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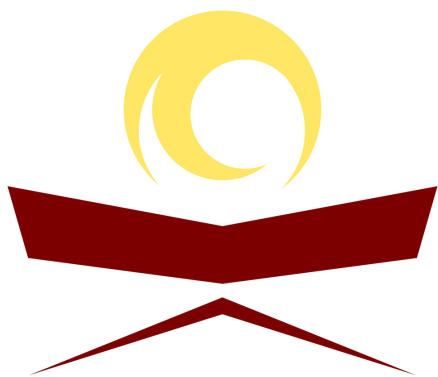
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# Muslim Identity Construction in Nadine Jolie Courtney's *All-American Muslim Girl*

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## Abstract

This research examines the construction of Muslim identity in the main character of Nadine Jolie Courtney's *All-American Muslim Girl*. This research used a qualitative textual analysis with a content analysis approach, focusing on how identity is represented through the character's dialogue, actions, and internal thoughts. Data were collected by systematically coding narrative units in the novel that reveal aspects of Allie's identity formation. The theory of character and characterization from DiYanni is used to analyze Allie's character, while James Marcia's four identity status framework is used to interpret the stages of identity construction. The findings reveal that Allie develops a passive American Muslim identity, shaped by her gradual learning of Islam and practice of religious rituals. Her identity's construction follows Marcia's stages: (1) identity diffusion, where Allie hides her Muslim identity while benefiting from her white appearance; (2) foreclosure, where she avoids Islamic practices due to family judgement; (3) moratorium, marked by exploration and confusion in her spiritual journey; and (4) identity achievement, where she embraces her muslim identity, commits to continue learning, and chooses to stand up for Muslim rather than conceal her faith.

**Keywords:** American Muslim, Identity Construction, Identity Formation, Muslim Identity Crisis.

## Introduction

The rapid growth and increasing visibility of the Muslim population in the United States have raised complex questions of identity, belonging, and cultural integration. For second-and third-generation Muslims, born and raised in America, identity formation often involves negotiating inherited Islamic traditions within a predominantly secular and frequently Islamophobic environment. Unlike their immigrant parents, who maintained a singular cultural and religious framework, younger generations face unique challenges that can culminate in what is often described as an identity crisis. Muslims have suffered increased animosity when portrayed as foreign dangers (Rauf, 2016). Prejudice and discrimination against Muslims dramatically increased following the arrival of the first generation of Muslim immigrants. As Nailafidah and Handayani (2024) note, Muslims in the United States increasingly encounter workplace discrimination, hate crimes, verbal abuse, and racist slurs. Islamophobia has gradually risen as a result of negative portrayals of Muslims by many Americans. These struggles, often framed within U.S.-centric trauma narratives (Djohar, 2023), persist more than



two decades later. Prejudice and negative stereotypes against Muslims not only endure but are also transmitted to subsequent generations (Teguh et al., 2024).

On the second and third-generation American Muslims who are the children of immigrants, they shed their parents' religious and cultural markings by becoming more Americanized. The process of re-Islamization has been accelerated as an increasing number of adolescents and young adults (Haddad). One of the struggles that are faced by young adults Muslim in America is an identity crisis. Several factors may be a cause for example they afraid of being discriminated in the Islamophobic society. This pressure can lead to internalized stigma and a profound sense of otherness. In response, some second and third-generation Muslims adopt strategies of identity concealment.

Muslim youth in the United States starts to negotiate their identities in the challenging times in grow up after the second-generation by "telling nobody" to policing each other within the Muslim community (Sirin and Fine). From this research, it can be seen that Muslim youth prefer to hide their Muslim identity to keep them safe from any threat. Meanwhile Karam (2020) stated that parents from second-generation expecting their children which is the third-generation will move closer to the American mainstream, it will make them retaining a minority identity more difficult. In addition, ssecond-generation Muslims are seen as Americans and not foreigners and, like other religious groups, their religious practices and institutions are viewed as dynamic (Cainkar).

Another significant response to the challenges of identity negotiation is the choosing to embrace and actively declare one's Muslim identity. For many second and third-generation Muslims, the encounter with Islamophobia or a personal spiritual awakening prompts a deeper engagement with their faith. This can involve actively studying Islamic teachings, increasing religious practice, participating in Muslim community initiatives, and openly asserting their Muslim identity in public spaces (Peek, 2005). This proactive stance often serves as a form of resistance against negative stereotypes and a reclamation of their narrative. Embracing their faith becomes a powerful source of resilience, providing a strong sense of community, purpose, and self-esteem (Suleiman).

*All-American Muslim Girl* by Nadine Jolie Courtney lifted the theme of identity crisis to the story of the youth Muslim that lives in America and the character itself struggling with the society and her family who refuse the spread of Muslim identity. What makes this novel different from others is the main character wants to embrace the Muslim identity and not hiding it even she lives in Islamophobic society. Moreover, she dares to get out of her comfort zone, in order to achieve her goals to be a better Muslim than before.

The only study that use the same corpus was found on *Sarcasm in Nadine Courtney's All-American Muslim Girl* (Salsabila and Djohar). The research identifies the prejudice that appears in the story and investigate the use of sarcasm to resist the prejudice. Four other related studies also discuss identity formation. Epsa's thesis *Soul Boy Identity Formation in "Northern Soul"* analyzes how the character John Clark develops his "Soul Boy" identity. Rosida and Molalita study the identity construction of Jordanian Muslim women in Fadia Faqir's *Willow Trees Don't Weep* (2014). Yasin et al.



explore the fluid identity of Muslim migrants in the United States through the character Hayat Shah in Ayad Akhtar's *American Dervish* (2012). Lastly, Wahyudi examines the identity crisis experienced by Parvaiz Pasha in Kamila Shamsie's *Home Fire*, using James Marcia's four identity statuses.

Although previous research shares a focus on identity construction, studies using *All-American Muslim Girl* as the primary corpus remain extremely limited. To date, only one published article examines Courtney's novel, leaving significant room for deeper exploration of how Muslim American identity is narratively represented. This gap is important because the novel provides a contemporary literary portrayal of second- and third-generation Muslim identity formation within an Islamophobic U.S. context—an area that remains underrepresented in literary scholarship. By analyzing the novel through identity theory—particularly James Marcia's identity status model and Stuart Hall's concept of cultural identity—this study contributes to broader discussions on Muslim American representation and expands the application of identity frameworks in literary analysis. It also offers an alternative understanding of Muslim American identity formation in contemporary YA fiction and highlights the novel's contribution to ongoing conversations on representation, belonging, and resistance in American Muslim literature.

### Method

This study employs a descriptive qualitative research design, which is appropriate for literary analysis because it emphasizes the interpretation of meanings and representations within a text. This method was selected to explore in depth how identity is constructed in the novel through the protagonist's experiences, thoughts, and interactions. The qualitative approach used is textual analysis, which allows the researcher to examine closely how narrative elements contribute to the portrayal of Muslim identity. In this study, DiYanni's theory of characterization is used as an analytical framework to understand how the author constructs the protagonist through appearance, dialogue, and action. These aspects are particularly relevant because they reveal the character's development and identity negotiation throughout the narrative. To further analyze how the main character constructs her Muslim identity, the research applies James Marcia's Identity Status Theory. Marcia's four identity statuses—diffusion, foreclosure, moratorium, and achievement—provide conceptual categories for interpreting the protagonist's levels of exploration and commitment as reflected in the narrative. The integration of these two frameworks enables the study to explain how specific traits and behaviors in the novel correspond to particular stages of identity formation. The primary data of this research is Nadine Jolie Courtney's *All-American Muslim Girl* (2019). Secondary sources include books, journal articles, and previous studies published between 2000 and 2024 that discuss identity theory, Muslim identity, youth identity development, and literary representations of Muslim characters. These sources were chosen based on their relevance, credibility, and contribution to supporting both the theoretical background and the analysis. Data collection involved close and repeated reading of the novel to identify narrative segments related to characterization and identity development. Textual evidence such as descriptions,



conversations, and key scenes was extracted and annotated to highlight moments that reflect aspects of characterization and identity struggle. The data analysis follows the procedures outlined by Miles and Huberman (1994), which include data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. During data reduction, relevant passages were selected, coded, and organized according to DiYanni's characterization categories and Marcia's identity statuses. The coded data were then displayed in thematic groupings to illustrate connections between the protagonist's traits and her stages of identity formation. Finally, conclusions were drawn by interpreting these patterns and verifying them with insights from secondary sources. Through this methodological approach, the study provides a theoretically grounded and systematic analysis of how Muslim identity is constructed in *All-American Muslim Girl*.

## Results and Discussions

### The Analysis of Allie's Character

The first part of the analysis focuses on Allie Abraham, the central character in *All-American Muslim Girl*. Allie is depicted as a high-school sophomore who appears no different from other American teenagers. She enjoys a close relationship with her parents, performs well academically, and experiences the excitement of a growing romance with a boy from her school. To those around her, there is nothing that sets her apart. What most people do not realize, however, is that Allie is Muslim. Because her parents do not actively practice and often distance themselves from religious life, Allie initially does not consider it a major issue to keep her identity private. This secrecy, however, becomes the foundation of her internal struggle as she navigates the tension between practicing her faith openly or suppressing it to blend seamlessly into her environment.

Allie's physical appearance plays a central role in this conflict. She was described as having light features—such as reddish-blonde hair, pale skin, and hazel eyes—which allow her to pass easily as a non-Muslim in American society. (Courtney 2019, 8-9) These features, inherited from her American mother, give her an advantage: she does not fit the stereotypical image of a Muslim often imagined by the public. This privilege stands in sharp contrast to her Syrian father, whose more visibly Middle Eastern appearance makes him a target of prejudice and Islamophobic hostility. Because of his own painful experiences, he encourages Allie to conceal her Muslim identity for her safety.

Although blending in offers Allie a sense of protection, it creates emotional tension as she becomes more aware that staying hidden requires her to silence an important part of herself. This tension lies at the heart of her identity crisis and shapes her journey toward understanding what it means to embrace both her Muslim faith and her American identity (Courtney 2019, 12).

Allie has spent years adapting herself to whatever environment she enters, adopting different "masks" to blend seamlessly into various American settings. She follows her father's guidance on concealing her Muslim identity and learns to amplify the most socially acceptable parts of herself. In California she performs the role of the ideal surfer girl; in New Jersey she adopts the polished style associated with preppy culture; and in Chicago she presents herself as a relaxed, sporty teenager. After moving



to the South, where traditional femininity and polished appearances dominate, she adopts a vintage, Old Hollywood aesthetic, wearing 1950s dresses and cultivating a personality built around humor and an enthusiasm for movie musicals (Courtney 1993, 12). All of these efforts show how consciously she molds herself to fit into American norms.

This adaptability reveals more than a love for fashion or social experimentation—it reflects Allie's attempt to survive in an environment where Muslims are often misunderstood or openly judged. Her father encourages her to embrace these performances as a form of protection, believing that conformity will keep her safe from marginalization. The prejudice around her reinforces this anxiety: even when national incidents occur that do not involve Muslims, the people in her community still express suspicion and hostility toward them. At school, some of her friends echo these biased views, and even her father's girlfriend holds negative opinions about Muslims, forcing Allie to stay silent whenever the topic arises. She often feels the urge to defend her faith, yet lacks the confidence to speak up, revealing how deeply she fears judgment and exclusion.

Allie is fully aware of the privilege her appearance grants her. Her pale skin, red hair, and lack of visible religious markers allow her to move through society unnoticed as a Muslim. (Courtney 2019, 43) This white-passing privilege protects her from the racism and stereotyping faced by other members of her family, particularly those whose appearance aligns more closely with public assumptions about Muslims. Unlike visibly Muslim women who wear headscarves and may be perceived as threatening or foreign, Allie is assumed to be simply American. While this privilege offers her safety, it also intensifies her internal conflict, as she recognizes that the very thing protecting her is the same thing distancing her from her own identity.

Allie is portrayed as a character with a growing and sincere desire to learn about Islam. According to the Cambridge Dictionary (2025), the term *passionate* refers to someone who has very strong feelings or emotions, and this applies directly to Allie's internal state. She experiences a deep uneasiness about identifying as Muslim while realizing that she knows very little about her own religion. Although some of her relatives, particularly on her father's side, are knowledgeable about Islam and can speak Arabic, Allie herself was never taught to practice or understand the faith. This lack of guidance creates a sense of incompleteness within her, prompting her to seek answers and explore the aspects of Islam that were withheld from her during childhood.

Allie becomes increasingly aware of her limited religious knowledge, even in basic matters such as how to properly express respect for the Prophet Muhammad. Her uncertainty demonstrates the gap between her inherited identity and her lived experience. (Courtney 2019, 15) Growing up in America, she often distanced herself from anything associated with Islam, choosing instead to blend in with her surroundings. However, as she matures, she begins confronting questions about her own Muslimness, setting the stage for a deeper identity exploration.

This growing curiosity leads Allie to take concrete steps toward understanding her faith. When Allie, feeling guilty for neglecting a copy of the Quran she carries with her, decides to begin reading it attentively. She starts from the opening chapter and



immerses herself in the text, pausing frequently to search for explanations online and cross-reference what she reads. (Courtney 2019, 100) This moment marks the beginning of Allie's self-directed journey to learn Islam—an active process that reflects both her passion for understanding her identity and her gradual movement toward a more informed and committed sense of self.

When Allie decides to read the Qur'an from the beginning, she is taking her first deliberate step toward gaining religious understanding. She purchases her own copy of the Qur'an and begins studying it independently, relying solely on online references to clarify meanings because she has no guidance at home. This initiative demonstrates that her desire to learn Islam is self-motivated and deeply personal. Her growing curiosity eventually leads her to seek a supportive environment, which she finds in the Muslim Student Association (MSA) at her school. Within this community, Allie meets new friends who share her interest in exploring Islamic teachings. Their weekly gatherings involve a variety of activities, including Qur'an reading and memorization, practicing prayer, and group discussions on different themes. Through these sessions, Allie gains new knowledge and begins to develop a more grounded understanding of Islamic practices.

Allie's commitment becomes even more evident when she decides to formally memorize prayers and acquires items associated with worship, such as an abaya and a prayer rug (Courtney 2019, 169). Although she continues to hide her religious exploration from her father, she receives quiet support from her mother, who drives her to and from her meetings with the MSA members. This encouragement strengthens Allie's motivation to learn and practice. She feels connected to her peers in the group because they share similar goals—expanding their knowledge of Islam and growing together as young Muslims.

As Allie becomes more involved in these discussions, she begins to think more critically about Islamic teachings. Her exposure to new ideas and interpretations encourages her to question certain terms and conditions within Islamic worship. This stage of critical engagement reflects her deeper involvement in constructing her religious identity and marks significant progress in her journey toward understanding and practicing Islam.

Allie begins to express critical thinking as she engages in discussions with her study group about Islamic teachings, including the regulations surrounding the hajj pilgrimage. After conducting her own research, she questions the rule that women must be accompanied by a male guardian and obtain permission from a husband, son, or brother. Her concern reflects not only her desire for accurate understanding but also her awareness of gender inequality in certain cultural interpretations of Islam. Although the Qur'an emphasizes the equality of men and women, many traditions have shifted over time, shaping social perceptions in ways that do not always align with the original texts. Allie's willingness to interrogate these discrepancies demonstrates her growing intellectual engagement with her faith and her ability to critically assess religious practices.

As she becomes more involved with the Muslim Student Association, Allie initially feels she has finally found a community where she belongs. The group offers her a sense of safety, shared purpose, and collective exploration of Islam—something she has long



been searching for. However, Allie later begins to doubt whether she truly fits in. Each member of the group comes from a different background and level of religious knowledge, and Allie's personal struggles—particularly the pressure from her father to hide her identity and the prejudice she encounters at school—make her feel increasingly isolated. Even with the support of her boyfriend, she remains uncertain, especially because his father harbors strong biases against Muslims. This layering of familial, social, and emotional tensions intensifies her sense of vulnerability.

Allie's journey reaches a turning point when she openly asserts her Muslim identity during a confrontation with her boyfriend's father, who holds dismissive and prejudiced views toward Muslims. (Courtney 2019, 298) depicts this moment as a decisive declaration of self. Allie affirms her identity as a Muslim and acknowledges her Syrian heritage with conviction, rejecting the silence and fear that previously defined her. This act represents a powerful shift from concealment to self-acceptance, marking her transition into a young woman who is ready to defend her beliefs despite criticism or hostility.

Overall, Allie is characterized as a young woman navigating the complexities of identity in a society that often misunderstands her cultural and religious background. In the beginning, she survives by expertly camouflaging herself—an ability shaped by her father's insistence on hiding for safety. Her white-passing appearance allows her to move unnoticed through spaces where visible Muslims face prejudice, yet this privilege leaves her feeling disconnected and incomplete. As she seeks knowledge, community, and clarity, her internal conflict becomes more apparent. Ultimately, her journey reveals a gradual movement from fear and uncertainty toward confidence, understanding, and a firm embrace of her identity as a Muslim.

### **The Construction of the Muslim Identity Analysis**

The growth of migration in the US has an impact on identity, particularly for second and third-generation American Muslims. The process of identity crisis and its consequences are questionable. Based on previous discussion, Allie as the main character is confronting various conflicts and she undergoes identity crisis with her Muslim identity. Therefore, this research will explore her Muslim identity construction through identity statuses to answer existing conflicts. The analysis will be discussed through the four stages of identity statuses such as identity diffusion, foreclosure, moratorium, and identity achievement. The conflicts that appear of each stage will be discussed with the strategies that Allie used to overcome the problems.

#### **Identity Diffusion Stage**

According to Marcia, identity diffusion occurs when adolescents show limited exploration and lack firm commitments in forming their identity. This stage is evident in Allie, who grows up in Georgia within a mixed-faith household. Her father, a Jordan-Circassian Muslim, and her mother, a former Catholic who converted to Islam, do not practice religious worship and rarely discuss Islam openly. Their avoidance of religious topics creates a home environment where faith is treated as something distant and unspoken.



In the novel, Allie reflects that religion is never discussed positively in her family, signaling that she has grown up without meaningful exposure to Islamic beliefs or practices (Courtney 2019, 50). This lack of religious engagement becomes the root of her early confusion: Allie recognizes that she has been hiding her Muslim identity for years, yet she does not fully understand why. Her father's experience of being suspected as a Muslim for simply speaking Arabic reinforces the family's tendency to keep their religion invisible, pushing Allie further into avoidance.

As she becomes more aware of her heritage, Allie begins to feel like an outsider—someone disconnected from the Muslim community because she knows so little about the faith. She suggests that if she had learned Arabic or grown up with more cultural exposure, she might feel more connected to her identity (Courtney 2019, 218–19). This sense of detachment aligns with Marcia's description of identity diffusion, where adolescents have not yet explored or internalized the components of an identity they technically belong to.

Allie's emotional struggle intensifies when she admits that hiding her religion makes her feel as though she is rejecting her family. Her frustration reflects the beginning of a desire to explore, learn, and truly understand her identity instead of suppressing it (Courtney 2019, 152). Although she has not yet committed fully to a religious identity, her dissatisfaction with avoidance indicates that she is starting to move out of the diffusion stage and toward more active exploration.

### Identity Foreclosure Stage

According to Marcia, foreclosure occurs when an adolescent makes a commitment without undergoing meaningful exploration. The commitments in this status are typically inherited from parents or other authority figures, adopted without questioning or evaluating alternatives. Individuals may appear stable, but the identity they hold is often unexamined and shaped by external expectations rather than personal choice.

In Allie's case, her foreclosed identity is not a religious one, but rather the absence of religion—an inherited disengagement from Islam. Although she is born into a Muslim family, she grows up in a household where Islamic practices are deliberately avoided. The novel illustrates that while many of her cousins participate in Ramadan fasting, her own family treats the observance as something to be steered away from (Courtney 2019, 129). This suggests that the rejection of Islamic practice is not merely passive neglect; it is an intentional stance shaped by her father's experiences with discrimination and his desire to protect the family. As a result, Allie's early identity is foreclosed through parental decisions that define religion as something unsafe and unnecessary.

This foreclosure becomes more visible when Allie begins practicing Islam privately and her father eventually discovers her involvement. He responds with frustration, emphasizing that she benefits from being perceived as fully American and not visibly Muslim. He believes that she has been given an identity that shields her from prejudice, implying that deviating from it endangers her well-being (Courtney 2019, 312). His reaction shows that he has already determined what her identity should be—one centered on safety, assimilation, and distance from Islam. Any attempt by Allie to explore or embrace her Muslim heritage is described by him as “throwing away” the



protections her appearance affords. This parental pressure represents the core of foreclosure: a commitment her father expects her to maintain without undergoing independent reflection.

Allie's challenge to her father's expectations marks the tension between inherited identity and self-driven exploration. She admits feeling ashamed for always passing as non-Muslim and begins openly resisting the identity her father has imposed on her. This conflict is not simply about religion; it is about authority, autonomy, and the right to define herself.

The family's fixed intellectual framework further reinforces the foreclosure. Allie's father insists that their family prioritizes reason and empirical thinking, dismissing anything tied to religious emotion or inherited tradition (Courtney 2019, 313). This worldview, presented as a family standard, restricts Allie's opportunity to explore spiritual dimensions of her identity. Her silence during their conversation—when he realizes that her mother is aware of her exploration—signals her awareness of the boundaries she is crossing and the fragile position she occupies within this pre-established family identity.

Overall, Allie's experience aligns strongly with Marcia's foreclosure status. The expectations set by her parents, especially her father, create a predetermined path in which distancing from Islam is considered logical, safe, and correct. Allie is not encouraged to explore her religious background or develop her own understanding of being Muslim. Instead, she inherits a commitment to hiding, passing, and disconnecting from her heritage. This foreclosed identity remains intact until Allie begins questioning these boundaries, indicating her gradual movement toward exploration in the next stage of her identity development.

### **Moratorium Stage**

Marcia describes moratorium as the stage in which adolescents are actively exploring their identity but have not yet reached a firm commitment (1993). This period is marked by confusion, self-questioning, and emotional instability as individuals attempt to understand who they are and what they believe. In this stage, Allie enters a deep phase of exploration, confronting both internal uncertainties and external pressures while navigating her emerging Muslim identity.

Her early attempts at studying Islam illustrate the beginning of this exploration. When she secretly purchases a Quran, she experiences an overwhelming mixture of anticipation, anxiety, and shame (Courtney 2019, 93). This moment captures her first deliberate action toward understanding Islam on her own terms. Although she does not understand Arabic, she persists by searching for explanations online. Her efforts reflect both courage and vulnerability—she is excited to finally take initiative, but embarrassed because she must hide this step from her family. The conflicting emotions show how she is caught between curiosity and fear, a hallmark of the moratorium stage.

Allie's exploration becomes more structured once she joins the Muslim Student Association. The meetings involve Quran reading, memorization, discussions, and question sessions (Courtney 2019, 139). The group provides a supportive environment where members from different backgrounds share knowledge and encouragement.



Even as the newest member, Allie participates actively in learning Arabic, studying Quranic passages, and engaging in discussions. Her involvement shows a clear shift from passive avoidance to deliberate exploration. She adopts the strategy of immersing herself in religious practices to understand Islam more fully, even though she has not yet committed to living by its teachings.

However, her identity exploration is complicated by emotional and relational conflicts. Allie privately reflects on how easy life would be without religious guilt, especially regarding her relationship with her boyfriend (Courtney 2019, 143). While her boyfriend supports her journey, Islamic teachings challenge the permissibility of such relationships. This creates an internal struggle between personal desires and religious expectations. Her father's disapproval of her practicing Islam intensifies this tension. The clash between romantic attachment, parental pressure, and religious norms reveals her uncertainty about how to reconcile different parts of her life.

Allie's reflections later in the novel highlight the complexity of her moratorium. She admits struggling with selective belief—embracing aspects of Islam she finds meaningful while resisting those she disagrees with (Courtney 2019, 272). She values Islam's emphasis on family, women's rights, and compassion but grapples with teachings or interpretations she views as exclusionary or outdated. This selective engagement demonstrates a core feature of moratorium: she is actively questioning, negotiating, and evaluating her beliefs rather than accepting them uncritically or rejecting them entirely.

Overall, Allie's moratorium stage is characterized by emotional turbulence, active exploration, critical questioning, and selective commitment. She seeks understanding through study groups, personal reading, and introspection while confronting tensions related to family, relationships, and religious expectations. This stage represents her most intensive period of identity work, where she experiments, doubts, and seeks clarity about what being Muslim means to her.

### **Identity Achievement**

Identity achievement, according to Marcia, is the stage in which an individual successfully resolves a period of crisis and exploration, arriving at a strong and internally defined commitment to their identity (1993). At this point, the adolescent possesses a mature sense of self shaped by personally evaluated values, beliefs, and goals. Those who reach this stage tend to demonstrate confidence, stability, and resistance to external pressures because their identity commitments arise from deliberate personal choice rather than external imposition.

Allie reaches this phase after a long and emotionally complex process of questioning, learning, and navigating conflicts in her religious, social, and interpersonal life. Her journey is marked by both internal struggles and external pressures—including her father's expectation, societal prejudice, and her own uncertainty—yet these experiences ultimately sharpen her understanding of what she wants to claim as her identity.

Allie's sense of belonging becomes clear when she states, "*I am finally part of something bigger than myself, part of the ummah, and it is beautiful.*" (Courtney 2019, 179). This moment represents a turning point. By joining the Muslim Student Association



and actively participating in their learning and worship activities, she discovers a community that aligns with her exploration. The sense of peace and beauty she experiences shows that her exploration has transformed into an internalized commitment. She no longer approaches Islam tentatively or with secrecy; instead, she embraces it as part of who she is. This illustrates not only the resolution of earlier conflicts but also the emergence of a stable identity grounded in chosen faith and community.

However, Allie's achievement of identity does not erase the challenges associated with public identification as Muslim in America. After embracing her Muslim identity more openly, she reflects on how others now perceive her "*I've gone from being just plain Allie to being Allie the Muslim. My identity boxed in, just like that.*" (Courtney 2019, 208). This passage emphasizes that identity achievement does not imply freedom from societal stereotypes. Nevertheless, Allie's internal commitment remains firm despite the external labeling. Where she once hid behind her white-passing appearance, she now accepts that being recognized as Muslim is part of the identity she has chosen for herself. Her commitment is not based on approval but on conviction. She practices worship with her friends, acknowledges her Muslim heritage, and openly defends Islam from harmful assumptions—even when this leads to conflict, such as with her father or with influential figures like her boyfriend's father. Her willingness to defend her faith illustrates her ability to stand firm in her chosen identity.

Allie's internal affirmation becomes most visible in her reassurance to herself: "*I'm still a Muslim. And I'm still good.*" (Courtney 2019, 302). She acknowledges the possibility of imperfection—recognizing that she may struggle, falter, or fail to meet every religious expectation. Yet she affirms that her worth and identity are not invalidated by these difficulties. Rather than being derailed by self-doubt, she integrates her religious identity with self-compassion. This acceptance reflects the maturity associated with identity achievement: she understands that her Muslim identity is not defined by strict perfection but by sincere commitment, effort, and intention. She moves beyond selective belief and confusion toward a grounded, balanced understanding of herself as a Muslim.

In sum, Allie's identity achievement emerges through her active exploration, critical reflection, and personal decisions. She embraces her Muslim identity fully—not because it was imposed or expected, but because she chose it after confronting both internal doubts and external challenges. The final stage reflects her development into an individual with a clear, stable self-concept and a confident, self-defined religious identity.

## Conclusion

In *All-American Muslim Girl*, the analysis shows that Allie undergoes a complex identity crisis as she negotiates between hiding her religion for safety and openly expressing her Muslim identity in the United States. Her experience is shaped by several factors: her privilege of white-passing appearance, her growing interest in learning Islam, her anxieties, and her emerging role as a defender of her faith. In the first stage, identity diffusion, Allie follows her father's advice to conceal her religion and blends into



mainstream American society, showing no firm commitment or active exploration. In the foreclosure stage, she simply adopts her parents' religious stance without questioning or deeply engaging with Islam. The moratorium stage marks the height of her crisis: Allie begins to explore Islamic teachings and practices but remains uncertain, selective, and inconsistent as she negotiates between her beliefs and the social environment around her. Ultimately, in the stage of identity achievement, Allie develops a clear, confident commitment to being Muslim. After passing through periods of confusion and struggle, she affirms her faith, continues learning about Islam, and becomes willing to stand up for the Muslim community. By the end of the novel, Allie transforms from someone who avoided acknowledging her religious identity into a young woman who embraces Islam with conviction and curiosity. Overall, Allie's journey reflects a complete progression through Marcia's four identity statuses—diffusion, foreclosure, moratorium, and identity achievement—demonstrating that religious identity is neither fixed nor inherited but formed through exploration, crisis, and conscious commitment. Allie's final position in identity achievement affirms Marcia's argument that genuine identity formation requires both meaningful exploration and the courage to commit, highlighting the dynamic and developmental nature of adolescent identity construction.

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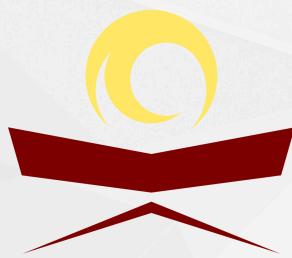
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