

The Lived Experiences of Global Citizenship Education by Asian-Muslim Teachers Attending A Professional Development Program in the USA

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Abstract

Following the initiation of the Madrasah Education Program (MEP) in 2004, the government of the Philippines has historically promoted the liberal education of Muslim citizens. Filipino-Muslim teachers have been trained and equipped to preserve the core principles of Islam in public schools in all regions of the Philippines. However, the MEP does not provide specifically for the professional development of Filipino-Muslim teachers who want to work at schools in other English-speaking nations. In the USA, professional development programs have been developed specifically to help Asian-Muslim teachers grow into globally and culturally engaged citizens. The present phenomenological study focuses on the lived experiences of seven Asian-Muslim teachers who, in 2022, attended a professional development program abroad in the USA. A thematic analysis was conducted to interpret the transcripts of their conversations recorded at a focus group meeting. Emergent themes were extracted which highlighted the benefits to individual teachers. These benefits included: adapting to new lifestyles, becoming more flexible, becoming more confident, developing an open mind, obtaining a deeper understanding of social interactions and teaching in the English language in a culturally different environment, reaffirming their own cultural beliefs and values, and developing attitudes that involve tolerance and respect for the values and beliefs of other cultures. The overall conclusion is that the participation of Asian Muslims in a professional development program abroad in the USA opened up new opportunities to promote the ideals of Global Citizenship Education. The practical implications are that institutions in the Philippines organizing professional development for teachers should ideally provide opportunities for Filipino-Muslim teachers to travel abroad and help them grow into globally competent citizens.

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