

Benevolence, Belonging and the Global Citizen: A Hermeneutic Study of Teacher Education in Post-colonial Pakistan

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the experience of pre-service teachers in the Punjab region of Pakistan with regard to global citizenship education (GCE) in their pre-service teacher education programs. There are many examples of the one-way transportation of global citizenship curricula designed in the Global North to post-colonial settings that lack intentional consideration of the respective local processes of meaning-making. This research sought to answer the question of how belonging, benevolence, and pre-service teachers' positioning themselves as global citizens make sense in a national education system affected by colonial legacy. A hermeneutic phenomenological approach was used, and 22 semi-structured interviews were conducted with pre-service teachers from three teacher education institutions in Punjab. The interviews were transcribed with AI-assisted transcription software and analysed in NVivo 15 with AI-supported coding in an iterative interpretive writing process based on van Manen's approach. Four themes were generated: understanding teaching as a legacy of obligations, ambivalence about global belonging, benevolence as a disposition, and the classroom as a site of quiet resistance. The results show that there is no abstract ideal of global citizenship for pre-service teachers; rather, it involves a sense of tension between being rooted in the local and imported notions of global responsibility. This study contributes to the scholarship on post-colonial teacher education by showing how the element of benevolence that is typically taken for granted within teacher education can also become a "colonial legacy" as an unexamined element in shaping teacher identity in certain ways. The implications for teacher education policy and curriculum design in Pakistan and other post-colonial contexts are discussed.



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1. Introduction

Today, the globally minded teacher has become an integral part of teacher education systems throughout the world, with the hope of developing the innate sense of ‘oneness,’ as well as the disposition to empathy and ‘shared responsibility’ (Dower, 2003). International organisations and donor groups have been calling for forms of global citizenship in education and have overseen what they see as a much-needed process of educational reform in the Global South, seeing it as universally advantageous in all circumstances (Oxfam, 2006; Peters et al., 2008; UNESCO, 2013, 2015). In Pakistan, where teacher education has traditionally imported curricula developed elsewhere, global citizenship education has been integrated into initial teacher education curricula in the form of policy documents, textbooks, and through the aid of a cadre of teachers trained by donors on the subject (Abdi & Shultz, 2009). This uptake is taking place in the context of a project already organised by colonial administrative set-ups and pedagogical imagineering (Willinsky, 1998). To investigate pre-service teachers’ actual experiences of these ‘exported’ ideals—which affect the nature of their classroom practice and what they will teach students in the classroom—is important, as teachers serve as the primary vehicles for delivering global citizenship curricula (Banks, 2008).

Both in international circles and within the borders of the nation-state Pakistan, that citizenship education is not divorced from issues of power, history and positionality (Andreotti, 2006). A post-colonial critical analysis of global citizenship education reveals that “helping” and global responsibility, and benevolence, very often perpetuates a colonial order of “giver” and “recipient” (Jefferess, 2012). In the same vein, Pashby’s study of global citizenship education in the times of new imperialism reveals that well-meaning curricula can set up learners in the Global South as receivers of knowledge rather than co-creators of it (Pashby, 2012). Cook’s ethnographic studies of development volunteers in Northern Pakistan also show that there are

hidden inequalities in power dynamics behind these well-meaning claims to selfhood (Cook, 2012). Such criticisms help to foreground the fact that GCE is a political rather than a purely technical project, and is historically located, especially in the context of a country like Pakistan where political institutions are embedded with the logics of colonial politics (Azeem, 2020; Tikly, 2004).

Theoretical critique aside, however, research on how pre-service teachers live and experience discourses on global citizenship is limited, particularly in the non-North American, non-European context (Andreotti et al., 2010). While much current research focuses on curriculum texts, policy rhetoric, and/or teacher educator perspectives on curriculum, few research studies have explored pre-service teachers’ experiences of curriculum (Taylor, 2012). This gap is especially critical in Punjab as teacher preparation institutions are expected to do two things at once—to foster national loyalty and to promote global outlooks; however, neither has been well accomplished, and/or a balance between the two is not maintained (Khoo, 2012; Muhammad, Qureshi, & Farooq, 2025; Rauf & Muhammad, 2025). There is a limited understanding in the literature of how pre-service teachers work through feelings of belonging when they are required to embrace notions of global responsibility outside of their cultural and historical context. Nor has research addressed the character of the feelings of benevolence, invariably regarded as an unambiguous advantage in worldwide citizenship literature, the way they are felt, and how they are performed by teachers who are training for jobs in poorly resourced post-colonial classrooms.

This study aims to address these questions and fill these gaps: What are the experiences of pre-service teachers in Punjab regarding GCE during their initial teacher education? How do they think about and grapple with notions of benevolence, belonging, and responsibility for global and local identities? What are their lived experiences in relation to postcoloniality of teacher education in Pakistan? This paper offers a new empirical

perspective on this area of research, which is commonly marked by conceptual critique, by adopting a hermeneutic phenomenological design focused on lived experience. In the following sections, the literature on global citizenship education, post-colonial theory, and teacher identity is reviewed, and the methodology used, a hermeneutic phenomenology, is explained. The results are then analysed and presented in four interpretive themes, which are discussed in theoretical and practical perspectives with respect to teacher education in Pakistan and related settings.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Global Citizenship Education and Its Discontents

The rise of global citizenship education from a moral perspective was one of realising the need for concern beyond national boundaries, including poverty, conflict and environmental degradation (Bosio & Schattle, 2021; Estéles & Fischman, 2020; Noddings, 2004). Early theorisations saw the global citizen as being able to compassionately think on a global level, to think from outside structures, cosmopolitan, and beyond the parochial, nationally oriented loyalties (Boni & Calabuig, 2015; Cabrera, 2023; Nussbaum, 2002). However, the discourse has been criticised for its assumption of a “universal subject position,” without taking into consideration the specific historical positions of the various subjects, with respect to global power (Jefferess, 2012). Contemporary notions of global citizenship tend to define the “global citizen” as a citizen of the Global North, who has the power to contest and/or rescue distant others, whilst Global South subjects are presented as subjects of intervention and not global citizens (Jefferess, 2012). Against this backdrop, Andreotti’s (2006) contrast between ‘soft’ and ‘critical’ global citizenship education can help to further illustrate this tension, with soft versions focusing on charity and cultural awareness, and critical versions on the need for a more structural analysis of inequality and complicity. A further critique is delivered by considering how neoliberal imaginaries reinvent

global citizenship discourse on a basis that hides the global responsibility of actors based on their history of inequality formation (Tarc, 2012). As a body of work, it makes clear that the concept of global citizenship education is not neutral from an ideological perspective, nor is it universally applicable in all cultures with no need for contextually sensible translation (Franch, 2020).

2.2 Post-colonial Theory and the Colonial Legacy in Education

Post-colonial theory offers means to analyse the continuity or durability of the power relationships of colonisation in current educational structures, even though politically they are independent (Said, 1994). Studies of the curricula/educational system and the colonial imagination illustrate the production of hierarchies of institutions of knowledge (Willinsky, 1998) by distinguishing between the “civilised” and the “primitive.” In a similar manner to Smith’s (1999) de-colonising methodologies work, indigenous and local knowledge is further highlighted in the way. Western epistemologies still dominate the production of knowledge in the post-colonial context. In the particular case of global citizenship education, Abdi and Shultz (2009) go so far as to say that citizenship frameworks based in liberal democratic theories often universalise assumptions that do not find meaningful expression in post-colonial African and Asian contexts, in favour of de-colonised conceptions of citizenship based in local histories. We extend this critique, claiming that even seemingly critical citizenship global education can be perpetuating ‘epistemic violence’ if it assumes it is possible to create knowledge that is unambiguous and universally applicable (Andreotti et al., 2012). All these works indicate that consideration of these injunctions should be a pre-condition of any implementation of global citizenship education in Pakistan.

2.3 Benevolence, Positionality, Teacher Identity

A constant characteristic in debates on global citizenship in postcoloniality is dangerous benevolence. Cook’s (2012) work on development volunteers in northern Pakistan is a case in point

of how the benevolent imaginations of Western volunteers may be masks for their complicit participation in the reproduction of colonial power structures, with well-meaning intentions to help. Stevenson (2012) too is critical of global justice campaigns for their pernicious incorporation of a politics of pity. This critique of the benevolence of the West also leads to an issue the post-colonial discourses do not necessarily consider in-depth, namely: “How do local teachers trained in imported ‘citizenship’ discourses understand themselves in their local contexts as ‘culpable’ helpers, or as change agents?” Part of the answer is offered in Taylor’s (2012) suggestion of a “pedagogy of implication” – a way of engaging teacher education that helps to trouble pre-service teachers to think through how their own complicity and investments are involved in thinking and learning about the topic area. Literature on teacher candidates in Global North countries such as Canada has almost exclusively dealt with the situation of teacher candidates; however, little attention has been paid to how comparable dynamics may or may not be generated for teachers located within post-colonial societies and in a liminal position as both a continuation of colonial education and a potential to transform it.

2.4 Teacher Education in Pakistan and Gap in Lived Experience

Studies on teacher education in Pakistan have highlighted some continuous problems such as an overload of the curriculum, lack of critical pedagogy training, and clashes among religious, national and global teacher identity formation (Ahmed, 2022; Khoo, 2012; Siddiqui et al., 2021). In this regard, the history of citizenship education in Pakistani schools is long-standing, where religious and national identity is foregrounded – at times to the exclusion of global citizenship that is often assumed in citizenship education globally to be cosmopolitan by nature (Ghafor et al., 2026; Muhammad, 2016; Muhammad, Qureshi, & Rauf, 2025). However, there is a lack of empirical research that focuses on the pre-service teachers’ own experiences of integrating global citizenship concepts into teacher preparation, especially on

the emotional and identity-based aspects of ‘belonging’ and ‘benevolence’. This is a significant disjuncture because the lived interpretations do much more to shape the enactments and/or resistances of such a policy than do policy intentions in isolation (Pike, 2008; Schugurensky & Wolhuter, 2020). The current study is an attempt to fill this gap by using a hermeneutic phenomenological approach with pre-service teachers in Punjab to understand how it is lived in the pedagogical world.

3. Research Methodology

3.1 Research Design

This study employed a hermeneutic phenomenological approach based on van Manen’s (2016) conceptualisation of a study of lived experience. This approach was chosen because the research questions were not for the purpose of explanation through the generation of a theory, but rather for exploring persons’ lived experiences and how they make meaning. Unlike grounded theory, it is the goal of hermeneutic phenomenology not to develop a substantive theory about the data, but rather to ‘open’ and interpret ‘how the phenomenon is lived’ (van Manen, 2016). It also differs from descriptive phenomenology in the recognition that the interpretative presence of the researcher influence the understanding developed and not that it is possible to bracket all forms of previous knowledge. Judging from the motivation of this study aiming to understand the meanings of the concepts of participation, “belonging” and “benevolence” in the global citizenship discourse as interpreted by pre-service teachers, the most suitable methodology was one that was sensitive towards meaning and the act of interpreting.

3.2 Philosophical Paradigm

This study was based on an interpretive and phenomenological paradigm. Epistemologically, knowledge is not an objective external fact, but is co-constructed by the researcher and participant with each other in a dialectic dialogue with the other (Gadamer, 1975). The study takes the stance that reality is not something that is purely detached, static, or may be predefined in itself, but

is instead experienced, embodied, and given meaning in the world (Heidegger, 1962). In all steps of this study, the interpretation of the textual material was also understood as a research process, with the possibility of subsequent alterations as a way of securing comprehensibility and quality in the interpretation. This is a practice consistent with the criterion that “writing is research” (van Manen, 2016).

3.3 Participants and Sampling

The sampling technique used was purposive criterion sampling (Patton, 2015). The inclusion criteria were enrolment in an initial teacher education programme in Punjab, having covered at least one of the course components on global citizenship/global perspective, and being willing to reflect in-depth (Creswell & Poth, 2023). The pre-service teachers included in the study were 22; there were 14 females and 8 males who were aged 20-28, in three teacher education institutions in Punjab. The participants had both rural and urban educational backgrounds, and the majority were undergraduate students in their last year of the Bachelor of Education programme. This number of participants matches the recommendation by several authors of hermeneutic phenomenological studies, which range from 10 to 25, sufficient to enable enough depth of interpretive response to each account (van Manen, 2016).

3.4 Data Collection

The data were collected through semi-structured, conversational interviews, which elicited the lived experience description as described by van Manen (2016). An interview scheme was designed to elicit specific instances and experiences participants had of global citizenship topics in their training, as opposed to abstract views. The interviews lasted 45-70 minutes and were conducted in Urdu and English based on the participants' preference at a time of the participants' choice in private interview spaces in the participants' respective institutions. The audio recordings of the interviews were transcribed with the help of AI-assisted transcription software, and segments were manually verified. The

conversational approach resonated with the recommendations to listen to the rich accounts of experience in qualitative interviewing (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2015) and to listen to the flow and rhythm of dialogue, following Flick's (2022) guidance on interview-based qualitative research.

3.5 Data Analysis Procedures

Analysis was undertaken using van Manen's hermeneutic phenomenological approach, which comprised a number of interrelated reading strategies used with the interview texts (van Manen, 2016). First, each transcript was read holistically to understand its basic meaning as a whole text that describes an experience. Second, a selective (highlighting) method was adopted to identify statements that seemed to be especially significant or enlightening with respect to the phenomenon investigated. Third, a detailed, line-by-line reading revealed the content of each group of sentences: What did each sentence indicate about the lived experience of the participants in terms of global citizenship, belonging, and/or benevolence? Fourthly, thematic analysis was performed to pull out statements in each transcript across the themes and identify statements that highlighted patterns of meaning across the participants' accounts. Finally, akin to van Manen's (2016) focus on the writing of interpretation as an analytic activity, the research team joined in writing and rewriting passages of interpretation to create more articulated impressions of an experience.

3.6 Data Analysis Software (CAQDAS)

Qualitative analysis of the data was conducted using NVivo 15, which included the use of AI-assisted coding capability to aid the coding and organisation of lived experience descriptions (Jackson & Bazeley, 2019). The software was used during the interpretive process to help manage thematic statements, retrieve and organise text segments which could be related to the emergent themes, and for memo writing and taking analytical notes. NVivo visual mapping tools helped to visualise the relationships between thematic statements in the way they advanced through the process of analysis, and the data

management features provided secure storage and version control of transcriptions and coding structure. AI-assisted coding was used to obtain initial groups of related text segments that were then checked, further sorted, and re-interpreted manually to ensure that the thematic development was generated not only by the automated recognition of patterns but also by the interpretation of the participants' language. This noticeable strength of AI involvement in the organisation and interpretive work by the researcher also improved the transparency of analysis while maintaining the integrity of researcher interpretation required by hermeneutic phenomenology.

3.7 Trustworthiness and Rigour

To establish credibility, the texts of the interviews were revisited and reread many times during the analysis phase, as well as through group discussions of the findings and analyses. To ensure dependability, all coding decisions, memos, and themes were systematically documented in an audit trail within NVivo. To ensure confirmability, constant reflexive journaling, which included reflections on assumptions and positionalities during data collection and analysis, was performed, as per the basic requirements of a naturalistic inquiry (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). A thick and contextualised description of the teacher education setting and the backgrounds of the participants supported transferability, allowing for the judgement of the applicability of the findings to similar settings. The quality of qualitative research was considered by adhering to criteria based on credibility by preferring to convey the individuality of the values and conclusions rather than describing the results as given, generalisable, and objective, in line with Tracy's (2010) criteria on the quality of qualitative research. In the end, as van Manen suggests, the validity of such an experience of the phenomenological account lies not so much in the procedural correctness as in the readers' ability to "phenomenologically" nod (van Manen, 2016): to recognise the process described as being one that is authentic, and that the outcome of such an experience is thus considered authentic.

3.8 Ethical Considerations

Ethical approval was granted by the relevant institutional review board before data were collected. Before the study, detailed information was provided to all the participants regarding the purpose of the study, the procedure of the study, and their right to withdraw at any time without any consequence. Confidentiality was respected, and the participants were given participant numbers and the names used in quoted extracts have been redacted or changed. All audio recordings and transcripts were kept on encrypted and password-protected devices in the sole control of the research team and will be destroyed after the broader research project has been completed in accordance with the institutional data protection rules and regulations.

4. Findings

4.1 Teaching as Inherited Obligation

This theme deals with the concept of teaching as an obligation that can be passed on within the profession: This theme explores the participants' sense that a teaching career was not necessarily a career they had elected but a predetermined set of duties imposed by family, religion, and national service.

4.1.1 Duty before choice. Most participants talked about taking roles that they were given to be a teacher as opposed to jobs that they actively sought. One of the participants explained, "My father always said that teaching is a noble profession, so I always felt like it's never a point where I was going to think about other options" (Participant 6). Another evaluative comment was more eloquent:

In fact, I think about myself; I know why I'm here, in this programme. It was never just a decision. My family, community, and even my religion tells me that teaching kids is doing service to God and this country. It is not something that I sat down and decided to do, like, oh, I'm going to be an engineer. In some ways, it selected me through all that I saw. (Participant 11)

This account suggests a relational construction of teacher identity as part of a "web of obligation,"

not as a product of individual deliberation, as has been assumed in citizenship education (Pashby, 2012).

4.1.2 Unrest and discomfort at the national and global level. When asked about the differences between national service and ideals of global citizenship discussed in the learning materials, students were hesitant to respond, as they felt uneasy about it. One individual commented that, “We are asked to think global, but quite honestly, my responsibility is with my students, my own village first” (Participant 14). This tension is not unique to the post-colonial critique, as global citizenship orders often seem to be oblivious to local responsibilities and local needs (Tarc, 2012).

4.2 The Ambivalence of Global Belonging

Local participation in global citizenship is explored in this theme as one that often involves ambivalent and sometimes uncomfortable experiences of citizenship, not an expanded identity but a kind of citizenship in-between local rootedness and an abstract global community.

4.2.1 Feeling addressed but not seen. A few of the participants felt that the subject on global citizenship content was about a general world regardless of their own historical and cultural backgrounds. Participant 3 noted that reading about global citizens always seemed to be about someone in Europe or America and not about people in Punjab. This echoes Jefferess’ interpretation of how global citizenship discourse positions a privileged subjectivity that excludes others based on their varying spatial location on the global rather than its content focusing on what is ‘citizenship’ (Jefferess, 2012).

4.2.2 Selective global attachment. Although global citizenship discourse was not outrightly rejected, participants explained how they selectively adopted aspects of global citizenship that were relevant to local issues, such as environmental issues or a shared regional history. One participant provided a longer consideration of this selective engagement:

I feel like we live in the world when we talk about climate change; obviously, we experience it here too

- the heat, the flooding. However, the same material about being a citizen of the world in a general sense, rather than a historical one, omitting any mention of where I am from, or my colonial background—that’s where I’m like, well, okay, I feel like I have to set all that aside and just be a part. I want to belong to both, but the material on its own doesn’t really enable me to do that. (Participant 19)

As shown by this finding, negotiations of belonging do not necessarily fall either for or against global citizenship discourse but rather reformulate it in a local context in terms of meaningful concerns, resonating with the researchers’ call for “pluriversal” conceptions of global citizenship rather than universal (Andreotti et al., 2012).

4.3 Being Charitable—A Two-Edged Temperament

This theme demonstrates the conceptions participants had regarding their future role as teachers for disadvantaged students, where benevolence is seen as not only a good line to take but also a potentially problematic attitude for the teacher.

4.3.1 Pride in helping. The participants showed enthusiasm about playing the role of helpers of less-privileged children. One participant (Participant 8) said: “I’m proud to be the ever so great one to change children’s future, mainly children from poor families.”

4.3.2 Discomfort with saviour framing. However, some participants were uneasy when they read the text of the course in which teachers were portrayed as road map providers for disadvantaged communities, and uncomfortable (what they read as) parallels with colonial rescue discourses emerged.

One of the readings in one of our classes was about teachers being saviours to poor children, and for some reason I wasn’t happy about it, but I couldn’t articulate why. Later, I realised that this was the same as the tales of the British coming to ‘civilise us’ on their missions. I do not want my students or myself to be perceived in that manner. I want to help not because I’m better than them; I want to

help because I know what they're going through. (Participant 21)

It is indicative of Cook's (2012) critique about benevolence as a disposition that can inadvertently create a hierarchical relationship between the benevolent and beneficiary, which lie within the same national community (as those who are served).

4.4 The Classroom as a Site of Quiet Resistance

This is a theme that in essence captured some of the ways in which participants envisioned that content should be adapted when they moved to their own classrooms, which was done quite often through a subtle reinterpretation, and not as outright rejection.

4.4.1 Reframing content locally. Participants were not interested in rejecting global citizenship material, but most envisioned a way to reconceptualise it using local examples/imagery and histories. One participant said, "I will still address some issues regarding the world around me, but then I will begin with what my students know, what our own history is, and the struggles that we faced" (Participant 17).

4.4.2 Quiet withholding. Others talked of less ostentatious and more quiet resistance in which they were wary about letting in material that seemed imposed upon them or was not a reflection of their students' lives and experiences, rather than confronting institutional expectations. The finding in the present study indicates that pre-service teachers still have agency in interpretation, albeit under a strict institutional context - as supported by Taylor's (2012) argument for pedagogical implication as a space for engaging in critical negotiation instead of receiving and delivering content.

5. Discussion

5.1 Interpretation of Findings

The results show that rather than a global identity, pre-service teachers in Punjab live a form of global citizenship education that is negotiated in layers. Inherited obligation is the lived experience of teaching, as is benevolence, with its uneasy

colonial past, and belonging to the global, as an ambivalent experience. This directly connects to the research questions, which show that global citizenship discourse is not simply an addition over the existing description of teachers' identity, but it takes place in complex ways with pre-service teachers' current ideas of responsibility, community, and history. The phenomenological nod being honoured here is that of becoming a global citizen that in no way disassociates from being a local, obligated, and historically situated person.

5.2 Connection to Existing Literature

This research contributes to the post-colonial critique of global citizenship education by showing that the conflicts that have been observed in the Global North also occur at the local level with teachers in a post-colonial country. That global privileged citizen-subject was criticised here, plus an important modification: subjects not only felt excluded from this subject position, but they also actively reconfigured this subject position in response to issues of concern to them locally (Jefferess, 2012). By extension, the idea of Cook's (2012) benevolence (colonially inflected) is not limited to volunteers from the West, but also applies to pre-service teachers themselves from Pakistan, and how benevolence can trouble the pre-service teachers' self-understanding even if the subject of teaching is their own community. This is different from Taylor's (2012) Canadian pedagogy of implication, where teacher candidates focus on how to interrogate complicity with respect to harming people at a distance, while in this study teacher participants interrogated complicity relating to their own community. This implies that the nature of the very distance and proximity claims creating post-colonial teacher identity work in Pakistan differs. The issue of quiet resistance also illustrates Andreotti's (2012) attempt to distinguish between soft and critical global citizenship education, where critical engagement does not necessarily involve explicit curricular critique, but can be done informally, for example, in the classroom, via reinterpretation.

5.3 Implications

As this research implies, global citizenship discourses should be made more sophisticated when implemented in post-colonial contexts to include explicit attention to the structuring of obligation, benevolence, and belonging in a particular location prior to the implementation of global citizenship content. In terms of practice, teacher education institutes of Punjab should think of contextualising the global citizenship curriculum by integrating local history and the colonial legacy in a more abstract manner and not as an alternative global citizenship ideal. Teacher educators could also identify teaching methods that could help pre-service teachers express discomfort with the saviour framings, allowing this discomfort to serve as a potential space of critical reflection rather than leaving it unspoken. From methodological considerations, this research illustrates the potential of the combined use of hermeneutic phenomenology and AI-supported qualitative analysis tools for identifying the implicit and context-specific negotiations of identity that a survey- or purely conceptual approaches to global citizenship education would likely overlook.

5.4 Limitations

Although this sample is deemed suitable for the depth of the hermeneutic phenomenological approach, given the three institutions in Punjab, it is challenging to imagine that it can represent the whole spectrum of teacher education institutions in Pakistan. Despite reflexive strategies, some elements in participants' stories were foregrounded during the process of interpretive writing, reflecting the researchers' own positionality as educational researchers with an understanding of post-colonial theory. Although the use of AI-assisted transcription and coding was efficient, some transcription mistakes in the code-switching between these two languages in the colloquial context could have slightly impacted the accuracy of some quotations and demanded diligence for manual verification. Lastly, the results are related to the classroom practices that the participants desire to implement and not the

ones that they actually employed, as data were gathered during initial teacher education, and not during in-service teaching.

5.5 Future Research Directions

Future research should track these pre-service teachers once they have entered full-time teaching practice to see whether the quiet resistance and reinterpretation strategies, described above, continue as such after they become "in-service teachers." Comparative research in other post-colonial teacher education contexts (e.g., Bangladesh or Nigeria) would then allow us to see if this form of negotiation of obligation and benevolence is unique to Punjab or characteristic of the post-colonial. Future methodological research could also examine the evolving nature of hermeneutic phenomenological analysis as AI-driven coding tools are adopted, analysing how AI impacts the interpretative dimension in the context of pattern detection.

6. Conclusion

This study aimed to gain an understanding of pre-service teachers' experiences of global citizenship education in their teacher training programmes and explore how notions of belonging and benevolence - as legacy concepts - are negotiated in a post-colonial context of seeking citizenship and belonging in a nation-state. The results reveal that global citizenship is not an abstract ideal awaiting appropriation but rather a way of life, negotiated as a community obligation, ambivalent belonging, uneasy benevolence, and quiet classroom resistance. All these themes suggest that for these participants, being a global citizen is inseparable from their locality, sense of responsibility, and colonial heritage.

The importance of this research lies in its ability to show that post-colonial questions, which were largely formed under the iconic gaze of Global North actors and institutions, have relevance in locally nuanced forms within post-colonial nations. However, teacher education courses may import global citizenship approaches without considering these local negotiations; in doing so, they risk asking pre-service teachers to enact a citizenship identity that may be uneasy with the

lived sense of duty and belonging. This means that simply adding content is not enough; rather, engaging with the historical and cultural context into which global citizenship education is placed is required.

Future research should follow up on pre-service teachers' interpretations and subtle manifestations of resistance during their transition into the classroom and whether resistance or reinterpretation is amplified or

suppressed due to the demands of the classroom environment. Comparative studies in other post-colonial teacher education contexts would further investigate whether these patterns are unique to Punjab and whether they represent something more than the post-colonial. One thing is clear: global citizenship, however well intentioned, cannot be taught as a placeless ideal. It must be learned, taught, and lived from somewhere.

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