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Hyphenated Identity Development of Arab and Jewish Teachers: Within the Conflict Ridden Multicultural Setting of the University of Haifa

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ABSTRACT

The theory of "Hyphenated identity" (HI) argues that people living in complex political-social contexts construct HIs with various sub-identities. The University of Haifa (UH) is a meeting space and experience for people of different nationalities and religious backgrounds. Thus they live "on the hyphen", between identities found in contrast vs. harmony. This study was initiated and carried out as part of a Cooperative Participatory Action Research (CPAR). Nineteen graduate students, all teachers in a multicultural society ridden with conflicts, were interviewed about their life stories, their family background and the development of their identity as shaping their personal and professional lives. At the end of the interview, they were asked to draw an Identity Drawing Map (IDM) and add an explanatory text. Finding indicated that many women transferred their complex identity in order to create a balanced and a challenge in their life; they became leaders in their communities and empower other women to follow them toward self actualization. The study's contribution is in broadening the understanding of concepts of HI development, by analyzing the similarities and differences within each ethnic/national group. Since identity development influences significantly people life, we can learn about these processes. Using the creative methods of drawing identity fabricated a deeper understanding and emotional presentation of the person.

KEYWORDS

Identity; Teachers; Arab and Jews; University of Haifa; Israel

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