggests that mindsets, as Ramadan (2004) noted, are in need of a complete evolution. It is with the reconstruction of common sense that leaders disrupt impeding imitation models and the logics mired by neoliberal technologies and customs. Working with and through long-held traditions of routine, markets, lack of grassroots knowledge, resistance and the challenges besetting official leaders to commit to what the institution stands for, is no small task. Indeed, bringing into effect the "Islamic" into the educational practices of schools is no easy task but with faith, evolving common-sense thinking and persistence, it can be navigated.

CHAPTER SEVEN: CONCLUSION

7.1: Chapter Seven Overview

Islamic schools may well be amongst the latest and relatively more embryonic developments of the neoliberal agenda of cultivating choice and creating the path for alternatives in the competitive business of education. They are, however, caught in a competing and complex web of agendas. This study revealed that just as research of Islamic schools must take the Islamic ethos they are embedded in seriously, consistent with Zine (2004), these educational institutions cannot be understood outside of or immune to the broader cultural politics. Drawing on Apple (2004, 2006), Critical Race Theory (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995) and Zine's (2004) critical faith-centred epistemology, I adopted the position that an understanding of Islamic schools, their constituencies' choices and decisions, their lived experiences and struggles alongside their practices, cannot be detached from the cultural climate. The schools' speech acts (Ahmed, 2012) and rhetorical mechanisms (Symes, 1998) were analysed against a backdrop of powerful neoliberal engendered market forces and a racial landscape, as were their informal and formal practices (Apple, 2006). Neoliberalism has worked to influence the schools' educational practices, creating possibilities that are bounded with limitations. It has facilitated and narrowed, enabled and constrained. Yet with the interventions of leaders who operate by faith (Dantley, 2005), searching for and offering alternatives (Apple, 2006; Said, 1994), the schools' espoused theories and their theories in use, specifically, the possibilities and tensions arising from dominant discourses is less widespread. Going forward, consistent and sustained commitment by the schools and importantly *adab* guided intellectual leaders alongside collective activism, hold the promise of progress.

Methodologically, with any inquiry of this kind there is the problem of respondent bias. Firstly, what this research reflects are active attempts by schools and participants to express how their Islamic ethos, neoliberal policies and being labelled a suspect community has shaped their schooling and educational experiences and practices. Secondly, this research is not necessarily representative of Islamic schools generally. The three schools in this study were aware that they ticked all the right boxes in accolades of "excellence", "effectiveness" and "success" as prescribed by mainstream educational perspectives. This assurance that they

are winners in the competitive race presents as a potentially key reason for consenting to participate in this research project.

When comparing the conjectures surrounding Islamic schools to the lack of context-based evidence in serving a stigmatised minority, to seek as Peace Academy states "what they can offer society" (Philosophy), this inquiry in relation to constructing the espoused purpose of Islamic schools in Australia is timely. Importantly, how faith practitioners who are tasked with cultural formation (Schein, 2004) articulate, embody and represent the schools' cause (Said, 1994) adds to an empirical void. The purpose of this chapter is to present an argument and final comments by way of concluding this research project. It proposes future directions for Islamic schools and their leaders in constructing the schools' institutional identity. This is followed by recommendations for future research.

7.2: Reviewing the Argument

Within and against a neoliberal educational policy backdrop (Ball, 2016) and a policy environment where forms of choice are legitimated in and by a racialised education market (Gulson & Webb, 2012), the findings show that schools in this study and their leaders are not only enacting interpretations of Islamic education. Rather, they give their take on it based on their resolutions to complex questions relating to Islamic education in Australia today. These resolutions take a range of forms, representations and positions on educational and ideological concerns ranging from Islamic teachings to the focussed academic fulfilment of their purpose. In relation to the former, the all-encompassing concepts of *adab* and *akhlaq*, what the schools conceive to be important "life skills" (Medina, Mission) and "values" (Peace Academy, Philosophy) and importantly their calling concerning preparing upright, spiritual and ethical young men and women for civic participation are instituted, largely, within the informal structures of the schools. Not only are these ethically moored frameworks enacted and experienced through everyday Islamic rituals, including values-based talks, *salat*, charity, fasting, as well as dress codes and outreach programs, but they signpost and guide behaviour. Alongside their supported application by educational practitioners, they connect students with others inside and outside the schools. On the other side of the spectrum, neoliberal technologies of performativity and a culture of excellence are prominent in the schools' formal practices. What is problematic, as this research revealed, is the uncritical adoption and implementation of dominant discourses – the performance-driven model and, to

borrow from Ramadan (2004), the "*taqlid*" or inherited model of Islamic knowledge production that mobilise the schools' cultures into dualisms, compromising substance.

Indeed, as the three participating schools in this inquiry show, Islamic schools have always strived towards and continue to carve out an identity construed by Islamic teachings, an inclusive environment, caring teachers, and as Merry (2015) noted, a challenging curriculum. These stated commitments help achieve the highly sought-after goals of identity transmission and raising the academic achievement of students. Towards these ends, neoliberalism has been productive, giving rise to and expansion of Islamic schools, and consequently broadening the scope of choice for parents. For clients seeking the schools, better life trajectories are conceived.

However, going back to the persuasive rhetoric for teaching about being Muslim in a Western society (Ramadan, 2004) as opposed to the dichotomy of teaching Islam and the secular subjects, clearly desirable by middle leaders (L2, L4) and expressed in either the case schools' rhetorics or policy documents, this invariably has different reach in the cultures of the three case schools. For now, the strong desire to move forward is securely oriented towards the latter – to perpetuating dualisms. To explain, as far as the embedding of Islamic teachings in the informal curriculum, the findings of this study show that the embedding of values in the case schools' operations can present as "artefacts" (Schein, 2004) and potentially be experienced as "Islamic veneers" (L4). However, it is a fact, as reported, that an overwhelming majority of participants see the instituting of Islamic practices and rituals as a serious matter in meeting "the requirements of a Muslim school" (S14), towards which leaders who operated by faith (Dantley, 2005) were catalysts. Leadership commitments and contributions to embedding Islam in the informal practices, their embodiment of *adab* and *akhlaq*, and their exemplification of just actions in their everyday interactions, evokes the schools' instituted values thereby consolidating Striepe's (2016) findings that enactment of leadership is anchored in values which are derived from leaders' personal spirituality and reinforced by the values of the school's affiliated faith. More than that, their symbolic behaviour enabled for the infusion of spirituality in the schools' climates. The findings therefore diverge from Hassen (2013), who concluded that schools merely provided the infrastructure, the "façade", and did not have the ability to nurture spiritual growth (Hassen, 2013, p. 511).

Leadership relational interventions are equally significant. In a social landscape of exclusion, the presence of leaders who enact the schools' ethos and understand the broader

social issues and how they affect their students, but more than that, who provide, as Peace Academy and Medina reiterate, the "proper" guidance (Prospectus), is significant for mitigating students' conditions. In fact, it can be claimed that leaders' creation of structures of feeling that inhere in community, and their extension of encouragement, care and affection with spirituality (Waghid, 2011) reverses the hostile treatment and harm extended to students in their daily lives. Even if these religious practices, such as "verses learned by heart and values idealistically passed, do not engender a personality whose faith is deep, nor engage learners in critical thinking" (Ramadan, 2004, p. 132), and as Driessen and Valkenberg (2000) contend, are of outward appearance, the emotional and social development elicited through congregational religious practices and the support on offer, during tumultuous times at least, makes a profound contribution to restoring confidence (Osler & Hussain, 1995; Zine, 2007) dignity and self-respect. The findings therefore correspond with Striepe (2016), who concluded that leadership practice, particularly the ways leaders interact with staff and students, are influenced by spiritual values; the findings are also consistent with Zine (2007) and Hussain and Read (2015), whose research reveals familial ties to be a strong factor in these schools. The biggest strength of the case schools was modelling respect, courtesy and fairness as well as forging connections, in what Hussain and Read (2015) coin as the "pseudo-parental" (p. 562) role of practitioners. In this respect, the findings resonate with Merry and Driessen's (2016) assertions that owing to efforts to align the values of the school with those of the home, pupils are more likely to develop strong relationships with staff and feel at home in an Islamic school. As a result, many Muslim children experience greater self-confidence and this, at least in theory, Merry and Driessen (2016) argue, can contribute to improved academic results. Islamic schools' contributions then do not merely centre on restoring justice to a stigmatised minority but they play an added vital role in contributing to peace and social cohesion. By enabling choice, and as a consequence, the physical space where schools and their practitioners can align values with those of students' homes, it can be argued that neoliberalism has been productive for this disenfranchised community. Given that religious practice is embedded and can be freely exercised, neoliberalism has allowed for the schools' aspirations to provide the tools for achieving just action.

The worrisome tendency, to draw on Apple (2003), is whether Islamic schools and their faith leaders "can control the uses to which their support of neo-liberal policies will be put" (p. 57). If Islamic schools use neoliberal technologies to meet their charges' needs without displacing their theory, then their institution of purpose cannot be compromised. When

considering the schools' conviction in "morals" and "behaviours", "Islamic values", even "Islamic manners", and the strong emphasis placed on these as vehicles for developing confident individuals to positively facilitate constructive social action, this belief would surely transpire into a curriculum design and praxis that is commensurate with an Islamic philosophy of education, steered by circumstances and contexts (Panjwani, 2004; Ramadan, 2004). Complex issues of the times require moving beyond 'thin', dichotomous curriculum models, inviting 'thick' forms of knowledge acquisition concomitantly with the amassing of deep critique and intellectual engagement (Waghid, 2011). In an age of difference and multiplicity, an underlying concern that schools and their leaders can no longer sideline is how an integrated, holistic methodology can engage students with "how to be" and therefore develop their potentiality in seeking *'ilm* and *'amal* (Al-Attas, 1980; Hanson, n.d.) – their responsibilities towards themselves, the environment and society.

Going back to the schools' construction of their purpose, if Islamic schools conceive themselves to be essentially about preparing students "to cope with the complexity of modern life", as the principal of Bringelly (Website) and the other cases assert, then the resources and conditions being instituted are still far from playing an enabling role in key cultural dimensions (Starratt, 2003) and are arguably at odds with the philosophy underscoring the schools. Juxtaposed with the spiritual and nurturing value-addedness of the three case is an alternative reality of market logics, adopting a technical body of knowledge with an appendage model of Islamic teachings. Notwithstanding the question of success, as defined by university entry and "God-consciousness", the thorny topic and indeed amongst the biggest unresolved issues in the three schools is the formal curriculum. As revealed by participants and a plethora of documents, Islamic schools have allowed external policy to mobilise to a large extent what their institutions should do, what knowledge to privilege and how to engage with 'excellence' – dedicating long hours towards key disciplines, studies and tests. Furthermore, they mobilise staff capacity, largely, around the dominant knowledge, even accommodating their formal Islamic teachings around it. In fact, the schools' administrators are induced to be policy actors that enact and experience neoliberal modes of governance and ensure that it is part of the everyday experiences of their stakeholders. If, as Medina espouses, it is through "addressing their faith and its values… in all facets of college life" that "students truly reach their full potential" and achieve "belonging"—also keystone to Peace Academy's values integration goals, as the school Principal "firmly" espouses—then the sustained and consistent tailing of this selling point to the mandatory curriculum is

problematic for actuating purpose. Therefore, the findings also show that those who were entrusted with instituting purpose appear to adopt leadership practices based on those derived from bureaucratic agencies and laws. The findings thereby build on Striepe's (2016) conclusions that leaders' practices are merely based on authority emanating from a religious ethos, the combined ethos of personal faith and the school's affiliated faith. When taking into account the importance of "knowledge", as Peace states, "for the betterment of themselves [students] and the society", embracing a neoliberal excellence framework and its associated regime of protocols with the accommodation of an inherited model, provokes questions about the reasons for the schools' divergence from the philosophy they espouse to deliver.

Yet, criticism charged against Islamic schools, based on transitory divergence from the ideals of Islamic education (attributed to privileging the dominant paradigms), does not hold if schools are overcoming educational disadvantage and deepening inequities. To claim that by adopting the bifurcated curriculum model Islamic schools are not preparing students for the workforce nor inducing good action in their graduates, is to deny the important work they do. For instance, preparing Muslims for social mobility, as professionals, is a win-win situation for parents and is no minor achievement for Islamic schools. It can indeed be argued that if the concrete realities of Muslims are central to how Islamic education is translated and enacted, then by working towards overcoming the socio-economic disadvantage of Muslims (Peucker et al., 2014) and closing the achievement gap, schools have strategically appropriated neoliberal values and the dominant market logic towards serving their own purposes, which is consistent with Apple's findings (2003, 2006). Furthermore, the findings reinforce Hussain and Read (2015), who concluded that Islamic schools are valuable for improving the mobility of students from less advantaged backgrounds. It can therefore be concluded that Islamic schools are hubs for strengthening the integration of Muslim communities by equipping young people with qualifications to compete for higher tertiary education degrees as well as in the workforce. There may be some salutary effects that emerge from this approach. Concurring with Apple's (2003) assertions, the space provided by educational markets can be reoccupied by schools and in the case of Islamic schools is being employed to work against the damaging discourse of exclusion and towards raising the socio-economic profile of Muslim communities.

However, the deeper issue at hand is not whether Islamic schools are successful in the performance race. This is no novel finding. The bigger issue, to borrow from Davies and Bansel (2007) is to what extent schools are leaning towards producing the "entrepreneurial

subjects best fitted for the neoliberal workplace" and the neoliberal economy (p. 254), thereby alerting future inquiries to excavate into what is being compromised. The wide consensus over the importance of Islamic practices—prayers, *dua*s, dress—as being reflective of purpose when contrasted with the suspicious treatment Muslims endure, is that they may well serve an emancipatory function. If "being average is not good enough anymore", as Peace's Principal's statement reads; if this is in fact being actualised in the "exclusion of underperforming students", as a leader from Bringelly explains (L4); and if the process of sorting and "educational triage" (Youdell, 2004) is entrenched in the schools' practices, it brings into focus worrisome educational and social outcomes. If Islamic schools are not redressing the disadvantage of learners then they are adding to the perpetuation of oppression of an already marginalised community—and herein lies their contravention of their theory. Certainly, Medina's approach to fulfilling "potentiality" (Website) by bringing both students and parents into focus, Bringelly's "social-consciousness" programs (Memon, 2010) and Peace Academy's "values integration" (Tauhidi, 2001) are exemplary projects for countering disadvantage. They may not be sufficient. Whether the treatment of students does in fact perpetuate inequality and if the curriculum does contribute to developing, as Ramadan (2004) suggests, dual personalities, merits pause and serious interrogation for faith trustees. Whilst the question over schools being complicit in producing inequalities prompts in-depth qualitative inquiry, it was clear that "excellence", which reigns high in an Islamic educational methodology, has been recalibrated for "excellence", "successful" and "effective" in meeting the requirements of the state, focusing on adopting what is available and proven to work, and on survival.

Nonetheless, when considering the pressures that tax the schools in a competitive educational market on the one hand and a racialised vulnerable market position on the other, then pressures to perform are eminent. Perceptions of failure, measured in terms of the schools' compliance with educational norms and mandates, for most schools demonstrates lack of responsibility (Ball, 2016). In an Islamophobic climate, failure to be seen to be ahead of the "excellence" game renders Islamic schools suspicious. Deviance is similarly equated with letting go of existing cultural models. As a few participants' insights show, loosening their grip on either position raises dilemmas in relation to the schools' authenticity, which potentially threaten the schools' market appeal. When applied to the challenges encountered by Islamic schools, Apple's (2005) reminder that choice exists with contested freedom holds much value.

Yet an assessment of the readily available resources at the schools' disposal, specifically that of staff, and as many participants claimed, their "knowledge" and talents, even the implicit selection of students, but foremost amongst these is opportunity, then Islamic schools are in a unique position to counter the critique that they are in fact producing "a substandard product" and outcomes, as charged by a leader (L4). These enablers, alongside well considered strategy and sustained intervention, allow them to avoid what Grace (2009) coins as a 'mission drift' in order to remain faithful to their philosophy and external mandates, while tackling the Muslim condition head on. Institutional processes inhering in habitual dichotomies present as barriers to progress: dual bodies of knowledge, dual groups of teachers and dual ways of thinking, no matter how inclusive, how they perform, nor how well the gaps are filled by symbolic and relational leaders or exemplary programs here and there. In fact, a compelling argument can be made as to whether the schools' "enabling conditions" are in fact linked to the "right" aims (Merry, 2015, p. 147). This is not to say there is no room whatsoever for "minimalist" (Waghid, 2011) enactments of conceptions of Islamic education, nor that such an approach does not produce ethical people nor prepare them for the workforce. What is being proposed is that it no longer suffices as the befitting approach, a view the three schools recognise. By encouraging the creativity, talent and commitment of faith practitioners to the list of resources above, schools are in an advantageous position and can potentially strike a balance. In doing so, they can make a significant contribution, preparing spiritual, ethical, creative, critical and engaged individuals, women and men of *adab* (Al-Attas, 1980). What is certain is that the pressures prescribed by hegemonic discourses cannot be interrupted by the trial and error tactics and myopic vision that is afforded in phases of foundational establishment, but summon critique and activism.

To summarise, if a culturally inclusive education underlined by Islamic principles is the cultural paradigm of Islamic schools, then, given the schools' circumscribed conditions, the possibility of cultural cohesion can only be achieved not through faith alone, but with the heightened activism of practitioners who envision the larger picture and act for a just cause (Apple, 2006; Said, 1994). As stakeholders' observations and leaders' experiences and reflections revealed, without ethical leaders (Dantley, 2005) a greater dissonance can potentially exist between how the schools' cultural paradigm is being performed and what it promises. As the data reveal, there is no denying that faith and morally steered leadership and indeed presence, are vital for nourishing and evoking the schools' purpose. More than ever in

challenging times, the gap between what Islamic schools espouse and what Islamic schools commit to, but more than that, what they should in fact be doing summons commitment and full engagement to facilitate the principles that govern them. If conditions are to shift beyond words, statements, policies and images then faith and presence will have to adopt not only heightened action but, as the struggles of one leader (L4) reveal, sustained dismantling of cemented "institutional habits" (Ahmed, 2012, p. 129). Transitioning from texts to progress, for now at least, means integrating the sacred and the secular to capture the realities and raise the potentiality of all learners and in doing so strengthen their civic participation. Given that it is the leader's duty to strive for cultural completion (Schein, 2004; Deal & Peterson, 2009), it follows that the 'accountability' (Zine, 2004) and *amanah* of leaders (Beekun & Badawi, 1999) of Islamic schools centres on an amalgam of faith, intellectual drive and balanced action. Unquestioning acceptance of existing models and what has been passed on to schools as the ideal, and sustained establishment-phase fumbling, no matter how well intentioned, serve to perpetuate further disadvantage to a minority that is already on the margins.

7.3: Implications for Practice: The Way Forward

As a precursor to engaging with *theory in action* (Argyris & Schön, 1974), professional learning must take precedence in Islamic schools. If, as Schein (2010) argues, the giftedness of leadership lies in terminating any dimension of culture when it has served its purpose, then Islamic schools and more specifically their leaders are tasked to push through and persist for progress to be achieved. In order to move forward at this point in time, the findings reveal the need for leaders who are guided by faith but actively and critically engage with purpose construction in three fundamental areas: professional learning, creating the "right" purpose and collective activism.

7.3.1: Professional learning for organisational coherence.

Any chance of cultural formation inevitably takes leaders back to one of the key recommendations made at the *First World Conference on Muslim Education* (1977), stressing learning for both leaders and teachers as a priority. The success of constructing a purpose that is guided by the aims of Islamic education and framed by its constitutive concepts cannot have any reach unless it is internalised at a deeper level with associative key concepts and knowledge. Sustaining normative principles of excellence, dress codes, regimented protocols and formalistic ritual cannot overcome the dualisms impeding progress. Nor can they fully

equip students with the repertoire of skills and critical disposition to enable proactive participation in social issues that are unique to Muslims and common human problems.

Extrapolated from Schein's (2004) postulation that the unique ability of leaders lies in understanding and working with culture, and Said's (1994) summation for intellectual participation, is that beyond an understanding of artefacts and support, leaders of Islamic schools have knowledge of the local culture and the deeper purposes that steer them and take action to close the gap. Seeing as the key condition for translating purpose into collective commitment is through learning new ways of thinking, moving forward, leaders are tasked with creating and managing the conditions, and importantly, the resources for continuous learning. Following Grace's (2009) assertions that the distinctive needs of faith school leaders require the provision of continuing professional development and courses that address their specific challenges, it is recommended that trustees start with themselves. As this inquiry reveals, leading without explicit knowledge building, what Shah (2007) conceives to be the right and responsibility of a leader, constrains envisioning possibilities and presents as an impediment to the construction of Islamic education. Whilst this study showed the schools' willingness to develop staff in the dominant paradigm, consistent with Argyris' (1991) recommendations, leaders themselves need to fill the gaps between the theory that steers the schools and their actions with learning. Essentially, learning helps leaders find the one voice, as indicated by the data, a necessary talent for helping them mediate the complexity arising from the double space. Having this essential talent gives them clarity pertaining to what to prioritise, which in turn qualifies them for making informed decisions impacting the lives of their school communities and society. Furthermore, it equips them with the tools for leading instruction, leading professional learning but also overcomes the tensions arising from the human relations domain of school life, specifically with those who are instrumental to embedding purpose: teachers. More than that, by impacting on educators' approach to their work and their treatment of the curriculum, developing teacher capacity has profound and far-reaching effects. From an instructional perspective, developing new assumptions allows for deeper engagement with the fundamental issues of teaching and learning on multiple fronts.

Translated into raising staff capacity, ongoing but purposeful professional learning offers teachers opportunities to collaborate and speak a common language with shared understandings, as well as the educational tools to circumvent the barriers that two different worldviews present. Secondly, translated into their professional practice—the curriculum and

teaching—the reconstitution of common sense enables the infusion of Islamic values into the schools' formal structures, thus releasing the pressure of values talks, sermons, recitations and invocations, which all data sources strongly indicate are crowded, largely, in the informal curriculum, integrated into the morning assembly or other congregational events. Therefore, embedding *adab* and *akhlaq* into every aspect of student learning has the advantage of engaging all sensory faculties, not just the visual and auditory which is common practice in the schools' congregational activities but through, as Webster (2010) suggests, creative conversations, real-life scenarios and meaningful dialogue over values, both in the classroom and encouraged outside. This approach overcomes the existing dichotomy inherent in the schools' cultures. Overall and of most significance in constructing purpose is that building school capacity alerts practitioners more broadly to how they link their everyday labour with the philosophical anchor of the schools. Specifically, this means that it awakens them to the inequalities that are engendered by employing certain content and forms of knowledge, and of greatest import, how to critique and fully engage with them (Apple, 2006). As Grace (2009) noted of faith-based leaders, with appropriate and continuous professional development, leaders of Islamic schools will also be able to align and strengthen those features of their educational cultures that enhance community relations and seek to minimise those aspects that may work against these goals.

7.3.2: The "right" purpose for collective action.

Leadership is vision. Consistent with Raihani and Gurr (2010) and what leading teachers pointed to in Memon's (2011) study, the key question that arises, and one that is of utmost importance for leaders' serious consideration, is: What is purpose? Who should own it? and, following from these, taking action to power purpose across the schools' cultural dimensions. Significantly, collaborating with others on the creation of a shared purpose (Kouzes & Posner, 2004; Schein, 2004) gleaned by learning can resolve the perceived contradictions as well as illumine future directions pertaining to the complexities and questions over institutional commitments. Importantly, in building consensus and agreements through the powering of a shared purpose, the issue of divided loyalties to tradition or the dominant corpus of knowledge can be spearheaded. By persevering with a consciously articulated collective purpose and linking it with the environment, an area all the case schools are invested in, as well as its explicit alignment with teachers and the contested issue of the formal curriculum, leaders provide an education for parity of outcomes geared towards excellence and identity formation. In retrospect, the creation and pursuing of a collective

vision not only has the advantage of giving momentum to commitment and continued loyalties. Given that the majority of stakeholders are the schools' clients and therefore the schools' biggest advertorials to others in the community, vision sharing and being seen to pursue it, raises the schools' market appeal.

7.3.3: Collective activism.

In keeping with Apple (2006), the findings reveal that changing existing educational and social inequalities and creating curricula and teaching that are more socially just are being attempted on local ground. Schools strive to create educational programs that are both pedagogically and politically emancipatory, but competing priorities and constraints crowd out the possibilities of quick progress for those who are committed. In the case of Bringelly's head of HPE (L4), he does not just look to satisfy parental expectations, performance pressures and those from the public. He shows concerns and attentiveness to these but also engages in a carefully considered process involving the reconstruction of an Islamic education that is in sync with the needs of his charges, taking into account the racialised, market-oriented context.

Bolman and Deal (2008) remind us that from a political perspective, goals, structure, and policies emerge from an ongoing process of bargaining and negotiation among major interest groups. Their contention is that interdependence, divergent interests, scarcity, and power relations inevitably spawn political activity. Conflict, in-house internal disputes and external cultural divides which seep into the workplace, issues few stakeholders made mention of but middle leaders (L2, L3, L4) experienced and acted upon, summon not just faith commitment but political activism. Amidst heightened ambiguity and contradictions, the findings show that leaders engaged with purpose, embracing a symbolic, relational and structural mindset (Bolman & Deal, 2003, 2008). Least reported by leaders overall were intellectual engagement and political participation: pursuing alternatives, questioning, promoting and championing purpose that is anchored in the theory steering the schools. In the case of the three schools in this study, political activism is fundamental for revitalising curriculum integration and innovation, which a wealth of documents produced by the schools corroborates, continue to be energised by reigning discourses and an overall favourable orientation towards a corporate educational model. Engagement with a political mindset, including advocacy and negotiation, developing alliances and cementing deals, as leader 4 described, enables the dismantling of firmly installed "walls", of ingrained "institutional

habits" (Ahmed, 2012, p. 129). When these are balanced with symbolic representations and the forging of connections with stakeholders, they coalesce to initiate change in the common-sense thinking of a school community. Heightened engagement with the political mindset shifts the focus towards a context-oriented body of knowledge.

Yet, as Apple (2006) has forewarned, building alternatives cannot be a single act but a collective one. Leaders who are committed to moving forward will also need to translate individual commitments into harnessing collective commitments politically in the strategic formation of coalitions. Steered by common human and educational problems, leaders are encouraged to build alliances within their own organisations and form strategic networks with faith-based schools, but they also need to cross the religious and secular divides.

In retrospect, pursuing these areas is no easy undertaking when considering that most practitioners in Islamic schools are struggling simply to get on with the business of developing a clear set of learning goals, a challenging curricula, a safe and accepting school climate, and all the while trying to infuse an Islamic ethos into the schools' cultures, as Merry and Driessen (2016) also noted. Indeed, leaders of Islamic schools have a difficult task ahead of them. Nonetheless, it is one that cannot be delayed. What is clear is that Islamic schools' leaders must take stock of the issues at hand and tackle them head on, even if it means "obstructing" them (Ahmed, 2012, p. 187). Anything less than a proactive but balanced approach is not worthy of the trust they hold themselves accountable for.

To conclude, this inquiry counters the argument that Islamic organisations are potential places where fragmentation and even radicalisation can germinate. Alongside Short (2003), faith schools do not hinder social cohesion but strengthen it. The findings reinforce Underabi's (2014) study of mosques and Vergani et al.'s (2017) findings that organised Islamic organisations and groups act as "a civic engagement incubator" (p. 73). Building on this scholarship, faith-based, intellectual educational leaders act as agents of justice and social cohesion. In this regard, it can be argued that Islamic schools' leaders who draw on their personal beliefs, values and socio-cultural understandings and respond to them through educational praxis play a critical role in constructing Islamic schools' espoused purpose and that of wider society.

On a final note, in non-Islamic societies where value-laden associations embodying the ideals of Islam—*halal*, *sharia*, *jihad* and *hijab*—have been used to evoke antithetical constructions of the suspect and feared "Other" in the mainstream consciousness, leadership

activism to influence the life trajectories of the marginalised and disadvantaged is a moral act (Said, 1994, 2004). Arguably, in this age of difference, nothing other than leadership activism qualifies to attend to such an urgent real-life social issue, by providing alternative educational possibilities to eradicate categorical constructions of the Muslim "Other" as radicalised, inhuman and terrorist. When considering the myth of Islam which saturates the popular consciousness, there are very few places where talent and resources exist for understanding the broader issues, mediation of the dual worlds and the serious search for alternative educational solutions with a concern for cohesion, peace and justice, other than in Islamic schools. Herein lie the calling of Islamic schools and their trustees—a challenge but also an opportunity.

7.4: Recommendations

This study has sign-posted directions for a plethora of inquiries warranting further consideration, including understandings and enactment of the role of teachers in Islamic schools. Both teachers of the Islamic and non-Islamic faith provide rich cases. Whilst this research generated understanding of purpose construction from nominated influential individuals, a principal (L3), middle leaders (L2, L4) and religious leaders (L1, L5), potential inquiries could look at the practice of individuals who influence institutional life, focusing on religious educational leaders or leaders of instruction, separately. The formal curriculum is another issue with existing gaps. Following Sanjakdar's (2001) action research projects in the area of sex education, other curriculum areas invite research attention. Furthermore, examining the experiences of students with an exploration of the impact of excellence and its associative regime provides fertile soils for inquiry. Of importance as a follow up for this inquiry—and given how Islamic education is translated into institutional life—is seeking clarification on what it all means for different actors in Islamic schools, to hear their stories. Each of these avenues has much to contribute to scholarship within the cultural politics of education and Islamic schooling in the West.

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Appendices

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APPENDIX A   LETTER SEEKING EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST FROM PRINCIPALS TO CONDUCT SURVEY RESEARCH (PHASE 1)

Dear

Assalamu alaikum,

My name is Nada Ghamra-oui and I am a doctoral Student in the School of Educational Leadership, Australian Catholic University, Mount St. Mary, Strathfield. I am writing to you as the school authority representative to ask if you would be open to a request to allow me to conduct survey research with members of your school community during the period of November 2012- December 2012. At this stage I am still finalising ethical clearance from ACU, so this request is simply looking for an in-principle, and non-binding indication of whether you would be happy to discuss my approach further.

Australian Islamic Schools have been established since 1983, and are growing in popularity, yet to date there has been comparatively little study of leadership within them. At this stage I am particularly interested in exploring the ways in which members of the school community are influential in infusing the purpose in Islamic schools.

In order to do this, I would like to conduct an online survey with some members of your teaching and non teaching staff, the board of governance, parents and senior students. At a later stage, I hope to be following up with one school, and will seek further permission from that school at that time.

Should you agree to be a part of this study, the data collected would be confidential. Individuals remain anonymous and names of schools would not be associated with the research findings in any way during the conduct of this research or in any report or publication arising from it. Nor could comments and opinions be traced back to individuals.

By participating in the research there will be many potential learning and benefits. Participating schools will develop a deeper insight into the ways in which they are seen as living out their distinctly Islamic purposes. The research should also assist Islamic schools in pursuing their best ideals. More generally, this research and its findings will address a gap in our current understandings by providing insight into the possibilities for educational leadership practice in the service of young Muslims. The research will make a contribution to leadership scholarship in all schools, and particularly faith based schools.

As I have indicated, this letter is simply a preliminary contact, to get a sense of whether your school might be interested in exploring this type of participation further. I would be very happy to meet with you and the Board of Directors to discuss the research and clarify any issues for you. If it seems that you are interested I would then provide further detail, and in particular specifics of the ethical safeguards that I would put in place.

I would hope that you might be able to give me an indication of whether you would like to discuss this further by Tuesday, 30th of October, 2012.

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My contact details are provided below:

Telephone: (02) 9793 9356   Mobile: 0410 700 800

Email: nnghamraoui@gmail.com

I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely

Nada Ghamra-oui

Researcher

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APPENDIX B   **FORMAL REQUEST FOR RESEARCH APPROVAL (PHASE 1)**

TITLE OF PROJECT: **The leadership role in infusing the espoused purpose of Australian Islamic schools.**

NAMES OF SUPERVISORS:
Associate Professor Michael Bezzina
Dr Jack Frawley

NAME OF STUDENT RESEARCHER: **Nada Ghamra-oui**
DEGREE: **Doctor of Education**

Dear
Assalamu alaikum

Thank you for your initial openness to find out more about my research project which seeks to explore the role of leadership in infusing the espoused purpose of Australian Islamic schools. I am now writing to you formally, to provide further information which will enable you to make an informed decision about whether to be a part of this study.

Australian Islamic Schools have been established since 1983, and are growing in popularity, yet to date there has been comparatively little study of leadership within them. I am particularly interested in understanding the way in which anyone who exercises leadership (not only those with titles) contributes to infusing Islamic purpose in their school.

By participating in the research participating schools will develop a deeper insight into the ways in which they are seen as living out their distinctly Islamic purposes. The research should also assist Islamic schools in pursuing their best ideals. More generally, this research and its findings will address a gap in our current understandings by providing insights into the possibilities for educational leadership practice in the service of young Muslims. The research will make a contribution to leadership scholarship in all schools, and particularly faith based schools.

If you agree to participate, members of your school community will be invited to participate in an online, anonymous survey. The participant group includes: 4 members of the leadership team: 24 members of the teaching and non teaching staff: 30 students from Years 11 and 12: 30 parents of years 11 and 12 students, including members of the parent council: and 4 members of the board of governance. The online survey will simultaneously take place with an analysis of the school's online mission statement. Both activities will take place in November- December, 2012.

In terms of impact on your school, you can see that for most people it will simply require the completion of a 20 minute questionnaire. The school will be sent information letters for distribution to participants as outlined in the table above. Also, I will provide text for newsletter and staff bulletin reminders a week before the survey deadline. The assistance of one of the administrative staff in distributing the information letters to participants and inserting the excerpts would be of great assistance. The timing of all activities will be subject to your approval and at the convenience of the school.

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You should be aware that individual participants will be free to decide not to participate. You are also at liberty to withdraw your consent and discontinue at any time without providing a reason. The data collected will be anonymous and confidential. The name of the school will not be associated with the research findings in any way during the conduct of this research and in any report or publication arising from it. Nor will it be possible for any comments or opinions to be traced back to individuals.

The findings of the research will be collated in a thesis and may also be published in academic journals. Upon completion of the research, the findings will be made available to all participating schools. No individual or school will be able to be identified in any of the reports of the research.

Were you to have any questions about the research, before or during its conduct, you will be able to contact me as the researcher, or either of my supervisors, Associate Professor Michael Bezzina and Dr. Jack Frawley.

Associate Professor Michael Bezzina
Telephone (02) 9701 4357
 Facsimile: (02) 9701 4292
Email michael.bezzina@acu.edu.au

Dr. Jack Frawley
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Both Associate Professor Michael Bezzina and Dr Jack Frawley can be located at the:

> School of Educational Leadership, Australian Catholic University
> Campus 25A Barker Rd, Strathfield NSW 2135

This study has been approved by the Human Research Ethics Committee at Australian Catholic University. In the event that you had any complaint or concern, or if you had any query that the Supervisors and Researcher were not able to satisfy, you will be able to write to the Chair of the Human Research Ethics Committee care of the nearest branch of the Research Services Office.

NSW and ACT: Chair, HREC
C/- Research Services
Australian Catholic University
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Any complaint or concern will be treated in confidence and fully investigated. The participant will be informed of the outcome.

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In giving permission to participate in the research, the school is assenting to providing access to stakeholders of Islamic schools to participate in a 20 minute, online anonymous survey. If you agree to participate in this project, could you please complete the attached consent form indicating your agreement?

Yours Sincerely

Nada Ghamra-oui

Researcher

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APPENDIX B (Continued)   FORMAL REQUEST FOR RESEARCH APPROVAL (PHASE 2)

TITLE OF PROJECT: **The leadership role in infusing the espoused purpose of Australian Islamic schools.**

NAMES OF SUPERVISORS:
 Associate Professor Michael Bezzina
 Dr Jack Frawley

NAME OF STUDENT RESEARCHER: **Nada Ghamra-oui**
DEGREE: **Doctor of Education**

Dear
Assalamu alaikum,

Thank you for your initial interest in allowing me to conduct the first stage of my research in your school last year. The purpose of my research project is to explore the role of leadership in infusing the espoused purpose of Australian Islamic schools. I am writing to you now to provide further information which will enable you to make an informed decision about whether to be a part of stage 2 of the research.

Australian Islamic Schools have been established since 1983, and are growing in popularity, yet to date there has been comparatively little study of leadership within them. I am particularly interested in understanding the way in which anyone who exercises leadership (not only those with titles) contributes to infusing Islamic purpose in their school.

By participating in the research participating schools will develop a deeper insight into the ways in which they are seen as living out their distinctly Islamic purposes. The research should also assist Islamic schools in pursuing their best ideals. More generally, this research and its findings will address a gap in our current understandings by providing insights into the possibilities for educational leadership practice in the service of young Muslims. The research will make a contribution to leadership scholarship in all schools, and particularly faith based schools.

If you agree to participate, the following table has been prepared to provide you with an overview of how people in your school community would be involved, including the time line and stages of the research.

Overview of the Research

Major Research Question	How does the leadership infuse the espoused purpose of Australian Islamic Schools?		
	Data gathering method	Participants	Time line
STAGE 2: *Purpose –in-use*			
The Examination	Document analysis	2 Newsletters, School Prospectus Discipline and welfare policy	Term 1, 2013 February- March

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Phase		Staff Code of Conduct OR induction Policy Year 6 Teaching and Learning Programs for 1 term and relevant timetables.	
	Observations	*Events:* ceremonies, rituals and special days *The physical environment:* architecture, resources, space. *Signs and Symbols:* school name, logo, special artefacts. *Public Pronouncements:* Stories, assembly announcements and recitations.	Term 1, 2013
	Participant 1 week log	Leaders identified as having influence record brief details of their activities and reflections in 4 intervals daily.	Term 1, 2013 April
	Guided, open-ended, in-depth interviews	Leaders identified as having influence from Phase 1 surveys (Approximately 5-7).	Term 1, 2013 April- May

In terms of impact on your school, you can see that for the designated leaders it will require about an extra 20 minutes a day for 5 days to complete simple log entries. This is then followed by a 50 minute interview. You can see that any observations are simply at the most public levels of school life, and call for no additional effort on the part of the school. Most of the documents in which I am interested are in the public domain already, but the assistance of one of the administrative staff in gathering them together would be of great assistance. The timing of all activities will be subject to your approval and at the convenience of the school. The transcripts of interviews will be made available to individuals to check for accuracy.

You should be aware that participants are free to decide not to participate, or to discontinue at any time without having to justify or explain their decision. You are also at liberty to withdraw your consent and discontinue at any time without providing a reason. The data collected will be confidential. Neither the names of individuals nor of the school will be associated with the research findings in any way during the conduct of this research and in any report or publication arising from it. Nor will any comments or opinions be able to be traced back to individuals. Only the researcher will know your identity.

The findings of the research will be collated in a thesis and may also be published in academic journals. Upon completion of the research, the findings will be made available to your school. Neither individual nor your school will be able to be identified in any of the reports of the research.

Were you to have any questions about the research, before or during its conduct, you will be able to contact me as the researcher, or either of my supervisors, Associate Professor Michael Bezzina and Dr. Jack Frawley.

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This study has been approved by the Human Research Ethics Committee at Australian Catholic University. In the event that you had any complaint or concern, or if you had any query that the Supervisors and Researcher were not able to satisfy, you will be able to write to the Chair of the Human Research Ethics Committee care of the nearest branch of the Research Services Office.

NSW and ACT: Chair, HREC
C/- Research Services
Australian Catholic University
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Tel: 02 9701 4093
Fax: 02 9701 4350

Any complaint or concern will be treated in confidence and fully investigated. The participant will be informed of the outcome.

In giving permission to participate in the research, the school is assenting to provide the researcher with access to staff for interviews, non participant observations and to the documents named. If you agree to participate in this project, could you please complete the attached consent form indicating your agreement?

Yours Sincerely

Nada Ghamra-oui

Researcher

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APPENDIX C

INFORMATION LETTER TO ADULT SURVEY PARTICIPANTS (PHASE 1)

TITLE OF PROJECT: **The leadership role in infusing the espoused purpose of Australian Islamic schools.**

NAMES OF SUPERVISORS:
 Associate Professor Michael Bezzina
 Dr Jack Frawley

NAME OF STUDENT RESEARCHER: **Nada Ghamra-oui**

DEGREE: **Doctor of Education**

Dear Participant,

Assalamu alaikum

My name is Nada Ghamra-oui and I am a doctoral Student in the School of Educational Leadership, Australian Catholic University, Mount St. Mary, Strathfield. The purpose of my research project is to explore the role of leadership in infusing the espoused purpose of Australian Islamic schools. I am writing to you to invite you to be a part of this study.

Australian Islamic Schools have been established since 1983, and are growing in popularity, yet to date there has been comparatively little study of leadership within them. I am particularly interested in understanding the way in which the leadership is exercised by many people in Islamic schools and how it works to infuse their uniquely Islamic purpose in their culture.

By participating in the research participating schools will develop a deeper insight into the ways in which they are seen as living out their distinctly Islamic purposes. The research should also assist Islamic schools in pursuing their best ideals. The research should also assist Islamic schools in pursuing their best ideals.More generally, this research and its findings will address a gap in our current understandings by providing insights into the possibilities for educational leadership practice in the service of young Muslims. The research will make a contribution to leadership scholarship in all schools, and particularly faith based schools.

If you agree to participate, this will involve participation in a brief online survey. You will have the opportunity to share your significant insights and experiences regarding the school's purpose and how people influence the way it is infused in the school. The survey will take approximately 20 minutes and can be completed in your own time and space, minimising inconvenience to you.

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Your participation is voluntary. You can choose not to participate in the research without giving reasons and with no adverse consequences. Your identity, and that of your school will be anonymous and data collected will be confidential. No one from the school will have access to any of the data. It will not be possible to trace your comments and opinions back to you or your school.

The findings of the research will be collated in a thesis and may also be published in academic journals. Upon completion of the research, the findings will be made available to all participating schools. No individual or school will be able to be identified in any of the reports of the research.

Should you have any questions about the research, before or during its conduct, please do not hesitate to direct them to me as the researcher, or to either of my supervisors, Associate Professor Michael Bezzina and Dr. Jack Frawley.

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Telephone (02) 9701 4357
 Facsimile: (02) 9701 4292
Email michael.bezzina@acu.edu.au

Dr. Jack Frawley
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Both Associate Professor Michael Bezzina and Dr Jack Frawley can be located at the:

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Any complaint or concern will be treated in confidence and fully investigated. The participant will be informed of the outcome.If you agree to participate in this project; you will be able to access the survey by going to the following link:

....

By going to this link and completing this survey you are giving your consent to participate in this research.

Jazzakumu'llah kheir

Yours sincerely,

Nada Ghamra-oui

Researcher

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APPENDIX C   (CONTINUED)

INFORMATION LETTER TO PARENT SURVEY PARTICIPANTS (PHASE 1)

TITLE OF PROJECT: **The leadership role in infusing the espoused purpose of Australian Islamic schools.**

NAMES OF SUPERVISORS:
Associate Professor Michael Bezzina
Dr Jack Frawley

NAME OF STUDENT RESEARCHER: **Nada Ghamra-oui**

DEGREE: **Doctor of Education**

Dear Participant,

Assalamu alaikum

My name is Nada Ghamra-oui and I am a doctoral Student in the School of Educational Leadership, Australian Catholic University. The purpose of my research project is to explore the role of leadership in infusing the espoused purpose of Australian Islamic schools. I am writing to you to invite you to be a part of this study.

Australian Islamic Schools have been established since 1983, and are growing in popularity, yet to date there has been comparatively little study of leadership within them. I am particularly interested in understanding the way in which anyone who exercises leadership (not only those with titles) contributes to infusing Islamic purpose in their school.

By participating in the research participating schools will develop a deeper insight into the ways in which they are seen as living out their distinctly Islamic purposes. The research should also assist Islamic schools in pursuing their best ideals. More generally, this research and its findings will address a gap in our current understandings by providing insights into the possibilities for educational leadership practice in the service of young Muslims. The research will make a contribution to leadership scholarship in all schools, and particularly faith based schools.

If you agree to participate, this will involve participation in a brief online survey. You will have the opportunity to share your significant insights and experiences regarding the school's purpose and how people influence the way it is infused in the school. The survey will take approximately 20 minutes and can be completed in your own time and space, minimising inconvenience to you.

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The findings of the research will be collated in a thesis and may also be published in academic journals. Upon completion of the research, the findings will be made available to all participating schools. A short summary of the publication will be made available for students and parents. No individual or school will be able to be identified in any of the reports of the research.

Should you have any questions about the research, before or during its conduct, please do not hesitate to direct them to me as the researcher, or to either of my supervisors, Associate Professor Michael Bezzina and Dr. Jack Frawley.

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 Facsimile: (02) 9701 4292
Email michael.bezzina@acu.edu.au

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Any complaint or concern will be treated in confidence and fully investigated. The participant will be informed of the outcome.If you agree to participate in this project; you will be able to access the survey by going to the following link:

....

By going to this link and completing this survey you are giving your consent to participate in this research.

Jazzakumu'llah kheir

Yours sincerely,

Nada Ghamra-oui

Researcher

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(APPENDIX C CONTINUED)

INFORMATION LETTER TO PARENTS OF STUDENT SURVEY PARTICIPANTS (PHASE 1)

TITLE OF PROJECT: **The leadership role in infusing the espoused purpose of Australian Islamic schools.**

NAMES OF SUPERVISORS:
Associate Professor Michael Bezzina
Dr Jack Frawley

NAME OF STUDENT RESEARCHER: **Nada Ghamra-oui**

DEGREE: **Doctor of Education**

Dear Participant,

Assalamu alaikum

My name is Nada Ghamra-oui and I am a doctoral Student in the School of Educational Leadership, Australian Catholic University, Mount St. Mary, Strathfield. The purpose of my research project is to explore the role of leadership in infusing the espoused purpose of Australian Islamic schools. I am writing to you to seek permission for your child to be part of this study by the completion of a brief online survey.

Australian Islamic Schools have been established since 1983, and are growing in popularity, yet to date there has been comparatively little study of leadership within them. I am particularly interested in understanding the way in which anyone who exercises leadership (not only those with titles) contributes to infusing Islamic purpose in their school.

By participating in the research participating schools will develop a deeper insight into the ways in which they are seen as living out their distinctly Islamic purposes. The research should also assist Islamic schools in pursuing their best ideals. More generally, this research and its findings will address a gap in our current understandings by providing insights into the possibilities for educational leadership practice in the service of young Muslims. The research will make a contribution to leadership scholarship in all schools, and particularly faith based schools.

If your child participates in this research, this will involve participation in a brief online survey. Your child will have the opportunity to share his/her significant insights and experiences regarding the school's purpose and how people influence the way it is infused in the school. The survey will take approximately 20 minutes and can be completed in his/her own time and space, minimising inconvenience to him/her.

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Your child's participation is voluntary. Your child can choose not to participate in the research without giving reasons, and with no adverse consequences. His/ her identity will be anonymous and data collected will be confidential. No one from the school will have access to any of the data. It will not be possible to trace your child's comments and opinions back to him/ her.

The findings of the research will be collated in a thesis and may also be published in academic journals. Upon completion of the research, the findings will be made available to all participating schools. A short summary of the publication will be made available for students and parents. No individual or school will be able to be identified in any of the reports of the research.

Should you have any questions about the research, before or during its conduct, please do not hesitate to direct them to me as the researcher, or to either of my supervisors, Associate Professor Michael Bezzina and Dr. Jack Frawley.

Associate Professor Michael Bezzina
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Facsimile: (02) 9701 4292
Email michael.bezzina@acu.edu.au

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Any complaint or concern will be treated in confidence and fully investigated. The participant will be informed of the outcome.If you agree to give consent to your child to participate in the survey, please provide him/ her with this information letter and offer them the opportunity to participate in the study. Your child can then access the survey by going to the following link if he/she wishes:

………………………………………………………………………………

Going to this link and completing this survey presupposes that you have given your child consent to participate in this research.

Jazzakumu'llah kheir

Yours sincerely,

Nada Ghamra-oui

Researcher

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APPENDIX C (CONTINUED)

INFORMATION LETTER TO ADULT LOG ENTRY/INTERVIEW PARTICIPANTS (PHASE 2)

TITLE OF PROJECT: **The leadership role in infusing the espoused purpose of Australian Islamic schools.**

NAMES OF SUPERVISORS:
Associate Professor Michael Bezzina
Dr Jack Frawley

NAME OF STUDENT RESEARCHER: **Nada Ghamra-oui**

DEGREE: **Doctor of Education**

Dear Participant,

Assalamu alaikum

My name is Nada Ghamra-oui and I am a doctoral Student in the School of Educational Leadership, Australian Catholic University, Mount St. Mary, Strathfield. The purpose of my research project is to explore the role of leadership in infusing the espoused purpose of Australian Islamic schools. I am writing to you to invite you to be a part of this study.

Australian Islamic Schools have been established since 1983, and are growing in popularity, yet to date there has been comparatively little study of leadership within them. I am particularly interested in understanding the way in which anyone who exercises leadership (not only those with titles) contributes to infusing Islamic purpose in their school.

By participating in the research participating schools will develop a deeper insight into the ways in which they are seen as living out their distinctly Islamic purposes. The research should also assist Islamic schools in pursuing their best ideals. More generally, this research and its findings will address a gap in our current understandings by providing insights into the possibilities for educational leadership practice in the service of young Muslims. The research will make a contribution to leadership scholarship in all schools, and particularly faith based schools.

If you agree to participate, this will involve the completion of a simple 1 week log and participation in an interview. You will have the opportunity to share your significant insights and experiences regarding the school's purpose and how people influence the way it is infused in the school. . You will be required to complete the log daily. Completion time will take 20 minutes daily. The period of keeping the log will be followed by participation in an interview. The interview will take approximately 50 minutes and will be conducted at the school by the researcher, at a mutually convenient time, hopefully minimising inconvenience to you. It will be audio recorded. I

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will provide you with a copy of the interview guide prior the interview and transcription of the interview after the event to check for accuracy.

You should be aware that you are free to decide not to participate at any time without having to justify or explain your decision. You are also at liberty to withdraw your consent and discontinue at any time without providing a reason. While it is recognised that the small number of schools and individuals involved in this research might raise questions about the maintenance of confidentiality, every effort will be made to ensure that this is done. Measures to be used include: data collected will be confidential :neither your name nor that of the school will be associated with the research findings in any way during the conduct of this research and in any report or publication arising from it, nor will any one from the school have access to any of the data. In order to minimise any possibility of your being identified through your responses, no names will be used, only categories, for example, Leader A, Leader B and so on. There are at least four people in each category, and no information that might make it possible to identify you will be included in any report. Nor will it be possible to trace your comments and opinions back to you. Only the researcher will know your identity.

The findings of the research will be collated in a thesis and may also be published in academic journals. . Upon completion of the research, the findings will be made available to all participating schools. No individual or school will be able to be identified in any of the reports of the research.

Should you have any questions about the research, before or during its conduct, please do not hesitate to direct them to me as the researcher, or to either of my supervisors, Associate Professor Michael Bezzina and Dr. Jack Frawley.

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Any complaint or concern will be treated in confidence and fully investigated. The participant will be informed of the outcome.

If you agree to participate in this project, you will be given a Consent Form at the time of the interviews. You should sign both copies, retain one copy for your records and return the other copy to the Researcher.

Jazzakumu'llah kheir

Yours Sincerely

Nada Ghamra-oui

Researcher

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APPENDIX D

SCHOOL AUTHORITY CONSENT FORM FOR THE CONDUCT OF CROSS SECTIONAL SURVEY RESEARCH (PHASE 1)

TITLE OF PROJECT: **The leadership role in infusing the espoused purpose of Australian Islamic Schools.**

NAME OF PRINCIPAL SUPERVISOR: **Associate Professor Michael Bezzina**

NAME OF STUDENT RESEARCHER: **Nada Ghamra-oui**

I .... have read *or* have had read to me and understood the information provided in the Formal Request for Research Approval Letter. Any questions I have asked have been answered to my satisfaction. I agree to give consent for the conduct of an online survey amongst members of this school's community, realising that I can withdraw my consent at any time without adverse consequences. I am aware that the survey is being conducted by the researcher, Nada Ghamra-oui, and that it takes 20 minutes to complete. I am aware that participants remain anonymous. I agree that research data collected for the study may be published or may be provided to other researchers in a form that does not identify the school or any individual in any way.

NAME OF SCHOOL AUTHORITY.. TITLE ....
(Block letters)   (Block letters)

SIGNATURE .... DATE:..................................

SIGNATURE OF SUPERVISOR:...

DATE: ....

SIGNATURE OF STUDENT RESEARCHER: ....

DATE:..................................

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APPENDIX E: INVITATION AND REMINDERS EXCERPTS TO PARENTS AND STAFF PARTICIPANTS IN SURVEY RESEARCH
Excerpt 1: Invitation to the parents of senior students and their child to participate in survey research.

Dear parents of Year 11 and 12 students,

Assalamu alaikum

You and your child are invited to participate in a brief and anonymous online survey. Your school administration has given consent for your participation. The purpose of the survey is to share your significant insights and experiences of the leadership role in embedding the purpose/s of Islamic schools in their daily operations. As you and your year 11 /12 child are closely engaged with this Islamic school, your views are valuable to this research. The research is conducted by Nada Ghamra-oui. The survey will take approximately 20 minutes and can be completed in your own time and space.

An envelope which provides you with further information, including the link to access the survey has been provided for distribution to your school. Should you agree to give consent to your child to participate, please provide him/ her with the information letter and the link to access the survey.

Your participation is voluntary. Your identity will remain anonymous and data collected will be confidential. The results of this study should, *inshallah*, assist Islamic schools in pursuing their best ideals.

Jazzakumu'llah kheir for your contributions.

Yours sincerely,

Nada Ghamra-oui

Researcher

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APPENDIX E (CONTINUED)

Excerpt 2: Staff bulletin invitation to the teaching and non teaching staff to participate in survey research.

Dear teaching and non teaching staff

Assalamu alaikum

You are invited to participate in a brief and anonymous online survey. Your school administration has given consent for your participation. As significant stakeholders of an Islamic school you are invited to give your significant insights and experiences of the leadership role in embedding the purpose/s of Islamic schools in their daily operations. The research is conducted by Nada Ghamra-oui. The survey will take approximately 20 minutes and can be completed in your own time and space.

An envelope which provides you with further information, including the link to access the survey has been provided for distribution to your school. Access to the survey link is available in your information letter.

Your participation is voluntary. Your identity will remain anonymous and data collected will be confidential.

The results of this study should, *inshallah*, assist Islamic schools in pursuing their best ideals

Jazzakumu'llah kheir for your contributions.

Yours sincerely,

Nada Ghamra-oui

Researcher

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APPENDIX E (CONTINUED) WEEK 3 REMINDERS TO COMPLETE ONLINE SURVEY

Dear parent of Year 11 and 12 students,

Assalamu alaikum

Thank you to all the students and parents who have completed the survey research titled *the leadership role in infusing the purpose of Australian Islamic Schools*. If you have not yet completed the questionnaire or are interested in participating in this project, there is still time to do so at the link provided in the information letter. The results of this study should, *inshallah*, assist Islamic schools in pursuing their best ideals. *Jazzakumu'llah kheir for* your contributions.

Yours Sincerely,

Nada Ghamra-oui

Researcher

APPENDIX E (CONTINUED)

Dear teaching and non teaching staff

Assalamu alaikum

Thank you for your interest in the survey research titled *the leadership role in infusing the purpose of Australian Islamic Schools*. Just to remind you if you have not yet completed the questionnaire or are interested in participating in this project, there is still time to do so at the link provided in the information letter. *Jazzakumu'llah kheir* for your contributions.

Yours Sincerely,

Nada Ghamra-oui

Researcher

APPENDIX F   **PHASE 1:   CROSS SECTIONAL SURVEY**

THE LEADERSHIP ROLE IN INFUSING THE ESPOUSED PURPOSE OF AUSTRALIAN ISLAMIC SCHOOLS.

Assalamu alaikum

You have arrived at this link because you have responded to an invitation to participate in this survey. Completing this survey indicates your consent to the conditions outlined in the previously received information letter.

Because you are closely engaged in this Islamic school, I would greatly appreciate a few minutes of your time to respond to this online questionnaire. Its aim is to seek your views in relation to the purpose/s of this school, to identify people who influence its purpose/s and the leadership role in embedding the purpose/s within its operations. The school's purpose is the reason for its existence and guides what people work towards on a daily basis. When I refer to leadership I mean anyone who exerts influence in embedding the school's purpose in its philosophy, activities, programs and daily functions, not just those with formal roles or titles. Infusion refers to the way the school's purpose is embedded within its daily operations.

The results of this study will, *inshallah*, provide recommendations for best practice in relation to the way leadership embed the purpose of Australian Islamic Schools within their school operations.

Just to remind you of the details which were included in the information letter you have already read:

You were selected because your school administration has given consent to participate in this survey. Your identity will remain anonymous. All information provided by you will be treated as strictly confidential.

The questionnaire should only take 20 minutes to complete. Please submit it by pressing SUBMIT at the end of the questionnaire. You can leave the survey at any point and return to it as long as you log on from this same computer

Your opinion is what is important and is highly valuable for this research.

There are no right or wrong answers.

All information is confidential.

This questionnaire comprises two types of questions. Questions where possible answers are provided and questions where you need to respond in full.

Your participation is very much appreciated and will allow us to focus on critical issues related to the leadership role in infusing the purpose of Australian Islamic Schools.

Jazzakumullah kheir

Yours sincerely,

Nada Ghamra-oui

Researcher

SECTION 1: PURPOSE OF ISLAMIC SCHOOLS

THE FOCUS IN THIS SECTION IS ON ISLAMIC SCHOOLS IN GENERAL

The purpose of an Islamic school is to prepare confident individuals with the skills, attitudes and knowledge for productive membership in society, while at the same time helping them towards a deeper understanding of their own distinctive and developing religious beliefs and values.

In the next set of questions, you are presented with a statement. You are being asked to indicate your level of agreement or disagreement with each statement by indicating whether you: Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Some what Agree (SWA), are Undecided (U), Somewhat Disagree (SWD), Disagree (D), or Strongly Disagree (SD).

To what extent do you think the following are significant in the infusion of purpose/s in Islamic schools GENERALLY?

THE CURRICULUM

1. The teaching of Islam in religious education classes

SA   A   SWA   U   SWD   D   SD

2. The teaching of Islam in the mandatory curriculum

SA   A   SWA   U   SWD   D   SD

3. The teaching of Arabic in the curriculum

SA   A   SWA   U   SWD   D   SD

4. The teaching of academic subjects

SA   A   SWA   U   SWD   D   SD

5. Provisions of a balanced educational experience which caters to the religious, academic, social, aesthetic, linguistic and physical development of students.

SA   A   SWA   U   SWD   D   SD

6. Preparing productive individuals, active in the service of humanity

SA   A   SWA   U   SWD   D   SD

THE SCHOOL CLIMATE

7. The school climate fulfils the religious and spiritual needs

SA   A   SWA   U   SWD   D   SD

8. A community atmosphere

SA   A   SWA   U   SWD   D   SD

9. Warm interactions and positive teacher-student relationships

SA   A   SWA   U   SWD   D   SD

THE TEACHING STAFF

10. Religious education teachers

SA   A   SWA   U   SWD   D   SD

11. Class teachers

SA   A   SWA   U   SWD   D   SD

WE ARE NOW CHANGING FOCUS FROM ISLAMIC SCHOOLS GENERALLY, TO THIS PARTICULAR SCHOOL.

12. What is the name of your school?

....

13. Indicate your status as a stakeholder of this Islamic School (You can tick more than 1 box).

☐ Parent   ☐ The leadership team: principal, deputy, coordinators

☐ Student   ☐ Member of the board of directors

☐ Class teacher   ☐ Teaching support staff

☐ Teacher of religious studies   ☐ Administrative staff

☐ Support staff (counsellor)   ☐ Other? Please indicate below

....

To what extent do you think the following are significant in the infusion of the purpose/s of THIS Islamic school?

THE CURRICULUM

14. The teaching of Islam in religious education classes

SA   A   SWA   U   SWD   D   SD

15. The teaching of Islam in the mandated curriculum

SA   A   SWA   U   SWD   D   SD

16. The teaching of Arabic in the curriculum

SA   **A**   **SWA**   **U**   **SWD**   **D**   **SD**

17. The teaching of academic subjects

SA   **A**   **SWA**   **U**   **SWD**   **D**   **SD**

18. Provisions of a balanced educational experience which caters to the religious, academic, social, aesthetic, linguistic and physical development of students.

SA   **A**   **SWA**   **U**   **SWD**   **D**   **SD**

19. Preparing productive individuals, active in the service of humanity

SA   **A**   **SWA**   **U**   **SWD**   **D**   **SD**

THE SCHOOL CLIMATE

20. The school climate fulfils the religious and spiritual needs

SA   **A**   **SWA**   **U**   **SWD**   **D**   **SD**

21. A community atmosphere

SA   **A**   **SWA**   **U**   **SWD**   **D**   **SD**

22. Warm interactions and positive teacher-student relationships

SA   **A**   **SWA**   **U**   **SWD**   **D**   **SD**

THE TEACHING STAFF

23. Religious education teachers

SA   **A**   **SWA**   **U**   **SWD**   **D**   **SD**

24. Class teachers

SA   **A**   **SWA**   **U**   **SWD**   **D**   **SD**

25. Other? Please indicate: ....

SA   **A**   **SWA**   **U**   **SWD**   **D**   **SD**

26. Imagine I was a visitor in this school, in what ways would I see the school's purpose evident in the daily life of the school?

....
....

....

SECTION 2:   LEADERSHIP INFLUENCE AND INFUSION OF PURPOSE

In the next set of questions please indicate the people in your school community who you see as influential in bringing to life its (Islamic) purpose. 1 being highly influential (HI), 5 being not at all influential (NI).

27. Parent

   HI 1...............2...............3...............4...............5 NI

28. Student

   HI 1...............2...............3...............4...............5 NI

29. Class teacher

   HI 1...............2...............3...............4...............5 NI

30. Teacher of religious studies

   HI 1...............2...............3...............4...............5 NI

31. Support staff (counsellor/nurse)

   HI 1...............2...............3...............4...............5 NI

32. The leadership team: principal, deputy, coordinators

   HI 1...............2...............3...............4...............5 NI

33. Member of the board of directors

   HI 1...............2...............3...............4...............5 NI

34. Teaching support staff

   HI 1...............2...............3...............4...............5 NI

35. Administrative staff

   HI 1...............2...............3...............4...............5 NI

36. Other? Please indicate: ....

   HI 1...............2...............3...............4...............5 NI

Please identify and indicate the role of 3 people who have been highly influential in this area.

37. Name of individual 1: ....Role of individual 1: ....

38. Name of individual 2: ....Role of individual 2: ....

39. Name of individual 3: ………………………….Role of individual 3: ………………………………………

40. Think about the 1st person you mentioned in the previous question. Please tell me how this person is known to exercise this influence?

....

....

....

....

Jazzakumu'llah kheir.

Thank you for your contributions to this research.

Wassalam

PLEASE SUBMIT BY CLICKING **SUBMIT** BELOW

SUBMIT

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APPENDIX G

FORMAL REQUEST FOR RESEARCH APPROVAL (PHASE 2)

TITLE OF PROJECT: The leadership role in infusing the espoused purpose of Australian Islamic schools.

NAMES OF SUPERVISORS:
Dr. Jack Frawley
Dr. Marie Quinn

NAME OF STUDENT RESEARCHER: Nada Ghamra-oui
DEGREE: Doctor of Education

Dear Principal,

Assalamu alaikum,

Thank you for your initial interest in allowing me to conduct the first stage of my research in your school last year. The purpose of my research project is to explore the role of leadership in infusing the espoused purpose of Australian Islamic schools. I am writing to you now to provide further information which will enable you to make an informed decision about whether to be a part of stage 2 of the research.

Australian Islamic Schools have been established since 1983, and are growing in popularity, yet to date there has been comparatively little study of leadership within them. I am particularly interested in understanding the way in which anyone who exercises leadership (not only those with titles) contributes to infusing Islamic purpose in their school.

By participating in the research participating schools will develop a deeper insight into the ways in which they are seen as living out their distinctly Islamic purposes. The research should also assist Islamic schools in pursuing their best ideals. More generally, this research and its findings will address a gap in our current understandings by providing insights into the possibilities for educational leadership practice in the service of young Muslims. The research will make a contribution to leadership scholarship in all schools, and particularly faith based schools.

In terms of impact on your school, you can see that it will simply require the completion of a 30 minute online questionnaire of 3 or 4 individuals from your school. The school will be provided with information letters for distribution to participants.

You should be aware that participants are free to decide not to participate, or to discontinue at any time without having to justify or explain their decision. You are also at liberty to withdraw your consent and discontinue at any time without providing a reason. The data collected will be confidential. Neither the names of individuals nor

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of the school will be associated with the research findings in any way during the conduct of this research and in any report or publication arising from it. Nor will any comments or opinions be able to be traced back to individuals. Only the researcher will know your identity.

The findings of the research will be collated in a thesis and may also be published in academic journals. Upon completion of the research, the findings will be made available to your school. Neither individual nor your school will be able to be identified in any of the reports of the research.

Were you to have any questions about the research, before or during its conduct, you will be able to contact me as the researcher, or either of my supervisors, Dr. Jack Frawley and Dr. Marie Quinn.

Dr. Jack Frawley
Telephone (02) 9701 4305
Facsimile: (02) 9701 4292
Email Jack.frawley@acu.edu.au

Dr Marie Quinn
Telephone (02) 9701 4484
Facsimile: (02) 9701 4034
Marie.Quinn@acu.edu.au

Australian Catholic University
Locked Bag 2002 Strathfield NSW 2135
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Dr Jack Frawley can be located at the:

School of Educational Leadership, Australian Catholic University
8-20 Napier Street (Tenison Woods House), Level 18-18,
14 PO Box 968, North Sydney, NSW, 2059

Dr Marie Quinn can be located at the:

Faculty of Education, Australian Catholic University
25a Barker Road, Strathfield, NSW, 2135

This study has been approved by the Human Research Ethics Committee at Australian Catholic University. In the event that you had any complaint or concern, or if you had any query that the Supervisors and Researcher were not able to satisfy, you will be able to write to the Chair of the Human Research Ethics Committee care of the nearest branch of the Research Services Office.

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C/- Research Services
Australian Catholic University
Strathfield Campus
Locked Bag 2002
STRATHFIELD NSW 2135
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Any complaint or concern will be treated in confidence and fully investigated. The participant will be informed of the outcome.

In giving permission to participate in the research, the school is assenting to provide the researcher with access to up to 4 individuals for the purpose of the completion of an anonymous online questionnaire. If you agree to participate in this project, could you please complete the attached consent form indicating your agreement?

Yours Sincerely

Nada Ghamra-oui

Researcher

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APPENDIX H: INFORMATION LETTER TO QUESTIONNAIRE PARTICIPANTS (PHASE 2)

TITLE OF PROJECT: **The leadership role in infusing the espoused purpose of Australian Islamic schools.**

NAMES OF SUPERVISORS:
Dr Jack Frawley
Dr. Marie Quinn

NAME OF STUDENT RESEARCHER: **Nada Ghamra-oui**

DEGREE: **Doctor of Education**

Dear Participant,

Assalamu alaikum

My name is Nada Ghamra-oui and I am a doctoral Student in the School of Educational Leadership, Australian Catholic University, Mount St. Mary, Strathfield. The purpose of my research project is to explore the role of leadership in infusing the espoused purpose of Australian Islamic schools. I am writing to you to invite you to be a part of this study.

Australian Islamic Schools have been established since 1983, and are growing in popularity, yet to date there has been comparatively little study of leadership within them. I am particularly interested in understanding the way in which anyone who exercises leadership (not only those with titles) contributes to infusing Islamic purpose in their school.

By participating in the research participating schools will develop a deeper insight into the ways in which they are seen as living out their distinctly Islamic purposes. The research should also assist Islamic schools in pursuing their best ideals. More generally, this research and its findings will address a gap in our current understandings by providing insights into the possibilities for educational leadership practice in the service of young Muslims. The research will make a contribution to leadership scholarship in all schools, and particularly faith based schools.

If you agree to participate, this will involve responding to an anonymous online or hand written self- completion questionnaire. You will have the opportunity to share your significant insights and experiences regarding the school's purpose and how people influence the way it is infused in the school. Completion time will take approximately 30 minutes.

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You should be aware that you are free to decide not to participate at any time without having to justify or explain your decision. You are also at liberty to withdraw your consent and discontinue at any time without providing a reason. While it is recognised that the small number of schools and individuals involved in this research might raise questions about the maintenance of confidentiality, every effort will be made to ensure that this is done. Measures to be used include: data collected will be confidential :neither your name nor that of the school will be associated with the research findings in any way during the conduct of this research and in any report or publication arising from it, nor will any one from the school have access to any of the data.

The findings of the research will be collated in a thesis and may also be published in academic journals. . Upon completion of the research, the findings will be made available to all participating schools. No individual or school will be able to be identified in any of the reports of the research.

Should you have any questions about the research, before or during its conduct, please do not hesitate to direct them to me as the researcher, or to either of my supervisors, Dr. Jack Frawley and Dr. Marie Quinn.

Dr. Jack Frawley
Telephone (02) 9701 4305
Facsimile: (02) 9701 4292
Email Jack.frawley@acu.edu.au

Dr Marie Quinn
Telephone (02) 9701 4484
Facsimile: (02) 9701 4034
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14 PO Box 968, North Sydney, NSW, 2059

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This study has been approved by the Human Research Ethics Committee at Australian Catholic University. In the event that you have any complaint or concern, or if you have any query that the Supervisors and Researcher have not been able to satisfy, you may write to the Chair of the Human Research Ethics Committee care of the nearest branch of the Research Services Office.

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NSW and ACT: Chair, HREC
C/- Research Services
Australian Catholic University
Strathfield Campus
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Tel: 02 9701 4093
Fax: 02 9701 4350

Any complaint or concern will be treated in confidence and fully investigated. The participant will be informed of the outcome. If you agree to participate in this project; you will be able to access the questionnaire by going to the following link:

https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/NNGB

By going to this link you are giving your consent to participate in this research.

Jazzakumu'llah kheir

Yours Sincerely

Nada Ghamra-oui

Researcher

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APPENDIX I: SCHOOL AUTHORITY CONSENT FOR THE CONDUCT OF A SELF COMPLETION QUESTIONNAIRE (PHASE 2)

TITLE OF PROJECT: **The leadership role in infusing the espoused purpose of Australian Islamic Schools.**

NAME OF PRINCIPAL SUPERVISOR: **Dr Jack Frawley**

NAME OF STUDENT RESEARCHER: **Nada Ghamra-oui**

I .... have read *or* have had read to me and understood the information provided in the Formal Request for Research Approval Letter. Any questions I have asked have been answered to my satisfaction. I give consent for the identified leaders to complete a questionnaire. I realise that I can withdraw my consent at any time without adverse consequences. I am aware that the research is being conducted by Nada Ghamra-oui. I am aware that participant confidentiality will be maintained. I agree that research data collected for the study may be published or may be provided to other researchers in a form that does not identify the school or any individual in any way.

NAME OF SCHOOL AUTHORITY.. TITLE ....

(Block letters)   (Block letters)

SIGNATURE .... DATE:...................................

SIGNATURE OF SUPERVISOR:..

DATE: ....

SIGNATURE OF STUDENT RESEARCHER: ....

DATE:...................................

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APPENDIX J: THE LEADERSHIP QUESTIONNAIRE

Dear participant,

Thank you for your valuable contribution to this research. Following is a clarification of key terms which may help in understanding key concepts in this interview script:

A purpose is the reason for the school's existence and guides what people work toward (Starratt, 2003).
Infuse is the ways in which the school ensures its purposes are embedded and evident in its operations.

1. In earlier surveys, when people were asked to identify those who were influential in the infusion of this school's purpose, you were identified as one such person. Why do you think people may have identified you as exercising this influence?

2. To what extent are you aware of exercising this influence?

3. Can you tell me about some particular occasion on which you may have exercised this influence?

4. What do you explicitly do to influence the Islamic purpose in the life of the school?

5. Are there any particular strategies that you are conscious of employing which seem to work best?

6. What obstacles does someone face in seeking to infuse Islamic purpose?

7. What aspects of the school have helped in infusing the Islamic purpose?

8. In what areas does the school best reflect its purpose? What else could be done to improve this?

9. In what areas are there a difference between the rhetoric of what the school claims and the reality of what happens? Why is this?

APPENDIX K: THE STAKEHOLDER SURVEY: ANALYSIS OF CLOSED QUESTIONS

Survey question 4 was a template of survey question 1. Question 1 sought responses to Islamic schools' purpose/s generally and variables which embed purpose in culture. Question 4 sought to ascertain participants' views in relation to how purpose is experienced within their local context. Question 1 looked at espoused purpose, whereas, question 4 measured the purpose-in-use.

SURVEY QUESTION 1: To what extent do you think the following are significant in the infusion of purposes in Islamic schools GENERALLY?

Survey question 1 provided participants with 11 indicators asking them to rate the extent to which the 3 enablers: the curriculum (6 indicators), the school climate (three indicators) and teachers (2 indicators) were significant in the infusion of the purpose/s of Islamic schools generally. An open ended response option was also provided for each of the categories for the provisions of further indicators and elaborations. The overall responses suggest that all 3 enablers were considered as having a very great to great influence in the infusion of purpose/s in the cultures of Islamic schools generally. 61 responses were submitted to this question.

The curriculum

Indicators within curriculum receiving the highest rating of 44 responses within the very great range, and 20 responses within the great range ,compared to a mean of 12.2 is the teaching of academic subjects. Also preparing productive individuals, active in the service of humanity were considered as having the greatest (33 ratings), great (15) and moderately great influence (10) in the infusion of purpose. It can therefore be concluded that within curriculum these two have the most significance in the infusion of purpose.

The responses to the 2 indicators within curriculum, the teaching of Islam in religious education classes (30=20=11), considered to have a great (20 responses) or very great influence (30) and provisions of a balanced educational experience which caters to the religious, academic, social, aesthetic, linguistic and physical development of students (30+ 18+ 10+3) were also considered to have a very great influence(30 ratings) to a great (18) and moderate (10) influence in the infusion of purpose/s in Islamic schools and therefore it could be concluded that generally they have the most significance.

The teaching of Islam in the mandatory curriculum was considered to have a great (20 responses) or very great influence in the infusion of purpose/s in Islamic schools (21 responses compared with the mean of 12.3) and therefore it could be concluded that generally it is significant. The teaching of Arabic in the curriculum was perceived as having a moderate (24 responses) great (16) or very great (15 responses) influence in the infusion of purpose and

consequently it can be concluded that it is moderately significant in the infusion of the purpose of Islamic schools. There were no responses to the 'not at all category'.

The Climate

Data for school climate indicate that positive teacher-student relationships was considered to have a very great (34) to great influence 20) in the infusion of purpose/s in Islamic schools and therefore it could be concluded that generally it has the most significance. That the climate fulfils the religious needs was rated moderately great (12), great (17 responses) and very great (29 responses) compared to a mean of 12.2   in the infusion of purpose. Also, community atmosphere was perceived as having a very great (26) to great influence (25) compared to a mean of 12.2 in the infusion of purpose. It can then be concluded that school climate generally has the most significance in the infusion of purpose.

Teachers

Teachers were seen to have a very great (34) and great (22) influence in the promotion of purpose/s and therefore it can be concluded that they are most significant in the infusion of purpose. Religious education teachers were also perceived to have a very great (26 responses) to great (25) and moderate influence (4) and therefore it can be concluded religious education teachers were significant in the infusion of purpose/s in Islamic schools generally.

No alternative variable to the infusion of purpose was offered by the different sub groups participating as a response to the open ended alternatives. None of the indicators were given the rating of not at all.
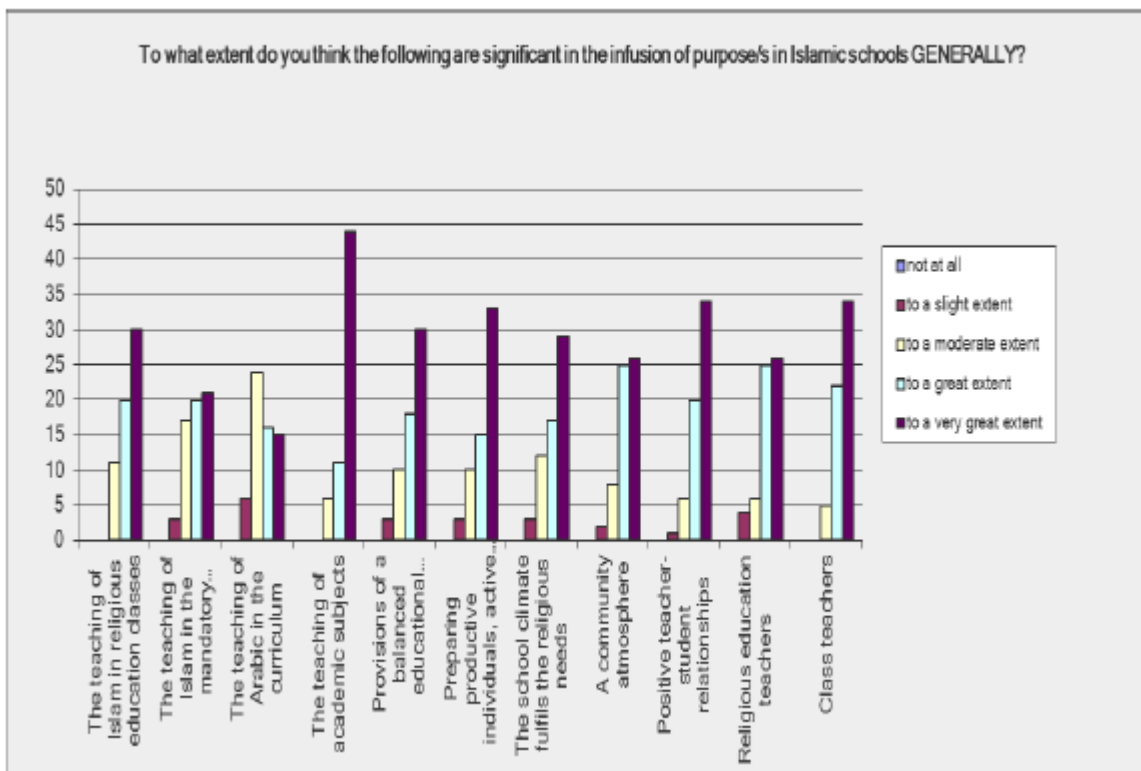
Survey Question 4: To what extent do you think the following are significant in the infusion of purpose/s in THIS Islamic school?

Returns from the different groups within the population were fewer than the responses to question 1 (55 responses) but confirmed the curriculum, the school climate and teachers as greatly significant in the infusion of the schools' purpose/s.

The curriculum

Indicators within curriculum receiving the highest rating of 33 responses within the very great range and 15 responses within the great range compared to a mean of 11 was the teaching of academic subjects. It can therefore be concluded that the academic subjects have the most significance in the infusion of purpose.

The academic subjects rated as greatly (15) and very greatly (33) influential compared to a mean of 11. Also perceived as influential were the teaching of religious education classes which rated as very great, (29), great (17) and moderately great (9). It can therefore be concluded that within curriculum these two have the most significance in the infusion of purpose. Preparing productive individuals, active in the service of humanity were considered as having a very great (27 ratings), great (13) and moderately great (4) influence in the infusion of purpose and provisions of a balanced educational experience which caters to the religious, academic, social, aesthetic, linguistic and physical development of students was perceived as having a very great(25), great (10) and moderate(18) influence and it may therefore be concluded that they are most significant in the infusion of purpose/s of the sample school. The teaching of Islam in the mandatory curriculum was considered to have a great (21 responses), moderate (13) or very great (18) influence in the infusion of purpose/s in Islamic schools (18) compared with the mean of 11 and therefore it could be concluded that generally it is moderately significant. The teaching of Arabic in the curriculum was perceived as having a moderate (17) great (16) or very great (15) influence in the infusion of purpose and consequently it can be concluded that it is moderately significant in the infusion of the purpose of Islamic schools. The "not at all" category was not seen as a response option in the curriculum indicators to question 4 .

The Climate

The infusion of the purpose/s of the schools is perceived by participants to be very greatly (27), greatly (19) and moderately (9) influential through positive teacher-student relationships. It can then be concluded that this indicator is most significant in the infusion of purpose/s. Ratings indicate that a community atmosphere was seen as very great (24), great (21) and moderately (5) influential and it can consequently be concluded that it was most significant in the infusion of the purpose/s of the sample. The school climate fulfils the religious needs was considered as very great (24), great (17) and moderate (11) and can consequently be concluded that it was significant in the infusion of the purpose/s of the

sample schools. The "not at all category" was not seen as an appropriate response option by any of the participants in the climate indicators to question 4 .

Teachers

Class teachers were considered to have a very great (26) and great (22) influence and it can then be concluded that they are most significant. Religious education teachers were seen to have great (26), very great (18) and moderate (8) influence and are therefore significant in the infusion of the purpose/s. The "not at all category" was seen as an appropriate response option for the indicator "class teachers" in question 4.

No alternative variable to the infusion of purpose was offered by the different sub groups participating as a response to the open ended alternative within this closed question. Only 1 indicator (religious education teachers) was scored a rating of "not at all".