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Challenges Facing Muslim Youth in the Era of Globalization

Naseeruddin Mahar*

PhD Scholar, Institute of Islamic Studies Shah Abdul Latif University, Khairpur.
naseeruddin.mahar@salu.edu.pk

Dr. Zain-ul-Abdin

Associate Professor, Institute of Islamic Studies Shah Abdul Latif University, Khairpur.
zain.arijo@salu.edu.pk

*Corresponding Author

ABSTRACT

The processes of globalization have brought about the shift in the paradigm of societies of the global population changing cultural values, patterns of communication, economy, and personal identities. The globalization is also bringing the prospects of education, economic participation, and intercultural interactions but at the same time, it is posing profound difficulties to the Muslim youth, especially remaining rooted to religious identity, in the light of cultural assimilation, and in the efforts to overcome the issue of bigotry. The current analysis reflects upon the intricate problems of Muslim youth in the contemporary era of globalization such as the problems of identity crisis, Islamophobia, digital influences, discrimination, socio-cultural upheavals, and the stress on the psychological and mental health. This paper highlights how Muslim youth act as mediators between the current values of religion and the modern needs and pressures of society that may cause detachment, confusion, or ambivalent identities that should be countered through resilience and critical interactions using the recent scholarly discoveries and empirical studies conducted in 2015-2025. The study focusing on thematic analysis of the available literature, interviews, and community testimonies uses a qualitative research design based on purposive sampling. The results demonstrate that globalization exacerbates the pressures that are associated with cultural conformity, religious conservatism, Islamophobia discourse, and digital cultural impact on religious practice, social belonging, and self-concept. The paper ends with the suggestions of a detailed policy aimed at

enhancing the identity with religion, popularizing the inclusive educational approach, encouraging the intercultural dialogue, and promoting the psychosocial resilience. Such initiatives play a very important role in enabling Muslim youth to flourish and still retain the basic faith values in a globalized society.

Keywords: Globalization, Muslim Youth, Identity Crisis, Islamophobia, Cultural Assimilation, Digital Media, Religious Values, Resilience.

INTRODUCTION

The trend towards globalization, which can be generally defined as the growing interdependence of societies on the basis of economic, cultural, technological, and political interdependence has gained momentum in the last few decades. Borders in this global village are less well defined and ideas, cultures and lifestyles are disseminated faster than ever before (Hamzah, 2025). To the young Muslim generation, this internationalization brings about a set of multifaceted issues that transcend the economic enrolment, affecting their cultural affiliation, faith, and social assimilation, and also their psychological health.

The Muslim youth or people between the ages of about 15 and 30 years who refer themselves to the followers of Islam form a large part of the world Muslim community. These young people are moving between and sometimes in conflict with various pressures across the globe, in North American and Europe, Africa, and Southeast Asia. Global connectivity, on the one hand, opens new possibilities in the field of education, information access, and economic activity; on the other hand, it opens them to secular cultural values, digital pressures, bias, and identity crises that can be incompatible with the traditional Islamic ideals (Turner and Khan, 2025).

The most popular issue is the identity crisis that Muslim youths undergo. As many researchers have noted, globalization tends to expose young people to Western standards and values and they may challenge the Islamic teachings in shaping the idea of a world (Al-Shash, 2025; Zine, 2021). The young members of Muslim society have a hard work of having to lash and combine different modern concepts of autonomy, individualism and consumer culture with the values of collectivism and Islam-based religiosity. The process of negotiating such divergent influences may be confusing, internally conflictual, and alienating (Negotiating a contested identity..., 2021).

Another deep-rooted issue is Islamophobia and discrimination. The increasing anti-Muslim attitudes that prevail in most of the Western communities and the negative media coverage by portraying Islam and Muslims in a negative light exert more pressure on Muslim youths and influence their sense of belonging and security (Global Islam: A Sociological Study-, 2025; Asad Latif, 2024). Studies in Western schools present a picture of how Islamophobia can be transmitted through the school setting and the general discourse, which support stereotypes and lead to the development of psychological pressure in Muslim students (Experiences of Muslim-American Students..., 2025). These pressures might cause defensive stance, withdrawal or hybrid formation of identity through a mixture of cultural conformity

and religious affiliation.

This is further complicated by the digital age which is a key piece of globalization. Although digital technologies and social media networks provide communities with a platform to organize and interact with religious communities, youths in the Muslim faith are also introducing them to materialism, sexualized information, individualism and cultural scripts that do not resonate with their religious constructs. Researchers point to the fact that digital media may contend with the preservation of Islamic identity, specifically when the content is controlled by secular or western cultural standards (Al-Shash, 2025; Globalization as a threat to Islamic Cultural Identity, 2025). This means that the Muslim youth should be able to come up with digital literacy and critical engagement tactics that enable them to manoeuvre in these digital spaces without compromising their value systems.

Moreover, cultural assimilation forces may take place in the Muslim-majority settings and in the diaspora communities (Hussain & Qasim, 2024). Multicultural Western society presents many Muslim youth with stereotyping, socioeconomic, and institutional exclusion that makes integration into mainstream life more difficult, yet they continue to practice their faiths (Global Islam: A Sociological Study..., 2025). In Muslim countries, where the majority of the population is Muslim, globalization has the potential to bring in the consumerist way of life and secularism that adversely affect the established way of living and religious way of doing things.

The effects of mental health problems on Muslim young people are also heightened by globalization. An overlap of identity negotiation, social marginalization, and digital pressures promotes anxiety, depression, and uncertainty in the future opportunities. As an illustration, acculturative stress, which occurs when people adjust to a new culture, has been associated with the increased rates of psychological distress in Muslim college students who had to survive in the hostile or insensitive academic environment (Understanding the Strength of Muslim Identity..., 2023).

Despite these opposing forces, the Muslim youth is not a passive victim of the globalization forces. Many of them use resilience one-up through the aid of religious knowledge, community and intercultural discussion groups. As it has been discovered, the ability to identify with the Islamic values of such concepts as justice, compassion and balance may offer a good platform to act in the global arena without losing the values (Religious Identity of Pakistani Muslim Youth..., 2025).

Scholars also emphasize that critical pedagogy, media literacy and community support are effective in enabling the Muslim youth to respond to globalization in a reasoned way. Such skills will help the young Muslims to strike a balance between modernity and tradition in such a way that it brings about agency rather than resignation or denial.

Such complicated problems should undergo the analysis to inform education, policy and community response, which can help Muslim youth. This paper is aimed at expanding the effects of globalization on the Muslim youth, to define the fields where the problems are brought up and to propose effective solutions to the same.

Research Objectives

To discuss the major socio-cultural and psychological concerns of the Muslim young generation as the globalization process occurs.

To investigate the impact that globalization is having on the identity of Muslim youth, their religious values and cultural identity.

To establish the impacts of digital media and global networks to the lives and worldviews of Muslim youth.

To provide policy suggestions and community-based measures which will assist the Muslim youth to be stronger and maintain their identities.

Research Questions

Which are the major socio-cultural issues of the Muslim youths in the globalized world?

What is the impact of globalization on identity development and Muslim youth religion?

How can digital media and global connectedness help or reduce these challenges?

Which policy and community measures can help Muslim youths to survive in a globalized world?

LITERATURE REVIEW

The impacts of globalization on Muslim young people are a topic that has been the focus of a large body of scholarly literature in the past ten years that has touched on issues of identity negotiation, Islamophobia, cultural conflict, and online interaction.

Culture and Identity Negotiation.

The formulation of identity among Muslim youth is one of the areas of interest in the study of globalization. Al-Shash (2025) points out that digital globalization exerts more identity strains as it exposes the young people to foreign cultural values, undermining the language and cultural affiliation and increasing the probability of cultural assimilation. On the same note, in Western settings the focus of studies is on how Muslim young people are reconciling personal freedom and religious identity symbols, negotiating cultural demands in multicultural urban areas (Bowen, 2007).

The term hybrid identities emerge in the studies that are conducted by diaspora Muslims where the youth are a mixture of Islamic belonging and secular culture. In Globalization has done what to Islamic Cultural Identity (2025), the authors address the issues of how Muslims in multicultural societies manage to navigate between the conservation of religious-cultural identity and the engagement in the more general cultural practices. These mixed identities are flexible but bring conflicts within a person and must be addressed through resilience and societal support (Finley, 2022).

Islamophobia and Discrimination.

Researchers always tend to associate globalization and the universalization of the narratives of Islamophobia which impact the lives of Muslim youth to a great extent. According to *Global Islam: A Sociological Study (2025)*, a negative portrayal and societal stereotypes in media has led to identity crisis and socio-economic costs that result in failure to integrate and belong in the society. Similar studies concerning the Western schools reveal that Islamophobia, as institutionalized discrimination and aggressive stigmatization, may have a negative impact on the psychological health of Muslim students and their educational experiences (Allen, 2010).

In the article on Islamophobia populism by Farid Hafez, the aspect of political movements of the right wing which capitalize on the sentiments of Islamophobia by building unfriendly communities, where Muslim youth feel excluded or intimidated by the need to protect their cultural values can also be revealed. The work on institutional Islamophobia by Khaled A. Beydoun is another illustration of how the fear could be mobilized by the state policies and popular discourse and used against Muslim populations, defining the experiences of the global audience and outlining the prevalent attitudes toward the communities (Ahmed and Rehman, 2022).

Digital Media and Influences around the World.

The internet is an asset and challenge to the Muslim youth. According to Al-Shash (2025), although digital media can be useful in the religious education and community building, it is also damaging the youth against secular cultural norms, which do not reflect Islamic values. Digital globalization promotes the transmission of cultures but enhances materialism, consumerism, and individualism, factors that may cause inner dissonance to Muslim young people who want to remain religious (Bano, 2023).

Religious Affiliation and Support of the Community.

Systems of religious identities are essential in making sense of youth resilience. The article *Islamic Identity of Pakistani Muslim Youth in the West (2025)* focuses on the identity that should be grounded in the Islamic concepts to overcome the pressures such as discrimination and cultural assimilation. This study reveals that the ground based on true religious knowledge promotes positive interaction with globalization without losing spiritual and cultural connectedness.

Family, Social Structures and Globalization.

The studies on family dynamics indicate that globalization transforms educational ambitions, parental ambitions, and the intergenerational conflict. *Globalization and the Arab Family System (2024)* explains why globalization has an impact on parenting, marriage norms, and family values, which indirectly impact the youth identity and social-cultural integration.

Other researchers indicate that the community networks such as mosques, cultural centers and youth programs play a crucial role in supporting religious values and social belonging in the globalized world.

Synthesis of Key Findings

Altogether, various themes are common in the literature:

Due to conflicting value systems, cultural negotiation and identity problems exist.

Discrimination and Islamophobia as such systematic impediments.

The issue of digital globalization as an asset and a conflict generator.

Resilience mechanisms of community and religion.

Young people and family and social change.

These results demonstrate the complexity of the interactions between the world and the lived experiences.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The research design used in this study is qualitative as it will help in examining the intertwined problems that have been faced by Muslim youth during the era of globalization. A qualitative approach would be appropriate since it would make it possible to have an in-depth insight into lived experiences, socio-cultural settings, and identity negotiations (Creswell, 2014).

Data Sources

The research draws on:

Peer reviewed journal articles and books published since 2015-2025.

Secondary data which are qualitative interviews and community testimonies of Muslim youth organizations.

Analysis of documents on policy reports and online discussion on the experience of youth in the context of the world.

Sampling and Participants

In the case of the secondary interview data, purposive sampling was employed to sample participants in different geographical settings (e.g., Western diaspora, Muslim-dominant nations, and multicultural cities) to obtain different experiences of globalization.

Data Collection

Data were collected through:

Consideration of published academic papers, reports and books.

Online community testimonies analysis based on credible research libraries.

The collection of secondary responses of interviews where possible.

Data Analysis

The analysis of data was performed through thematic analysis, where trends regarding identity issues, Islamophobia, the influence of the internet, or reactions of the community were identified. Triangulation was done on themes to give credibility and depth across sources.

Estimation / Analysis

Identity Challenges

The issue of identity became one of the key concerns in almost all the sources.

When moving in the global forces, Muslim young people tend to complain of cultural conflict and internal dissonance. The hybrid identities presented in the literature show how young people mix religious adherence to secular cultural lifestyles (Globalization's Effects on Islamic Cultural Identity, 2025). Such negotiation is capable of empowering youth who can make balanced identities but it also causes confusion to youths who lack a strong community support.

Impacts of Islamophobia

The attitude of Islamophobia affects the belongingness and self-esteem of Muslim youth. Discrimination against individuals based on their social group and education can be structured within schools, workplaces, and in the sphere of social conversations, which subsequently influences the development of negative self-perceptions and supports the cultural barriers (Global Islam: A Sociological Study..., 2025). The effect of this structural prejudice is the intensification of identity struggle and provocation in the defense of cultural retrenchment or withdrawal of civic engagement.

Digital Influences

Digital media is dual in nature. It also provides the instruments of religious education and community networking besides strengthening the secular cultural norms that question religious authenticity. Young people will need to become digital literate so that they can be critical and not subject to the content without losing their value systems.

Socio-Cultural Pressures

The indirect effect of globalization on the families and social structure leads to the effect on youth. The alteration of parenting expectations and contemporary lifestyles-related aspirations might constitute a conflict with the religious norms which causes inter-generational tension that influences the youth identity and decision-making.

CONCLUSION

This study confirms that the period of globalization is a confusing and confusing challenge to the Muslim youth. As globalization opens up possibilities to be educated, cross-culturated, and economically integrated, it enhances the stressors around identity negotiation, Islamophobia, digital cultural penetration, and socio-cultural fragmentation.

Primary results point at the fact that Muslim young people were constantly negotiated between the religious-cultural identity and global cultural norms, which are secular. Islamophobia as a form of structural prejudice and cultural narrative has been a constant barrier to belonging and self-esteem especially in the multicultural western societies. Digital globalization brings in more tensions in the self-concept and day to day activities as the young ones explore contents that tend to contravene the Islamic beliefs as they seek community and guidance on the internet.

In spite of these setbacks, the youthful Muslim community is resilient in case they have a solid religious background, open community contact systems, and media

literacy. By orienting identity to true Islamic teachings and thinking critically with the global cultures, the youth will be able to maintain their important values without dismissing the positive element of globalization.

Strategic policy interventions and community initiatives are necessary to handle these challenges effectively.

Policy Recommendations

Foster Non-discriminatory Programs:

The solution is to incorporate intercultural and religious literacy into education systems to lower the prejudice and enable Muslim and non-Muslim students to learn about different identities.

Support Community-Based Youth Programs:

Increase youth programs in mosques, cultural centers, and civil society that develop leadership, resilience and positive identity formation.

Enhance Digital Literacy:

Design initiatives that would give Muslim young people essential digital interaction techniques and be able to negotiate discern mentally with online cultural pressures and ethical promises.

Combat Islamophobia:

Lobby against discriminatory laws and stereotypes, promote bias against stereotypes, and establish safe society locations where Muslim youth can feel safe.

Empower Family Support Networks:

Promote family counseling and intergenerational dialogue programs which can aid in overcoming cultural frictions and enable mutual understanding in families.

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