

Beyond the Classroom: Religious Stressors and Adjustment Among Indonesian Muslim Graduate Students in an American Graduate School

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Abstract

This paper was to report some of findings from a larger phenomenological study on the lived experience of Indonesian graduate students in a US higher education. Particularly, this paper was to discuss the Indonesian Muslim graduate students' religious life experiences attending an American graduate school. The primary data sources were a demographic survey and in-depth interviews. The demographic data were analyzed descriptively. The interviews were analyzed by using within-case and cross-case displays and analyses. The theoretical framework of acculturation stress model was used to guide this study. Utilizing the acculturation stress model to describe Indonesian Muslim graduate students' cross-culture experiences, we organized our analysis and discussion around their perspectives and the contexts in which challenges they encountered emerge. An analysis of the text revealed that major themes related to religious beliefs and life experiences were unanticipated praying difficulties, longer fasting days, no holiday for Ramadan (the holy month of Muslims) celebration, no taraweeh (Muslim prayer peculiar to the holy month of Ramadan) prayers in mosque during Ramadan, and rare halal food, and decreasing religious stressors. Future higher education research and policy implications are also discussed.

Keywords: *Lived experience; Muslim graduate students; Indonesia; acculturation; religious stressors*