PERCEPTIONS OF MUSLIM EDUCATORS ON POSTCOLONIAL EDUCATION IN THE PHILIPPINES : A QUALITATIVE INQUIRY

ABDUL HAIY A. SALI
https://orcid.org/0000-0001-8675-1945
Institute of Education, Undergraduate Studies
Far Eastern University Manila, Philippines

ABSTRACT

The Muslims in the Philippines were unsubjugated and resisted the influence of colonization with their education system still intact today. However, constructs of postcolonial education among Muslim-Filipino educators are scarce. With these gaps, the study sought to establish a baseline conceptualization of Muslim education in the postcolonial Philippines. The study employed a qualitative research design to increase understanding of a relatively narrow concept or empirical phenomenon. The study utilized an interpretivist approach, particularly a transactional epistemology, and used purposive sampling with five Muslim educators as research participants. The results of the study provide a general overview of postcolonial praxes and constructs of Muslim education in the Philippines. However, the study is limited to five selected research participants. The study's results highlighted balancing secular and non-secular education, Muslim and Filipino identities, and learning institutions for knowledge preservation. The findings are imperative in addressing the dearth of professional literature on the hermeneutic of postcolonial Muslim education in the Philippines. In conclusion, further studies on its essence primarily as an impetus for relevant, appropriate, and responsive education and policies among Muslim educators and learners are sought.

Keywords: Postcolonial praxes, post-coloniality, Muslim education, Muslim-Filipino, Philippines

INTRODUCTION

On Colonial Education in the Philippines

Postcolonial education merits profound exploration being subjected to dominant power structures and ideologies during the periods of colonization (Abdi, 2012; Absari & Morados, 2020; Constantino, 1971; Habana, 1989; Ileto, 2001; Romero, 2020; Said, 1979). In its foundation, postcolonial education philosophies emerged in response to the marginalization and exclusion of diversity in educational systems. In the Philippines, while colonialism is thought to be a thing of the past, the ramifications of the almost 400 years of rule by Spain from 1565-1898 impacted the country's historical, cultural, and even educational development (Absari & Morados, 2020; Milligan, 2006; Romero, 2020).

P – ISSN 2651 - 7701 | E – ISSN 2651 – 771X | www.ioer-imrj.com
SALI, A.H.A., *Perception of Muslim Educators on Postcolonial Education in the Philippines: A Qualitative Inquiry, pp.1-15*

1

Furthermore, the almost 50 years of American colonization, however, contested, provided a leeway in the development of the public school system in the Philippines. According to Constantino (1971), hegemony was implicit in subjugated education to instill American national imagery as a dominant mentality among Filipinos. Ileto (2001) in his article titled "*Orientalism and the Study of Philippine Politics*" America just like Spain attempts to export its political and social values into the social stratum and moral fibres of Filipino society.

The "creating an ideal colonial child" as argued by Habana (1989) fermented the idea that the benevolent mission to civilize the children of the Philippines was through the public education system. Furthermore, the goal of colonial education was to "transform the strange Filipino child into an ideal colonial mind" (p. 121). Constantino (1971) expressed dismay at the miseducation of the Filipinos during the American occupation. Constantino argued that schools became an integral part of the *mis-education* of the children as he called for a relevant education geared toward "economic emancipation, political independence," and "cultural renaissance". However, the concept of postcolonialism in the Philippines, especially its impact on education is multifaceted. Consequently, one of the central canons of postcolonial education is to recognize the epistemology of diverse knowledge systems and praxes to better understand the contexts (Sali, 2020).

Inevitably, the experiences of the colonized according to Abdi (2012), in terms of "psycho-cultural, educational, philosophico-epistemological and social development dimensions have been extensive" (p. 1). Absari and Morados (2020) explained the imminent effects of colonial experiences in the Philippines, which "impacted the production of the country's historical narratives which shaped Filipino ideas and concepts of the nation-state, religious and cultural orientations, and domestic relationships of the Filipino people" (p. 2). From a sociological perspective, the consequences of the binarism of Western colonization, for instance, resulted in one dominant culture as the superior power, as opposed to the minorities, deemed inferior and uncivilized (Said,1978).

On Identities and Praxes

In the prehispanic Philippines, the early Filipinos had come to trade with Malay, Indian, Arab, and even Chinese merchants. The rich overflowing exchange of culture be it tangible or intangible shaped the early Philippine society. The culture of the early Muslims in Mindanao was flourishing even before the Spanish colonization. The establishment of the Sulu Sultanate around the mid-15th century was considered one of the most powerful sultanates in the world. The sultanate was prosperous even before the first Philippine Republic was formally established in 1899 (Sali & Marasigan, 2020). As followers of Islam, Muslims share a common history as "unsubjugated" people and have their own cultural identity up until today (Institute for Autonomy and Governance, 2019). Remarkably, as early as the 14th century, Islamic education was evident in the Philippines (Milligan, 2006). The accounts by American colonial officials described a *panditas* school – a small group of boys studying Islam under the tutelage of a local learned Muslim as evidence of knowledge transmission (Milligan, 2006 as cited by Sali, 2021).

In 1935, the conceptualization of national identity during the transitional government, despite the intention to utilize a normative approach, failed to include the narratives of minorities. At that time, the educational policies were heavily influenced and "sought to create a cohesive national identity without careful consideration of religious, political, and cultural biases" (Sali & Marasigan, 2020, p.

P – ISSN 2651 - 7701 | E – ISSN 2651 – 771X | www.ioer-imrj.com
SALI, A.H.A., *Perception of Muslim Educators on Postcolonial Education in the Philippines: A Qualitative Inquiry, pp.1-15*

2

202). However, instead of homogenizing cultural and class differences, Milligan (2005) pointed out that it instituted the "ethno-religious conflict" among Muslims in the Philippines. As supported by the study conducted by Romero (2020), the postcolonial philosophies of education in the Philippines emerged from the government's desire to create a common national identity influenced by Western conceptions of personhood and patriotism. Interestingly, before the Western colonial powers even set foot in the country, a *Baranganic* society existed being ruled by a *Datu* among sporadic communities with distinct cultures and traditions (Dizon & Mijares, 1999). Albeit, the concept of nationalism as a nation-state perhaps was relative, however, the sense of belongingness, power structure, and sovereignty in the communities was apparent at that time. Furthermore, Abdi (2012) argues that one should not disengage from the reality that societies, as such in the pre-colonial context, "designed their education on thoughtful, analytical trajectories that defined and justified this education as socially important, culturally and linguistically viable, and capable of ameliorating the livelihood of its recipients" (p. 4). However, these relevant experiences in particular belonging to the minorities in the Philippines are leased explored, and examined, thus the objective of the study.

On Muslim Education in Contemporary Philippines Identities and Praxes

Moreover, intercultural relations according to Carr and Thésée (2012), arguably, are the base of humanity. The Philippines as a pluralistic society has diverse cultures, religions, races, languages, customs, norms, and unique identities. Furthermore, the concept of Muslim education as taught in various educational institutions is constantly changing and adapting. In particular, madrasah education as a relative concept to Muslim education is fundamental in teaching both intellectual and spiritual knowledge to Filipino learners. The establishment of *madaris* became instrumental in the propagation of Islam in Asia's largest Roman Catholic nation. For context, the *madrasah* (pl. *madaris*) was considered the oldest educational institution in Mindanao and became an integral part of the proliferation of Muslim education. In the Philippines, madrasah generally refers to Muslim religious schools that teach Islam as the core emphasis in their curricular offerings (Sali, 2020). Sattar and Arriola (2020) argued that madrasah education provides a good venue both for the learners and parents to learn Islam as a religion that promotes values for co-existence with other ethnic and religious groups.

In response to providing inclusive education to Muslim learners, the Arabic Language and Islamic Values Education (ALIVE) Program as part of the Basic Madrasah Education Program (Sali, 2020; Sali & Marasigan, 2020; Sali & Ancho, 2021; Sali, 2023) of the Department of Education was institutionalized. However, cultural variances among Muslim Filipinos in the implementation of the ALIVE program in non-Muslim communities are still evident today (Sali & Marasigan, 2020). The narratives from the *Asatidz* or madrasah teachers explained the dire need to mainstream cultural identity and Islamic religion to promote awareness in schools and the community. The most evident factor in cultural variance was the inadequacy of in-depth knowledge and awareness of Islam by most non-Muslim mentors. This is one of the many reasons why cultural variances are somehow inevitable, especially in non-Muslim-dominated communities. Interestingly, the "ethnoreligious conflict" (Milligan, 2005, 2006; Caballeros-Anthony, 2007) has been in existence during the period of colonization even up to this day. The periods of colonization greatly influenced the educational system, identities, and praxes of the colonized.

P – ISSN 2651 - 7701 | E – ISSN 2651 – 771X | www.ioer-imrj.com

SALI, A.H.A., *Perception of Muslim Educators on Postcolonial Education in the Philippines: A Qualitative Inquiry, pp.1-15*

3

For this study, Muslim education refers to a system of education and learning that nurtures religious belief in the individual through intellectual and spiritual knowledge grounded primarily in Islamic principles and teachings. Furthermore, Trinidad and Leviste (2020, p. 2) exemplified that without a cohesive theorization, "studies will only be looking at particular parts of the puzzle that do not take into account the whole picture". Therefore, the study seeks to explore and understand the epistemology (philosophical-sociological constructs) of Muslim education in the post-colonized Philippines.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The study was structured around three primary objectives. Initially, it aimed to develop a foundational understanding of the current state of Muslim education. Subsequently, it delved into exploring the postcolonial frameworks influencing Muslim-Filipino educators. Finally, it sought to elucidate the epistemological and philosophical-sociological frameworks underpinning Muslim education in the post-colonized Philippines.

Central to the investigation was a focused inquiry into the following question: What are the postcolonial constructs that influence the landscape of Muslim education in the Philippines?

METHODOLOGY

Research Design. The study employed a qualitative research design, utilizing an interpretivist approach, specifically a transactional epistemology, to delve into the social interactions of the participants and their perceived meanings. Purposive sampling was employed, with five research participants selected (see Table 1), focusing primarily on their constructs shaping the essence of Muslim education in postcolonial Philippines. The research maintained a naturalistic approach, with no manipulation of settings. Data triangulation was achieved through an extensive literature review (Jaakola, 2020) to deepen understanding of the specific concept or phenomenon. Additionally, multiple data sources were utilized to construct a coherent epistemological and philosophical-sociological framework of Muslim education in the post-colonized Philippines. The qualitative inquiry aimed to explore and comprehend the individual experiences from the emic perspective of the participants (Merriam, 2009). Moreover, a desk review (Silewey, 2019) was conducted to supplement data from diverse sources, ensuring a comprehensive analysis.

Participants. There are two data sources used in this study: semi-structured interviews from the participants selected based on the inclusion criteria until data saturation; and a literature review from relevant research articles that were peer-reviewed by reputable journals and other written artifacts of mostly hermeneutics that can be readily accessed on online repositories.

Table 1
Basic Profile of the Sample

Characteristics	Indicators	No. of Participants
Gender	Male	2
	Female	3
Age	21-30	1
	31-40	2
	41-50	1
	>51	1
Educational Attainment	Doctorate Degree	2
	Master's Degree	2
	Bachelor's Degree	1
Occupation	Education Specialist	2
	University Faculty	1
	Ph.D. Student	1
	Madrasah Teacher	1

In addition, the inclusion criteria for the participants were: a Filipino Muslim educator; with specialization in education, religion, and cultural studies; and at least a graduate with a bachelor's degree. Experts validated the interview tool

P – ISSN 2651 - 7701 | E – ISSN 2651 – 771X | www.ioer-imrj.com

SALI, A.H.A., *Perception of Muslim Educators on Postcolonial Education in the Philippines: A Qualitative Inquiry, pp.1-15*

4

composed of semi-structured questions and went through pilot testing before actual data gathering.

There are two data sources used in this study: semi-structured interviews from the participants selected based on the inclusion criteria until data saturation; and a literature review from relevant research articles that were peer-reviewed by reputable journals and other written artifacts of mostly hermeneutics that can be readily accessed on online repositories. In addition, the inclusion criteria for the participants were: a Filipino Muslim educator; with specialization in education, religion, and cultural studies; and at least a graduate with a bachelor's degree. Experts validated the interview tool composed of semi-structured questions and went through pilot testing before actual data gathering.

Data Analysis. The transcription, after being coded, was subjected to the *NVivo* application where the most frequent words were considered in initial coding. In a deductive manner, (Miles et al., 2014) thematic analysis was also initiated. The codes, categories, and themes were identified and generated from the data analysis to abstract the conceptual foundation of the paper.

The thematic analysis was validated through peers' and respondents' validation for objectivity. A non-probability purposive sampling technique was utilized to identify the participants of the study. The study is limited to 5 participants. The sample size may not represent the experiences of the entire Muslim educators in the Philippines, thus the non-generalizability of the study.

The participants were voluntarily part of the study. Before the actual interview, informed consent was obtained and issues of privacy, confidentiality, anonymity, and beneficence were upheld and practiced during the entire duration of the study.

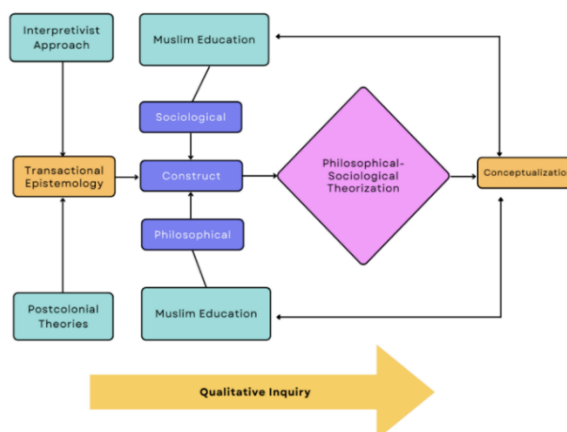Lastly, the researcher's role in the study was the observer.

Figure 1. Research Process

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. On Balancing Secular and Non-Secular Education

The results revealed through a thematic analysis that all the participants agreed that Muslim education in postcolonial Philippines reflects how to maintain the balance of both secular and non-secular education. Admittedly, most of the participants verbalized that because of the fast-changing educational landscape, it is inevitable that Muslim education should adapt to these changes (Sali, 2023). However, the emphasis on non-secular education particularly, introducing Islam at an early age to strengthen the foundations of the religion was also highlighted. The participants shared the following responses on their conception of Muslim education in the postcolonial Philippines rooted in an emic perspective:

"At the current system, it is [secular] prioritized as it gives more opportunities to the kids [learners]...The community accepted the fact that Muslim children have to undergo secular

education. However, at a younger age, Islam must be inculcated." - P1

"Education is a way of life not to obtain a degree. However, in Postcolonial Philippines I think it is different… The post-American colonization opened the door [of the Philippines] to the world that eventually shaped Muslim education… Opening of economic globalization exposed us to the different educational institutions" - P2

"Muslim education in the Philippines during the pre-colonial period is focused on Islamic religious education so more on about religion. The missionaries came to propagate Islam in the Philippines... It is like informal Muslim education. Usually it [teaching] was provided by Muslim scholars or religious leaders or Ulama, they taught our learners in Mindanao on Qur-an, Arabic language, Islamic law, and other religious subjects… The form of teaching is usually apprenticeship… There is no form of formal education like today in a postcolonial period" - P3

"I think we have the same perception [Muslim education], it is taught in a small group and not really formal [in terms of modality]. It is just a basic concept [competency] and most importantly reading Qur-an." - P4

In contemporary education, Abu Bakar (2018) argued the need to develop sound and moral spiritual citizens in a globalized world. The participants agreed that Muslim education during the precolonial Philippines was mostly community-based and transmission of religious teaching, especially the content of the Holy *Qur-an*. At present, Muslim education is mostly formal in terms of structure and as implemented in educational institutions. I argue that Muslim education in the perspective of postcolonial Philippines can be defined in many ways. Muslim education may differ in the modalities and implementation; however, the intent is to develop Muslim learners holistically as anchored to Islam

as a way of life. At present, Muslim education comes through the process of transmitting both intellectual and spiritual knowledge. With this, the emerging educational landscape provides a clear perspective of revisiting programs and policies relevant to madrasah education in the Philippines (Sali & Ancho, 2021).

Most of the participants used Madrasah education synonymous with Muslim education. In the Philippines, the Arabic Language and Islamic Values Education (ALIVE) Program of the Department of Education provides leeway to institutionalize Madrasah education in public schools. However, there were implementation challenges to the ALIVE program in terms of teaching and learning, in a thesis conducted by Sali (2020) on the pedagogical approaches of madrasah teachers implementing the ALIVE program, the dire need to understand the ontological perspective, particularly on the influence of Islamic education background and their pedagogical praxes were unprecedented. According to the participants, there was a significant influence of Islamic education on how they teach and even an influential factor on their content knowledge and even pedagogical content knowledge. Regarding knowledge transmission, Sabki and Hardaker (2013) argued that Islamic pedagogy is the interactions between Islamic teachers and students through orality, memorization, and a didactic approach toward the sacred.

In an attempt to create a pedagogical framework responsive to the current needs, Abdullah (2018) emphasized the necessity for hermeneutics of Islamic education. In the Holy *Qur-an,* the salient concept of knowledge or *Ilm* serves as an integral part of Islamic education. The following are some repeated injunctions in the holy scripture: *God will exalt those of you who believe and those who know high degrees* (58:11), and - *Oh my Lord! Increase my knowledge.* (20:114).

P – ISSN 2651 - 7701 | E – ISSN 2651 – 771X | www.ioer-imrj.com

SALI, A.H.A., *Perception of Muslim Educators on Postcolonial Education in the Philippines: A Qualitative Inquiry, pp.1-15*

6

The Holy *Qur-an* serves as the main source of knowledge for every Muslim. With this, the injunctions mentioned connote the integral role of education in the lives of every Muslim who believes in the Islamic faith. Based on the literature review, the philosophical underpinnings of Islamic education are mostly perennialism, however, with equal representation of social reconstructionism and humanism in terms of one's self-development and that of others. Consistent with Sabki and Hardaker's (2013) view that Islamic education follows a traditional approach - attained through revealed knowledge of religious sciences and acquired knowledge attained through rational intellectual and philosophical sciences. At present, both knowledge acquisitions are deemed contributory to the strengthening of the Islamic faith.

Remarkably, in the Philippines, accounts by American colonial officials described a *panditas* school – a small group of boys studying Islam under the tutelage of a local learned Muslim that existed even after the Spanish colonization. The competencies being taught were mostly Islamic studies, learning how to read and understand the salient teachings of the Holy *Qur-an* and other relevant Islamic teachings. In Islam, seeking knowledge is a lifelong process. The *Hadith* of Prophet Muhammad provides rich literature on the significance of seeking knowledge being obligatory for every follower of the Islamic faith. One of the famous teachings of Prophet Muhammad on lifelong learning: "Seek knowledge from cradle to grave". Halstead (2004, as cited in Sali, 2020) likewise declared that the heart of the Muslim concept of education is the aim of producing good Muslims with an understanding and a strong knowledge of Islam.

The Madrasah as an Islamic school is considered an integral part of knowledge transmission that provides learning opportunities through the teaching of the Islamic faith. However,

the Spanish and American colonization not only cultivated the cultural and religious divide in the Philippines (Muslim-Christian dichotomy) but also "led to the development of two parallel systems of education: one ostensibly secular but Christian-influenced and government-controlled and the other Islamic and largely outside government control" (Milligan, 2006, p, 413). As a result, since the madrasah was outside the government's control, the sustainability of the institutions was affected.

Presently, a policy on implementing the Basic Madrasah Education Program is an attempt to provide Muslim Filipino learners with relevant educational opportunities within the context of accepted cultures, customs, traditions, and interests. The DepEd Order No. 41, s. 2017, the Madrasah Education Program (MEP), specifically the Arabic Language and Islamic Values Education (ALIVE) Program catapulted the ALIVE program into the public school system in the country. Uniquely, the ALIVE program adds two additional subjects on top of the regular basic education curriculum's mandated subjects (Sali, 2021). This means that there are select public schools in the Philippines that are implementing the program despite its nature of secularism. However, the challenges in the implementation of the ALIVE program were evident, especially in the context of cultural variances. As part of the Basic Madrasah Education Program in the public schools outside Mindanao, cultural variance among Muslim-Filipinos as identified in the study by Sali and Marasigan (2020) is still evident today. Narratives from the *Asatidz* or madrasah teachers explained the dire need to mainstream cultural identity and Islamic religion to promote awareness in schools and the community.

2. On Muslim and Filipino Identities

Semantically, the national identity as 'Muslim-Filipino' to what we know today didn't

SALI, A.H.A., *Perception of Muslim Educators on Postcolonial Education in the Philippines: A Qualitative Inquiry, pp.1-15*

seem to have a linear approach. Historically, according to Lacar (1994), Muslims in the Philippines had difficulty identifying with the Philippine government. For instance, in the study of Abbahil (1984) being a Filipino was consistently the fourth preference given by Muslims as their nationality. The relevant studies revealed that at some point, Muslims in the Philippines do not perceive and even identify as part of the country. This phenomenon on national identity, according to Lacar (1994, p. 431) is not new, as historically, Muslims in the Philippines "have had difficulty identifying with the Philippine government". In the 1970s the increased trend leaning toward the Middle Eastern countries as their national reference was apparent. Furthermore, Mulder (2013) in his work titled Filipino Identity: A Hunting Question, illustrates the idea of the Filipino identity as problematic and confused. He shared the "absence of national vigorous national sentiments" among Filipinos contributing to the confused definition of being a Filipino.

In the Philippines, during the Commonwealth Government, the Legislative Act 4197, or Quirino-Recto Colonization of Mindanao Act was enacted on 12 February 1935. The Act was meant to provide a lasting solution to the pressing issue of the Mindanao colony. The law enabled a massive exodus of settlers from Luzon and Visayas to Mindanao, on top of the government's support. Furthermore, a year and a half later, the Commonwealth Act 141 classified all Moro lands as public lands. This pronouncement led to Muslims being illegitimate in their homeland. The laws enacted entrenched a deep sense of alienation among the Muslim population. As supported by historical records colonization, particularly the Western colonial powers entrenched a deep sense of alienation among the Muslim population. Caballero-Anthony (2007) discussed how the struggle of the Muslims refers to the Philippines' pre-colonial history:

"Most, if not all, of the historical accounts that describe the evolution of the "Bangsamoro" struggle, refer back to the Philippines' pre-colonial history before the arrival of the Spanish conquistadors and Americans. The historiographical accounts depicted images of several indigenous and Islamized communities that had inhabited the islands in the southern region of what is now the Philippines. The Islamization of most of these indigenous communities was said to have started in 1380. In fact, by the mid-1400s, Islamic forms of government (sultanates) were already in place, with the Sulu Sultanate formally established in 1450 AD" (p. 144).

According to Majul (1895) in his scholarly article on 'The Contemporary Muslim Movement in the Philippines', the term Moro was a pejorative term used by the Spanish conquerors. The word Moro was associated with or referred to as the "uncivilized" peoples in the South. The Spaniards also relate Muslims or the Moro as "pirates," "traitors," and even "*juramentados*" (people who ran amok). Said (1978) explained that the Orientalists have their own unique identities and thriving cultures predating the colonization of the West. However, the cultural bias, for instance, Spain subjected the unsubjugated Muslims as uneducated and uncivilized was an outright display of hegemonic dominance. Said (1978) said, "since the oriental was a member of a subject race, he had to be subjected" (p. 207).

However, Absari and Morados (2020, p. 10) argued that in the case of Muslims in the Philippines, negative stereotyping was a form of "colonial blunder depicting the negative imagery of the Moros" as part of the "divide and rule" policy instigated by the colonizers. In addition, the stereotypes catapulted the Moros as distinct from the converted *Indios* along with other groups who refused the conversion to Christianity. Lacar (1994) wrote the intensification of the campaign of

P – ISSN 2651 - 7701 | E – ISSN 2651 – 771X | www.ioer-imrj.com
SALI, A.H.A., *Perception of Muslim Educators on Postcolonial Education in the Philippines: A Qualitative Inquiry, pp.1-15*

8

the Spanish conquerors for converts to Christianity among the natives shattered the peace and stillness in the society which had reigned for a long time. I argue that Muslim-Christian dichotomy, prejudice, and quiescence of knowledge production to name a few were instrumental in how early Muslims adapted and even reacted to colonization.

According to Abdi (2012. p. 1), the experiences of the colonized in terms of "psycho-cultural, educational, philosophico-epistemological and social development dimensions have been extensive". With this, most of the participants described the extensive effect of colonization on the identity of Muslims in the Philippines. I argue that the way we identify ourselves as a confused nation was a consequence of the deep-entrenched colonization and the aftermath of centuries of ramifications as it impacted the country's historical, cultural, and even educational development (Absari & Morados, 2020; Milligan, 2006; Romero, 2020). Furthermore, according to some of the participants Muslim identity is easy to define, as someone who submits himself to the will of Allah and with total submission. Consequently, the word Filipino is somewhat contentious for most of the Muslims who were unsubjugated in the Philippines. The term Filipino was derived from a colonizer, Philip II of Spain to be specific. Therefore, the argument of whether there is a Muslim-Filipino identity is up for discussion, theorization, and conceptualization. A participant shared his responses on being a Muslim and a Filipino:

"You can't separate Islam as a way of life from politics in a Muslim community… We have sultatanes [in Mindanao], we have a system and is highly influenced by religion through proper translation of knowledge through Muslim education." P5

"Muslim can be defined if you are willing to submit to Islam.. Filipino is hard to define.. If you will standardize the definition if you love in the Philippines, then you are Filipino as a political term." - P2

"Usually in the news like negative incidences [referring to news], the [media] identify automatically Muslim Filipino. We don't get to say Christian Filipino so why? If the perpetrators are Christians for instance [the media] don't get to tag them as Christian Filipinos… Muslims in the Philippines were unsubjugated. However, we belong to the Philippines [as citizens], however, we were able to retain our identity as Muslims. " - P3

Interestingly, one of the participants highlighted that there is no such thing as a pure culture. The inevitable interplay of socialization in society becomes a leeway to build a community where most of the time practices for instance are socially constructed. In a society where truth is socially constructed, the downside of defining the Muslim Filipino identity may be subjected to prejudices based on past experiences, socialization, and interaction in the community. Therefore, culture is not static but dynamic. The participant verbalized:

"There is no such thing as a pure culture. There is an amalgamation of practices, norms, and standards from different groups of people when they come together thus the interaction." - P2

"Now, we have a balance of education where learners get to enjoy secular and non-secular education. The government supports Muslim education as such it was integrated into our present curriculum." - P3

"Muslim identity is subjected to discrimination just because in the past we fight against the colonizers" - P5

In the past, the most efficient methods of enforcing negative stereotypes between Muslims and non-Muslims were through insinuation such as the literary medium of stage theater - the *Moro-Moro* and *Linambay*. Until the 1950s, these theater

P – ISSN 2651 - 7701 | E – ISSN 2651 – 771X | www.ioer-imrj.com

SALI, A.H.A., *Perception of Muslim Educators on Postcolonial Education in the Philippines: A Qualitative Inquiry, pp.1-15*

9

portrayals had been prevalent in the Province of Cebu and some parts of Luzon and Mindanao. Primarily, these performances depict Muslims as murderous and treacherous. Most significantly, the play revolves around the theme of *"the only good Moro is a dead Moro".* I argue in the context of Orientalism, members of a subject race were substantially conquered through the continuous appropriation of negative racial stereotypes that persisted in the postcolonial era. It is apparent in the case of Muslims in the Philippines, even in the contemporary period. However, historical annotation provided evidence that some native Muslim inhabitants before the coming of Spanish conquerors in 1521 and the non-Muslim natives lived together peacefully and co-exist with one another.

. The concept of post-colonization in Muslim education as mentioned in the first theme on balancing secular and non-secular education, just like Muslim Filipino identity in the postcolonial Philippines is subjected to aporetic interpretation and becomes contentious issues. However, two of the participants relate themselves to a part of contemporary society being a Muslim and a Filipino:

"I can relate to being part of the contemporary society. Beyond the given success, the kind of education in postcolonial Philippines... We are still part of the nation-state formation. We can't talk about building if you do not talk about the Bangsamoro struggle" - P2

"Muslim education is problematic [referring to the institutionalization] because we are minorities. However, we are still a significant minority." - P1

On Learning Institution for Knowledge Preservation.

The participants believe that Muslim education is essential for knowledge preservation both from Islamic and cultural perspectives. Since all the participants are Muslim educators, they highlighted the importance of educational institutions to support the goal of Muslim education - that is to develop Muslim learners holistically with emphasis on the balance of secular and non-secular education. Interestingly, one of the participants mentioned that the type of education that we have now was greatly shaped by colonial education. The proliferation of knowledge and even knowledge production of Islam during the Islamic Golden Age complements religion and science. Albeit Muslim education anchored to *Qur-an* as a major reference on decision making from the past Sultanates in the Philippines [the content] is not diluted in time. However, in terms of instruction or the way we teach and deliver Muslim education, nowadays, it changes based on the context of the contemporary times that Muslim learning institutions adopt. Some of the participants shared responses on the essentials of a working learning institution for knowledge preservation through Muslim education:

"Kids [learners] must not be detached to cultural and religious beliefs perspectives… Islamic education before was highly intertwined with leadership... If they make decisions to societal matters, they will refer to Qur-an and Sunnah and Jurisprudence as a basis." - P1

"Islam is a holistic way of at things… All this theory by the Western countries only started to be developed in the Enlightenment period, like in the age of revolutions, nineteenth century, towards the end of the nineteenth century. The age of revolutions has already taken root in our Islamic societies. But we lost it because of post-colonial, you know, like, even if this idea of Post Colonial Society doesn't mean that we have abandoned our colonial education, that it? It is greatly much shaped by the kind of education that we embrace." - P2

Most of the participants mentioned that Madrasah education (ALIVE program) is an

P – ISSN 2651 - 7701 | E – ISSN 2651 – 771X | www.ioer-imrj.com

SALI, A.H.A., *Perception of Muslim Educators on Postcolonial Education in the Philippines: A Qualitative Inquiry, pp.1-15*

10

essential form of Muslim education, despite it being institutionalized in public schools without its implementation challenges. The implementation of the ALIVE program in basic education in the context of Islamization (Milligan, 2006) of education in the country was an unprecedented move for inclusivity. Inclusive education provides educational opportunities for every learner despite ethnic and religious differences, in the case of this study, the Muslim learners. The ALIVE program provides appropriate and relevant educational opportunities within the context of accepted cultures, customs, traditions, and interests (DepEd Order No. 41, s. 2017). The participant's responses on the implementation of the ALIVE Program:

"In the context of ISAL [Islamic Studies and Arabic Language] teachers are not regular teachers… That's an attempt to integrate Muslim education with the current system… The ISAL [most] is not qualified to teach [referring to their competencies in pedagogy and teacher competencies] being hired by the government." - P1

"Based on my studies [dissertation], my study is focused outside BARMM jurisdiction… In terms of teacher qualifications, the majority were elementary and high school graduates in Western education. That is one of the big factors of why Asatidz [Madrasah teachers] must [strengthen] professional development. Most of the principals and coordinators are non-Muslims, and the appreciation of the program is not that evident. With various programs coming from DepEd (National) to be implemented at schools, they see Madrasah Education Program (MEP) as an additional task." - P4

"Discrimination [refers to the outside BARMM jurisdiction] affects the implementation of Madrasah education… One factor is what we call cultural differences because we know that as

Muslims we came from different tribes [referring to ethnolinguistic groups] and backgrounds… Also, there is a lack of resources too like textbooks, classrooms, and quality Asatidz [referring to the implementation of Madrasah education]" - P3

One of the participants shared that in a secluded barangay in one of the Provinces in Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM), a private madrasah which is defined as a learning institution adapting the DepEd K to 12 Curriculum but with additional subjects on non-secular education has been providing formal education to the Muslim learners. I argue that Madrasah education provides Muslim learners not just preserving religious knowledge through Muslim education but also an effective educational institution that permeates formal secular education in hard-to-reach areas in Mindanao, Philippines. The participant revealed that:

"On the positive side, in our division, there are school-less barangays where regular teachers are afraid to teach, but with our pilot madrasah or integrated madrasah that is recognized and accredited by the government. The educational institution is being established like the pilot madrasah in conflict areas. It is good that there are still who cater on the basic education services to our learners even without regular schools to begin with." - P3

In the Philippines, I argue that there was a diminutive growth in terms of the proliferation of Islamic education among Muslim local thinkers and the advancement of rational intellectual sciences in the context of their cultural knowledge. The annihilation of local manuscripts was apparent by the colonizers which contain historical records and indigenous thoughts as such "were burned and destroyed by the Spaniards as they persecuted groups of local thinkers" (Absari &

P – ISSN 2651 - 7701 | E – ISSN 2651 – 771X | www.ioer-imrj.com
SALI, A.H.A., *Perception of Muslim Educators on Postcolonial Education in the Philippines: A Qualitative Inquiry, pp.1-15*

11

Morados, 2020, p. 4). This predicament during the colonization led to the slow growth or unprecedented quiescence of Islamic education, albeit, the Muslims in the Philippines are still with faith and culture intact. Unfortunately, most of the tangible culture including written artifacts was destroyed by the Spaniards in their quest to assert their dominance over the natives' cultural knowledge.

Therefore, there is a dire need to understand the ontology and epistemology of cultural knowledge to include religion to reach national consciousness and not just awareness or tolerance. Primarily, cultural understanding from the *emic* perspective was lacking during the colonization of the Philippines. In essence, I argue the pivotal role of philosophy, especially in analyzing relevant conceptual data - the philosophical inquiry, for instance, in Islamic education, one must not only consider the schema but also what makes sense to other sources of knowledge. That has always been the case for conceptual analysis, "the ambiguity of terms such as education may function to allow for superficial agreement about difficult issues so that people can proceed to act without having to settle all differences in advance" (Floden & Butchmann, 1989, p. 8). The findings were imperative in understanding the various constructs of Muslim education in a post-colonized society.

CONCLUSION

The study's results highlighted various constructs of Muslim education in the postcolonial Philippines: balancing secular and non-secular education, Muslim and Filipino identities, and learning institutions for knowledge preservation. All of the participants agreed that Muslim education in postcolonial Philippines reflects how to maintain the balance of both secular and non-secular education. On "Filipino-Muslim" identity to what we knew today, didn't seem to have a linear

approach. The necessity to mainstream cultural identity and Islam in general to promote awareness in schools and especially in non-Muslim communities is unprecedented. Muslim education is essential for knowledge preservation both from Islamic and cultural perspectives. Since all the participants are Muslim educators, they highlighted the importance of educational institutions to support the goal of Muslim education - that is to develop Muslim learners holistically. At present, constructs from the participants' *emic* perspective on postcolonial Muslim education are scarce in the Philippines. Therefore, the findings are imperative in understanding the epistemology of postcolonial Muslim education.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings and conclusion of the study, the following recommendations have been formulated:

1. Conduct further studies to understand educational concepts relevant to Muslim education and its implications for appropriate and responsive education for Muslims in the Philippines.
2. Implement culturally responsive Muslim education highlighting the unsubjugated identities of the Muslims in the Philippines.
3. Strengthen the implementation of madrasah-accredited schools approved by the government institutions in the Philippines.
4. Fortify the harmonious integration of secular and non-secular educational components in the curriculum of madrasah-accredited schools in the Philippines.

REFERENCES

P – ISSN 2651 - 7701 | E – ISSN 2651 – 771X | www.ioer-imrj.com
SALI, A.H.A., *Perception of Muslim Educators on Postcolonial Education in the Philippines: A Qualitative Inquiry, pp.1-15*

12

Abu Bakar, M. (Ed.) (2018). *Rethinking madrasah education in a gobalised world*. Routledge Taylor and Francis Group.

Abbahil, A. (1984). The Bangsa Moro: Their self-image and inter-group ethnic attitudes. *Dansalan Quarterly*, *5*(4), 197-250.

Abdullah, M. (2018). A pedagogical framework for teacher discourse and practice in Islamic schools, in Abdalla, M., Chown, D. and Abdullah, M. (Eds), *Islamic Schooling in the West*, Palgrave Macmillan, Cham, pp. 195-226.

Abdi, A. A. (Ed.). (2011). *Decolonizing philosophies of education.* Sense Publishers. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-94-6091-687-8

Absari, D. J. & Morados, M. A. (2019b). *Philippine Muslim history challenges and prospects*. UP CIDS Discussion Paper 2020-08. Quezon City: University of the Philippines, Center for Integrative and Development Studies. https://cids.up. edu.ph/discussion_paper/up-cids-discussion-paper-series-2020-09-philippine-muslim-history-challenges-and-prospects/

Caballero-Anthony M. (2007). Revisiting the Bangsamoro struggle: Contested identities and elusive peace. *Asian Security*, *3*(2), 141-161.https://doi.org/10.1080/147998 50701351425

Carr, P. R. & Thesee, G. (2011). Discursive epistemologies by, for, and about the decolonizing project. In Abdi, A. (Ed.), *Decolonizing philosophies of education*. Sense Publishers. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-94-6091-687-8

Constantino, R. (1971). *The miseducation of the Filipino.* In The Filipinos in the Philippines and other essays. Malaya Books, Inc.

Department of Education, (2017). Order (DO) No. 41, Policy *guidelines on Madrasah education in the K to12 curriculum*. The Philippines.

Dizon, E. Z., & Mijares, A. S. (1999). Archeological evidence of a baranganic culture in Batanes. *Philippine Quarterly of Culture and Society*, *27*(½), pp. 1–10. http://www.jstor.org/stable/29792430.

Floden, R. E. & Buchmann, M. (1989). Philosophical inquiry in teacher education. *Arts and Humanities*, 1-35.https://studylib.net/doc/8883552/1-philosophical-inquiry-in-teacher-education-robert-e

Habana, A. O. M. (1989). Creating the Ideal Colonial Child: Moral Education in the American Period Philippines, 1900-1935. *Historical Bulletin, 54.* https://www.pssc.org.ph/product/historical-bulletin-vol-54/.

Halstead, M. (2004). An Islamic concept of education. Comparative Education, 40(4), 517-529, https://doi.org/10.1080/ 0305006042000284510.

Institute for Autonomy and Governance (2019). Research on traditional madaris in ARMM and adjacent regions. Cotabato City: Notre Dame University.

Ileto, R. C. (2001). Orientalism and the Study of Philippine Politics. *Philippine Political Science Journal*, *22*(45), 1-32. https://doi.org/doi: 10.1080/01154451.2001.9754223.

Jaakkola, E. (2020). Designing conceptual articles: four approaches. *AMS Rev* 10, 18–26. https://doi.org/10.1007/s13162-020-00161-0.

Lacar, L. Q. (1994). Culture contact and national identification among Philippine Muslims, *Philippine Studies*, 42(4), 431-45. https://www.jstor.org/stable/42633465

Majul, C. A. (1985). The contemporary Muslim movement in the Philippines. Mizan Press.

Merriam, S. B. (2009). *Qualitative research: A guide to design and implementation*. Jossey-Bass.

P – ISSN 2651 - 7701 | E – ISSN 2651 – 771X | www.ioer-imrj.com
SALI, A.H.A., *Perception of Muslim Educators on Postcolonial Education in the Philippines: A Qualitative Inquiry, pp.1-15*

13

Miles, MB. & Huberman, AM. (1994). Qualitative Data Analysis (2nd edition). SAGE.

Milligan, J. A. (2005). Faith in school: educational policy responses to ethno-religious conflict in the Southern Philippines. *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies,* *36*(1), 67-86. https://www.jstor.org/stable/20072629

Milligan, J. A. (2006). The Islamization of education. *Comparative Education Review Special Issue on Islam and Education*, *50*(3), 410-430. https://www.journals.uchicago.edu/doi/full/10.1086/503883

Mulder, N. (2013). Filipino Identity: The Haunting Question. *Journal of Current Southeast Asian Affairs*, *32*(1), 55-80, https://doi.org/10.1177/186810341303200103

Nieto, S. and Bode, P. (2007). *Affirming Diversity: The sociopolitical Context of Multicultural Education*. Allyn and Bacon.

Philippine Statistical Authority (2015). *Mindanao Population.* http://rsso11.psa.gov.ph/article/factsheet-islam-mindanao

Sabki A., & Hardaker, G. (2013). The Madrasah concept of Islamic pedagogy. Educational Review, 65(3), 342-356. https://doi.org/10.1080/00131911.2012.668873

Said, E. (1979). *Orientalism*. Random House.

Sali, A. H. A. (2020). Pedagogical praxis: Muslim-Filipino Madrasah teachers' conceptuality of instructional process. *IAFOR Journal of Education: Studies in Education*, *8*(4), 115-131. https://doi.org/10.22492/ije.8.4.07

Sali, A. H. A., & Marasigan, A. (2020). Madrasah education program in the Philippines: An exploratory case study. *International Journal of Comparative Education and Development.* *22*(3), 201–217. https://doi.org/10.1108/IJCED-06-2019-0034

Sali, A. H. A, & Ancho, I. V. (2021). Pedagogical reflections of Muslim-Filipino Madrasah teachers: A phenomenological study. *Journal of Research, Policy & Practice of Teachers and Teacher Education*, *11*(1), 25-39. https://doi.org/10.37134/jrpptte.vol11.1.3.2021

Sali, A. H. A. (2023), Sociological Understanding of muslim education in multicultural Philippines, *Dinamika Ilmu*, *23*(1), pp. 105-122, https://doi.org/10.21093/dinamika ilmu.v23i1.6255.

Sattar, A. R. & Arriola, B. H. (2020). Contributions of madrasah education program to ounter violent extremism. *American Journal of Educational Research*, *8*(7), 450-45. https://doi.org/10.12691/education-8-7-1

Sileyew, K. J. (2019). Research design and methodology. In E. Abu-Taieh, A. El Mouatasim, & I. H. Al Hadid (Eds.), *Cyberspace*. IntechOpen.

Stubley, E. V. (2021). Philosophy as a method of inquiry. *The Quarterly Journal of Music Teaching and Learning,* *16*(8), pp. 44-54. https://opencommons.uconn.edu/vrme/vol16/iss3/8

Trinidad, J.E. & Leviste, E.N. (2020). Toward greater access and impact: Directions for a sociological understanding of Philippine higher education. *Industry and Higher Education* online first, 1-10. https://doi.org/10.1177/0950422220954062

Woods, D. L. (2005). From wilderness to nation: the Evolution of Bayan *UCLA: Center for Southeast Asian Studies.* https://escholarship.org/uc/item/24m1q0f9

The Holy Qur-an.

AUTHOR'S PROFILE

Abdul Haiy A. Sali is a Professorial Lecturer at the Institute of Education, Undergraduate Studies, Far Eastern University Manila. At present, he is pursuing his Ph.D. in Education specializing in Curriculum Studies with cognates in Philippine

P – ISSN 2651 - 7701 | E – ISSN 2651 – 771X | www.ioer-imrj.com

SALI, A.H.A., *Perception of Muslim Educators on Postcolonial Education in the Philippines: A Qualitative Inquiry, pp.1-15*

14

Studies at the College of Education, University of the Philippines Diliman. Mr. Sali has been working in the education and development sector for almost a decade. He is a published author in reputable academic journals, including those indexed in Scopus. He also serves as an editor and a reviewer in various international journals including a Q1 Journal on Islamic Studies. Mr. Sali is an invited resource speaker in national and international teacher training in research. His research focuses on pedagogic theories, curriculum and instruction, critical pedagogy, Philippine studies, and madrasah education.

COPYRIGHTS

P – ISSN 2651 - 7701 | E – ISSN 2651 – 771X | www.ioer-imrj.com
SALI, A.H.A., *Perception of Muslim Educators on Postcolonial Education in the Philippines: A Qualitative Inquiry, pp.1-15*

15