

The Journey of a Thousand Miles: Exploring Experiences of Filipino International Teachers

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ABSTRACT

This study explores the challenges and experiences of Filipino teachers teaching abroad, specifically in Arizona, focusing on their cultural adaptation, classroom management, and professional growth. Through qualitative research and thematic analysis, the study examines the lived experiences of Filipino educators, revealing key themes that highlight the complexities of adjusting to a new educational environment. The main themes identified include the challenges faced by teachers in Arizona, such as cultural and educational adjustments, classroom management issues, and communication barriers. Furthermore, the study investigates the strategies employed by teachers to manage disruptive behavior and engage diverse student populations, emphasizing the importance of culturally responsive teaching methods. The research also delves into the influence of Filipino teachers' cultural backgrounds on their instructional methods and interactions with students, highlighting the integration of Filipino educational values and traditions into the U.S. classroom. The study further examines the impact of teacher turnover on school climate and the role of intercultural competence in promoting global citizenship. Finally, the findings provide valuable insights for district superintendents, school heads, aspiring teachers, and undergraduate students, offering recommendations for improving teacher support, cultural adaptation programs, and professional development initiatives for those working in international educational contexts. This research contributes to the understanding of the intersection between culture, teaching practices, and classroom dynamics, providing a foundation for future studies on the experiences of international teachers. It also emphasizes the importance of cultural sensitivity and global perspectives in fostering an inclusive and effective learning environment.

INTRODUCTION

Background of the Study

Teachers play a vital role in shaping the quality of education and influencing student achievement. As emphasized by Geiger and Pivovarov (2018), cited in the study of Sarah Thomas (2019), "Even in the world's best school systems, the quality of the teacher is a primary driver of variation in student learning outcomes" (Ring & West, 2015, p. 106). This highlights the significant contribution of teachers in improving student performance, strengthening school climate, and promoting the overall development of educational institutions. Because of this, countries around the world continue to seek competent and highly skilled educators who can respond to the growing demands of global education.

In recent years, globalization has greatly influenced the field of education. According to Ospina and Medina (2020), both students and educators pursue opportunities abroad to achieve academic and professional growth, develop intercultural competence, and gain personal independence. For teachers, working in another country offers opportunities for career advancement, exposure to diverse educational systems, and professional development. As a result, international teaching has become increasingly attractive to many educators, including Filipino teachers.

The Philippines, despite being recognized for producing competent and resilient educators, continues to face challenges in its educational system. As cited in the study of Gino Sumalinog (2022), Slethaug (2007) noted that the Philippine educational system remains in constant transition and improvement compared to more established

educational systems worldwide. However, limited economic resources and relatively low salaries among teachers continue to push many Filipino educators to seek employment abroad. Consequently, teaching in foreign countries has become a practical option for both novice and experienced teachers who aspire for better compensation, improved living conditions, and greater professional opportunities.

Despite the challenges associated with working abroad, Filipino teachers demonstrate remarkable adaptability and resilience. Kong (2020), as cited in Sumalinog (2022), explained that teachers learn to broaden their perspectives and adapt to unfamiliar environments despite unfavorable circumstances. Exposure to different classroom practices, instructional approaches, and cultural environments allows teachers to enhance their professional competencies and personal growth. Furthermore, even difficult classroom experiences provide meaningful opportunities for learning and innovation.

Given these circumstances, there is a need to further examine the experiences of Filipino teachers working abroad, particularly in relation to their quality of working life and overall working conditions. Understanding the factors that motivate professional teachers to leave the country and teach overseas may provide valuable insights for educational policymakers and stakeholders. Moreover, this study may help determine the effectiveness of teacher exchange programs and identify possible strategies that the Department of Education in the Philippines can implement to retain competent educators and improve the welfare of teachers within the country.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This study is grounded with the following theories:

Value-Belief-Norm Theory

One of the theories is grounded from the Value-Belief-Norm theory, which emphasizes the importance of civic duties, the environment, and justice as critical factors in determining the predictive validity of values, beliefs, and norms. Next, the VBN methodology is utilized in the planning and execution of a brief, faculty-led study abroad program focused on educational travel. Quantifying how learning outcomes are clearly connected to important aspects of the foreign education experience is also achievable by showcasing how such theoretical contributions can assist alter the academic content and instructional delivery of these kinds of study abroad programs.

Multi-Cultural Personality

Summerfield et. al, (2021) cited that the researchers Van der Zee and Van Oudenhoven defined multicultural personality as, “success in the fields of professional effectiveness, personal adjustment and intercultural interactions” This model combines narrow personality traits that appear to be more relevant in gauging the performance of an individual in a multicultural context. Since its conception, the Multicultural Personality model has been implemented in different studies, obtaining acceptable results in research on satisfaction with the workplace abroad, effectiveness in intercultural mentoring, student adaptation to exchange programs, and multicultural effectiveness in university students.

Self-Determination Theory

Another theory to base this study is the Self-Determination Theory, or SDT according to Cherry (2022) it seeks to explain how being self-determined impacts motivation—that people feel more motivated to take action when they think that what they do will have an effect on the outcome. Learn more about how this theory works, as well as what you can do to improve your self-determination skills.

Self-determination theory suggests that people can become self-determined when their needs for competence, connection, and autonomy are fulfilled.

Self-determination theory grew out of the work of psychologists Edward Deci and Richard Ryan, who first introduced their ideas in their 1985 book *Self-Determination and Intrinsic Motivation in Human Behavior*. They developed a theory of motivation that suggests people tend to be driven by a need to grow and gain fulfillment.

Goal Setting Theory

Goal-setting theory is a well-researched theory that connects goal setting and task performance. And if you want to improve everything from employee engagement, performance, and motivation, understanding this concept is a must. It was developed by Edwin A. Locke.

According Debara (2022), Goal-setting theory is an organizational psychology theory. (It's also sometimes called the goal setting theory of motivation). According to this theory, goals that are clear, specific, and challenging are more motivating than vague goals or easy goals. And when employees are more motivated, they're more successful in hitting their goals best."

Goal-Attitude-Adaptation Theory

According to Uytico and Abadiano's theory (2020) goal, attitude, and adaptation are essential in the survival of Filipino teachers overseas. Working in a foreign environment requires an individual to be goal-oriented, to have the right set of attributes, and to be willing to adapt to thrive. The theory can serve as a frame of reference upon which teachers planning to work abroad can better prepare for such undertaking and upon which stakeholders in educational institutions in the country and abroad can have a better comprehension of the teachers' motivations, challenges, and adapting strategies in a foreign land. In its entirety, this theory pinpoints to the stories of millennial educators as they undertake the challenge of working abroad in order to accomplish personal growth and professional development. This also highlights the need to have the right goals and right attitude to succeed in teaching abroad.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The conceptual framework of this study explores the lived experiences of Filipino teachers under the J1 visa program in the Teacher Exchange Program (TEP) in Arizona.

The first component of the framework examines a teacher's psychological drive to participate in the Teacher Exchange Program.

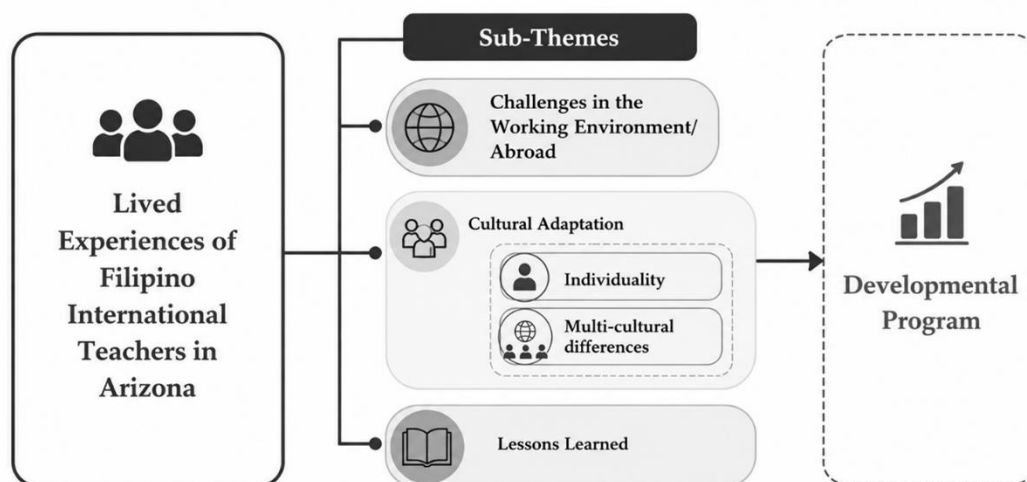


Figure 1. Schematic Diagram of the Study shows the Lived Experiences of Filipino International Teachers in Arizona

Statement of the Problem

The purpose of this study is to investigate the lived experiences of international exchange teachers in Arizona while they are participating in the J1 Visa Teacher Exchange Program.

This study sought to answer the following questions:

1. What challenges do Filipino teachers experience while working abroad?
2. How do Filipino teachers adapt to the cultural differences in their host countries?
3. What values, traditions, and cultural artifacts did Filipino teachers experience in public –schools in the United States, and how do they perceive the essence of these compared to their own cultural traditions and values?
4. How do the cultural backgrounds and experiences of teachers shape their instructional methods and classroom interactions?
5. What lessons do Filipino teachers gain from their experiences working abroad?

Significance of the Study

The results and findings of the study can be significant and beneficial to the following:

District Superintendents. This study will serve as a basis for cultural adaptation review, character development assessment and actual challenges refraction of Filipino teachers abroad, thus giving district superintendents the idea of how to accommodate Filipino teachers and what programs and trainings to give them.

School Heads. This study will help the school heads in managing Filipino teachers and will also direct them on how to lead effectively to maximize the potential of the Filipino teachers abroad. Understanding the teachers' challenges and hardships in the new working environment will serve as a basis for the school heads to steer his administrative and managerial roles and tasks to adjust on how to direct these culturally exchanged teachers.

Aspiring Filipino Teachers. This study will serve as a heads-up for Filipino aspiring teachers who want to teach in Arizona. Different challenges, emotional hang-ups and hardships in cultural adaptation will be presented systematically thus, giving the teachers advanced scenario of what is happening in the actual working environment especially outside the country.

Future Teachers. This study can help future teachers by understanding the challenges faced by current teachers in Arizona and be prepared for similar hurdles. They can learn from the experiences of others and develop strategies to navigate issues like classroom management, resource limitations, diverse student populations, and funding disparities.

Undergraduate Students. Studying lived experiences encourages reflection and critical thinking among undergraduate teacher students. They can analyze and evaluate the experiences shared by teachers, identifying successful strategies, areas for improvement, and ethical considerations in teaching practice.

Scope and Limitations of the Study

This study focuses on the lived experiences of Filipino educators teaching in Arizona, specifically in public schools. The research seeks to explore the challenges these educators encounter, including teacher-student relationships and classroom environment issues, and how they adapt their teaching strategies to address disruptive behavior and other classroom difficulties. Additionally, it examines the cultural values, traditions, and

artifacts Filipino educators experience in U.S. public schools and their perceptions of these compared to their own cultural background.

The study also investigates the role of school administrators in fostering a positive school climate amidst frequent teacher turnover and the influence of cultural backgrounds on instructional methods and classroom interactions. Furthermore, it aims to identify the insights gained by Filipino educators regarding intercultural competence and fostering global citizenship through their teaching experiences abroad.

Definition of Terms

Culture Shock. Conceptually, it is defined as the feeling of disorientation experienced by someone who is suddenly subjected to an unfamiliar culture, way of life, or set of attitudes.

Operationally, it is the maladaptation showed by Filipino teachers the moment they started teaching and working abroad.

Lived experiences. Conceptually, lived experience is a depiction of a person's experiences and decisions, as well as the knowledge gained from these experiences and choices (HealthTeach, 2022).

Operationally, it refers to the experiences of the Filipino teacher respondents while teaching in the Arizona districts.

Undergraduate students. Conceptually, it refers to students who are studying for their first degree at a college or university (dictionary.cambridge.org).

Operationally, it refers to the students who are taking up Education courses to become future teachers.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE AND STUDIES

The contents of this chapter are literature and studies that have been evaluated by the researcher. Their purpose is to give a clear background and understanding in the conception of this study that are related to the present investigation so to its major variables which are cultural adaptation, challenges, and lesson learned of the Filipino International Teachers.

Challenges in the Working Environment

According to Moran (2021), there's a recognition of the strong inclination toward direct communication. Nonetheless, this approach of getting right to the point might be interpreted as overly assertive in various cultures. In certain Asian countries, for instance, indirect communication prevails, and the principle of "saving face" holds considerable significance. When a new teacher openly points out students' errors in front of the entire class, it causes those students to experience a sense of embarrassment or 'losing face.' A preferable method would involve privately correcting a student's mistake in a one-on-one setting.

Gender dynamics play a crucial role in the puzzle of student interactions. In a heavily male-dominated society where teaching occurs, female students might not feel accustomed to freely expressing their opinions or engaging closely with men who aren't their relatives. Even simple gestures like a handshake between individuals of opposite genders could be deemed inappropriate in certain cultures. When teaching in a classroom with a mix of genders, it's vital to ensure equal opportunities for all students to participate and learn. However, this needs to be approached thoughtfully to avoid conflicting with societal norms and expectations (Moran, 2021).

Ospina & Medina (2020) cited in their study, successful acclimatization in the United States often requires the educator to be able not only to work but also to drive legally there. Regarding US school systems, international educators have not only to learn how the federal system works but also to become familiar with relevant state systems and local public or private school entities, which have their own regulations and policies. Furthermore, in addition to regulations and policies, the international teacher must be versed in the relevant school's

curriculum, pedagogical foundations, and goals. Assessment is also a serious issue because students in the host country often have different expectations from those of international teachers.

Lived Experiences of the Filipino International teachers

Teachers abroad were not always blessed with memorable and pleasant circumstances. They also experienced emotional drawbacks that pertained to extreme homesickness towards their immediate and extended families, especially during occasions. There were also cultural drawbacks such as language barriers brought about by their students' differences in accent, English speaking proficiency level, and lack of vocabulary. Teachers also became willing victims to psychological drawbacks such as burnouts and depression due to the thought that they failed to meet their expectations and in letting their students learn more. The lived experiences were detrimental to their job and other tasks entrusted to them as teachers (Bulawat, 2021).

Despite unfavorable circumstances, teachers still learn to widen their perspectives and perspective to adapt (Kong, 2020).

Moreover, with existing studies that presented the struggles that teachers abroad encountered, there are still more experiences to be discovered, covering the recent years, to fully inform the Filipino teachers. There is still a gap that needed to be delved because little did the aspiring teachers know that going abroad came with risks and drawbacks. With their excitement to earn and help their families, they ventured abroad without enough knowledge of the drawbacks that resulted in frustrations (Bulawat, 2021).

Cultural Adaptation

Adaptation is also a social and cultural exchange. It depends on the individual's own volition whether he or she will settle with the possibilities of a new socio-cultural environment, or if the idea of having new connections and relationships are denied and rejected. An individual's ability to adapt to foreign culture depends on the difference between the individual's own cultures. As stated by a large difference between the country of origin and the destination requires more transitions, which results in more adjustment difficulties than in a country with a similar culture. In other words, adapting is more difficult when the host country is more culturally distant. Individuals may also have been subject to similar cultures making it easier to adapt to their current environment. Adaptation process with culture shock involves continuous and active engagement and communication within the culture. This also applies in foreign work environments. Working in a foreign setting is a new experience. Adjusting to their environment requires them to adapt to foreign religion and beliefs. Achieving intercultural communication with students and colleagues requires patience, tolerance, and consideration for cultural differences because language and culture are closely related. Otherwise, cross-cultural issues may arise such as language barriers and teaching impediments. These issues affect the educators' performance within the workplace. Discrimination and isolation are also present in the workplace against Filipino educators similar to those in previous studies. Findings show that other nationalities offered more benefits than the Filipino educators. The educators cope with these by bearing with it or adapting (Reyes et. Al, 2020)

The study of Uytico & Abadiano (2020), stated that both cultural and language, is significant in assisting an expatriate in successfully living and working in an unfamiliar cultural environment. The participants were open to learning the culture in different ways thinking that this will benefit them while living in another country as well as the development of their teaching career.

Challenges Faced Abroad

Every challenge that Filipino educators face may be a positive or a negative impact on them. This new experience challenges the individual to adjust and unlearn ways they originally know and adapt to their new surroundings. Filipino Educators may feel homesick, new and at random times may be discriminated for being a Filipino. Working in a foreign setting requires an individual to become adaptive in navigating an unfamiliar environment and diverse culture, individuals try to fit in with the host culture and adjust him/herself according to maintain a suitable relationship and achieve social interaction. Homesickness and being discriminated are the factors that are accepted prior to moving to a foreign setting, yet, these factors indicate how adaptive a person can be

especially to those individuals who are trying to navigate an unfamiliar environment and a diverse culture (Reyes et. al, 2020).

He added that, Filipino teachers who teach English as a Second Language in these countries face numerous challenges and changes and must adapt to these changes. There is an endless supply of Filipino teachers, and there is a pay differential between teaching in South East Asian countries and teaching in the United States. They must integrate into their students' culture, environment, and classroom settings. According to studies conducted by communication barriers such as difficulty understanding the native language and producing appropriate accents, cultural differences, and individual preferences contribute to the breakdown of harmonious relationships; discrimination was noted to occur infrequently. Their lack of familiarity with the indigenous vernacular harmed their ability to comprehend and interact with the indigenous culture. One of the difficulties Filipino ESL teachers face is learning the indigenous languages of the schools.

According to Macapagong et. al (2023), one of the most common challenges these teachers have to face is the wide disparity of the Oriental and Western culture. Culture's principle includes a wide range of human actions, products, and institutions for people with varied educational backgrounds, experiential backgrounds, and life experiences. These overlapping of identities may cause culture shock. Teachers may have the mental preparation of what to expect through information gleaned from the internet and other people, but nothing can prepare them from the actual life of being in the USA. Moreover, the teaching strategies and curriculum are not the ones being used that even a seasoned teacher may find herself or himself struggling in the first few months of arrival. The use of technology can be intimidating to those teachers who practice traditional style.

In Chua (2021) findings of the study, with all the participants, their trials and tribulations did not just end when they stepped on US soil. They described these challenges as falling into two sub-themes: microaggressions toward Filipino teachers from students, parents of students and coworkers; and the effect on their mental health during their transition process. 85 All participants described events in their experience that the researcher and literature could describe as microaggressions. However, none of the participants used such word to describe their experiences. Their experiences mainly contained descriptions like being "mimicked," "cursed" at, "made fun of," and being subjected to "passive aggressive" treatment. The participants described these experiences as "horrible," "traumatic," and "scary."

Lesson Learned

According to Bulawat (2021) Aside from assisting students in learning, Filipino teachers stressed maintaining positive relationships with others. Salary, title, and advancement opportunities are all essential extrinsic job characteristics. When asked about their current jobs and pay, ESL teachers emphasized both internal and external benefits, implying a general alignment between their needs and what they get. While teaching English in a foreign school, Filipino teachers encountered difficulties with students' attitudes and behavior, cultural, environmental, and language barriers. They agreed on the importance of having a few common lessons popular with most of their students and making these subjects compelling for learners. Lesson planning aims to assist the teacher in developing an effective course plan and implementing solutions to potential problems. Language awareness entails an awareness of the potential obstacles to learning that language can present. These difficulties may occur when a student is studying a subject in a second language or learning certain words or structures for the first time in their native language. As to recommended ways for teachers to adjust to different situations, ESL teachers must develop cultural relations and respond with cultural sensitivity. Individuals must integrate themselves into their communities. English teachers who teach in a culture other than their own must foster an atmosphere that fosters student achievement. To be a culturally aware educator, one must first become acquainted with and appreciate their students' cultural backgrounds. The student's native language has long been a source of controversy in the ESL classroom. Teachers' methods must be adapted to different contexts and cultures. An instructor's preferred educational, psychological, or cultural teaching method may not be acceptable to all students or classes. Instructors must keep up with new texts, techniques, best practices, and professional development opportunities in ESL/ELL. Finally, it must always be bear in mind that a good classroom is one in which students feel understood, valued, and protected while being empowered to take emotional and intellectual risks. It requires deliberate preparation and direct instructor contact. They must adapt to the social climate of a foreign school.

Moreover, Vickery (2019) stated that, Patience is key. People are often surprised to find out that being a teacher, don't have to know a student's native language to teach them English. Instead, teaching English relies on repetition, speaking slowly and using things like pictures and body language to help. Adults might be more self-motivated students, but it can also be more challenging for them to absorb a new language. Kids might learn quicker, and teachers must be creative to keep them engaged. Every student is different, and no two classes are the same, so having patience is crucial.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter presents the research design, the subjects and respondents of the study, population and sample size, sampling techniques, data gathering instrument, validity and reliability of the research instrument, the data gathering procedure, and data analyses.

Research Design

This study will utilize a qualitative research design employing a phenomenological approach. Phenomenology is a method of inquiry that aims to explore and understand the lived experiences of individuals regarding a particular phenomenon. This approach is appropriate for the study because it seeks to examine and describe the experiences, challenges, motivations, and coping mechanisms of Filipino teachers working abroad.

According to phenomenological research, the primary goal is to understand how individuals perceive and make meaning of their experiences. Through this approach, the researcher will gather detailed narratives from overseas Filipino teachers to gain deeper insights into their quality of working life, professional adjustments, and personal experiences in foreign educational institutions.

The phenomenological approach is suitable for this study because it allows participants to freely express their thoughts, emotions, and perspectives regarding teaching abroad. It also enables the researcher to identify common themes and meanings derived from the participants' experiences. Through in-depth analysis, the study aims to understand the essence of being a Filipino teacher working in another country.

Data will be collected through semi-structured interviews with selected Filipino teachers currently employed abroad. The interviews will provide participants with the opportunity to share their experiences openly and comprehensively. The gathered data will then be analyzed using thematic analysis to identify recurring themes, patterns, and significant insights related to the phenomenon under investigation.

By using a phenomenological research design, the study will provide a richer and more meaningful understanding of the realities faced by Filipino teachers abroad. The findings may contribute to the development of policies and programs that support teachers' welfare, professional growth, and retention in the Philippine educational system.

Subjects and Respondents of the Study

Research participants in this study were called conversation partners "C.P." which was defined by Hunter Revell (2023) as method that allows the researcher to understand experiences through the participant's words and stories to create meaning.

Specifically, the participants were the eight (8) selected Filipino teachers assigned in different schools in Arizona. The researcher selected the participants based on following inclusion criteria:

1. The participant is a bonafide international exchange teacher assigned to the different school district in Arizona:
2. The participants have experienced teaching in their originating country prior to the teacher exchange program.
3. They are willing to participate and be part of the study thus considering the participation is voluntary.

Population and Sample Size

The population for this study consists of Filipino educators currently teaching in public schools in Arizona. These educators were chosen as they provide a unique perspective on the challenges and adaptations required when teaching in a foreign cultural and educational context.

The sample size was determined based on purposive sampling, a non-probability sampling technique that selects participants who are best suited to provide in-depth information about the phenomenon under study. For this research, a sample of 8 Filipino educators was identified as representative. This size is sufficient to allow for the collection of rich, qualitative data while ensuring diversity in participants' experiences and backgrounds.

Participants were selected based on the following criteria:

1. They must be Filipino educators currently teaching in Arizona public schools.
2. They must have at least one year of teaching experience in the United States.
3. They must be willing to participate in interviews and share their lived experiences.

This sample size ensures that the study captures varied insights while maintaining feasibility within the time and resources available.

Sampling Techniques

This research employed purposive sampling in selecting the individual sample as part of this research. Using purposive sampling, according to Nikolopoulou, K. (2023), Purposive sampling refers to a group of non-probability sampling techniques in which units are selected because they have characteristics that you need in your sample. In other words, units are selected "on purpose" in purposive sampling.

Also called judgmental sampling, this sampling method relies on the researcher's judgment when identifying and selecting the individuals, cases, or events that can provide the best information to achieve the study's objectives.

Purposive sampling is common in qualitative research and mixed methods research. It is particularly useful if you need to find information-rich cases or make the most out of limited resources but is at high risk for research biases like observer bias.

Data Gathering Instrument

This study utilized an interview guide question to understand the lived experiences of Filipino teachers abroad. The open-ended questions were used during the in-depth interview with the participants. The interview guide is composed of six (6) questions which are all directed at describing their experiences.

The instrument was crafted to gather detailed, open-ended responses that delve into the respondents' opinions, experiences, and narratives. These questions aimed to explore phenomena from the participants' perspectives. The instrument was validated with a panel of experts and considered all suggestions and recommendations to improve the study.

Validity and Reliability of the Research Instrument

In establishing the validity of the questions, three validators, considered experts in the field of education, were requested to validate the interview protocol and interview questions. The validators used the criteria set forth by Goods and Scates which will be used as an outline in assessing the data-gathering Instrument. The structured

interview guide received a rating of 4.78 which was considered excellent and was deemed acceptable for this study.

For this study, the researcher will transcribe the recorded interviews from the participants and present them individually. Additional information will be added, or erroneous transcriptions will be revised accurately as the participants validated and affirm their answers. This process recurred until data saturation was achieved.

Data Gathering Procedure

The researcher prepared the interview guide questions and necessary communication for the study. Once approval for the study was obtained, a letter was sent to the office of the Superintendent of the different School District and the school heads of the selected schools where the study were conducted. Data was collected from the teachers through face-to-face or virtual interviews based on their preferences. The participants was given approximately one to two hours to answer the interview guide questions, with no time constraints imposed. Throughout the interviews, verbal process consent was obtained, allowing for ongoing negotiation and affirmation of the written consent, in line with the principles of phenomenological research and respect for participants' rights. All interviews was recorded and transcribed verbatim, ensuring accuracy. Participants were assured of confidentiality regarding their answers. The researcher organized the results into thematic clusters, while maintaining participants confidentiality by not disclosing their names. Interview scheduling was done at the participants' convenience, and data was captured using audio recorders. After data collection, the recorded interviews were transcribed into written conversations and then translated. The gathered data were coded, categorized, and thematized. Following the steps of phenomenology, member checking was conducted to verify the accuracy and truthfulness of the data, which were further analyzed and presented thematically.

Data Analyses

The collected data were analyzed thematically, employing the fundamental principles of manual coding, organization, and theme development. The analysis process follows Colaizzi's (1978) structured seven-step method, ensuring a thorough and precise examination of the data. Each step remains closely aligned with the participants' accounts, resulting in a comprehensive yet concise description of the phenomenon being studied. The participants validate this description to confirm its accuracy. The method heavily relies on rich, first-person accounts of experiences, which can be gathered through various means, including face-to-face interviews, written narratives, blogs, research diaries, and online interviews. The steps involved are as follows:

1. Familiarization: The researcher becomes deeply familiar with the data by repeatedly reading the participants' accounts.
2. Identification of significant statements: Key statements related to the phenomenon are identified within the data.
3. Formulating meanings: The researcher derives meanings from these significant statements, focusing on the phenomenon while reflexively setting aside preconceived notions (acknowledging that complete objectivity isn't always achievable).
4. Clustering themes: The identified meanings are grouped into common themes across all accounts, with careful attention to avoid the influence of pre-existing theories.
5. Developing detailed descriptions: A comprehensive description of the phenomenon is written, incorporating all the themes identified in the previous step.
6. Producing a fundamental structure: The detailed description is condensed into a concise statement that captures the core of the phenomenon.
7. Verification of the structure: The condensed statement is shared with the participants (or a subset, in larger studies) to confirm it accurately reflects their experiences. Adjustments to earlier steps may be made based on their feedback.

This process ensures a rigorous and participant-centered exploration of the phenomenon under investigation.

PRESENTATION, ANALYSES AND INTERPRETATION OF DATA

This chapter provides a detailed explanation of the qualitative methods employed for data collection, offering a step-by-step overview of the processes involved. The chapter also outlines the specific analytic techniques utilized to examine the collected data and presents the findings derived from this phase of the study. These findings are thoroughly discussed, drawing connections to existing literature to enhance the understanding of the results. Comprehensive descriptions of the respondents are included, highlighting their characteristics to establish a clear context for interpreting the outcomes. The interview process is systematically elaborated, starting with an introduction to the interview guides, followed by an in-depth discussion of the responses gathered, which reflect the experiences of Filipino educators working abroad. In the concluding section, an overall summary of the findings from the interviews is presented to provide a cohesive understanding of the insights gained.

Research Findings, Results, and Analysis of Qualitative Data

The data analysis process employed Thematic Analysis to examine qualitative data. This method is typically applied to a set of written materials, such as interview transcripts. In this approach, the researcher systematically reviewed the data to identify recurring themes, including key topics, concepts, and patterns of meaning. The goal was to uncover and understand the underlying themes that emerge from the data, providing insights into the central elements of the study.

Introductory Part

The introductory phase of the structured interview centered on an engagement question aimed at identifying the challenges faced by teachers in Arizona, with particular emphasis on issues related to teacher-student relationships and the classroom environment. During the discussion, the researcher gathered insightful responses that emerged from the conversation. The participants were given professional guidance throughout the process and were encouraged to take full advantage of the opportunity to share their experiences. The researcher began by welcoming the participants, introducing themselves, and providing a clear overview of the session. This included explaining the objectives of the discussion, which involved fostering an environment where each participant's opinions were valued, ensuring equal opportunities for everyone to speak, and upholding confidentiality to maintain a safe and respectful space for all.

Challenges faced by teachers in Arizona and issues related to teacher-student relationships and the classroom environment

During the focus group discussion respondents shared different challenges as Filipino educators in Arizona assigned in their respective schools.

As stated by the respondents during the focus group discussion:

Respondent 1

“One of the biggest challenges I faced was building connections with students from very different cultural backgrounds. Many students in my class have a casual attitude towards authority. Which was surprising at first. Because in the Philippines, students generally show a high level of respect. It's also difficult for teachers because some students talk about their conflicts, which sometimes escalate into disruptive behavior in the classroom. The use of advanced learning technology was overwhelming in the beginning. But as time passed, I learned to use it effectively.”

Respondent 2:

“Managing large classes with diverse learning needs has been one of my biggest challenges. Many students require individual attention. But it can be difficult to provide while juggling lesson plans, grading, and

extracurricular responsibilities. Some students also have behavioral problems.... “There are strategies that require patience and specificity to manage. for which I was not fully trained. Another difficulty is the pursuit of specific cultural differences. Communicating with parents about how students and parents perceive the teacher's role can be difficult when expectations are inconsistent.”

Respondent 3:

“I have learned that language barriers can be a major challenge. Even though I speak English fluently, but some slang or colloquial words used by students or parents are unfamiliar. This sometimes leads to misunderstandings. Moreover, I must adapt to the process.”

Respondent 4:

“One of my main challenges is dealing with students who show little interest in academic work. In the Philippines, students generally value education more. So, this is a cultural adjustment for me. Motivating students to engage with mathematics is often difficult. Especially when they feel that it is not relevant to everyday life. Classroom behavior can also be a problem. Some students did not hesitate to answer or walked away. Which surprised me at first. I had to learn new classroom management strategies. to deal with these behaviors.”

Respondent 5:

“Teaching children here is rewarding but challenging. Especially because of cultural differences in parenting styles. Some parents are very involved. while others Looks disengaged This affects children's behavior in the classroom. The emphasis on equity was also new to me. It is a steep learning curve to manage a class with such a wide range of abilities.”

Respondent 6:

“The biggest challenge I faced was meeting the individual needs of students from diverse ethnic and cultural backgrounds. Students in my classroom often have different levels of English proficiency. And some are new immigrants who are facing their own hardships. Maintaining discipline is also a challenge. Because the education system here is more lenient and gives more rights to students. I must abandon the authoritarian practices we follow in the Philippines to avoid conflict.”

Respondent 7:

“I often hear complaints or excuses to sit outside. Another challenge is accounting for gender dynamics. This is because students talk a lot about their preferences and opinions. Which sometimes conflicts with planned activities.

Respondent 8:

“Adapting my learning style to the education system here was a big challenge. Art classes in the Philippines are more structured and focus on specific techniques. But here students are encouraged to express themselves more freely. Although this is a good approach, But sometimes it causes a lack of concentration in the classroom. This is especially true for students who view art as just something 'fun.' Some students also question authority. This was unexpected for me. I had to learn to foster mutual respect and build trust instead of relying on traditional methods of discipline.”

Based on the answers of the respondents, the experiences of Filipino teachers in Arizona reveal a complex interplay of cultural, professional, and systemic challenges that significantly impact their teaching practices and adaptation to a new educational environment. Key themes that emerged from the responses highlight issues related to cultural differences, classroom management, and the need for professional adjustments to align with the expectations of the Arizona education system.

The main challenge is navigating cultural differences. This is especially true in teacher-student relationships and parental involvement. Teachers noted that students' behavior in Arizona was markedly different from their experiences in the Philippines, where students tend to display a casual attitude towards authority figures. This cultural difference requires Filipino teachers to employ new strategies to promote mutual respect and build relationships. Moreover, different levels of parental involvement and different perceptions of teachers' roles also play a role. Add another layer of complexity. This requires careful communication and adjustment.

Classroom management becomes a key point of difficulty. Teachers cite a variety of student discipline problems. From disruptive behavior to lack of motivation among students. These challenges are exacerbated by students' diverse cultural and socioeconomic backgrounds. This often requires a unique perspective that Filipino teachers may not have encountered in previous experiences. Arizona Unified Education System brings together students with different needs and abilities into one classroom.

A high level of flexibility and innovation in teaching methods is required. Adapting to systematic differences, such as the use of advanced learning technologies and extensive documentation requirements, also poses significant obstacles. Many teachers expressed feelings of being overwhelmed by the administrative workload and needing to quickly familiarize themselves with new tools and methodologies. These challenges highlight the importance of targeted professional development and ongoing support to Helping foreign-trained teachers succeed in Arizona's education system.

Teaching Styles to Manage Disruptive Behavior or Other Classroom-Related Difficulties

The second question for the respondents is their teaching styles to manage disruptive behaviors and other classroom-related difficulties.

Other teachers focused on building relationships and strengthened connections:

Respondent 2:

"I focus on building strong relationships with my students. When I notice disruptive behavior, I'm trying to determine the root cause. This often involves challenges outside of the classroom. I incorporate group work and hands-on activities to keep students actively involved. Additionally, I adapt the physical classroom layout by arranging desks into small groups. To promote collaboration and reduce opportunities for off-task behaviors."

Respondent 3:

"In my classroom I use individual behavior management plans that are tailored to each student. For example, I use visual programs and timers to help students with ADHD or autism stay on track. If a student is disruptive, I will provide them with a quiet space to be able to control myself before returning to the group."

Other teachers retorted to engaging learning activities to control the learners:

Respondent 5:

"Interruptions often occur because students feel excluded or overwhelmed. I adapted by creating inclusive activities that every student can participate in at their own comfort level. I also create clear routines and use nonverbal signals, such as hand signals, to effectively manage behavior during loud times. Respecting cultural norms, such as gender-inclusive interactions is very important to maintain harmony."

Respondent 6:

"Disruptions in my class are often due to language barriers or frustration. I adapt by incorporating interactive and visual teaching aids to simplify instructions and concepts. Pairing students for peer support also works well,

as it fosters collaboration and reduces feelings of isolation. I remain flexible, adjusting the pace of lessons to accommodate students who may need extra help."

Respondent 8:

"Learners often display disruptive behavior because of short attention spans or unmet emotional needs. I adapted by combining pauses and interactive storytelling to maintain engagement. I also use visual behavior charts with simple icons to communicate expectations, creating a warm and caring environment helps children feel safe and reduce behavioral problems."

Some of the teacher-respondents used simulations, contextualized examples and breaks to survive the pressing demands of the learners.

Respondent 4:

"To deal with problems in the classroom, I include culturally relevant examples in the lesson. To help students participate, I also recommend short mindfulness exercises, such as deep breathing, to help students refocus. In managing disruptive behavior, I use a combination of redirects and gentle reminders. To ensure that I maintain a balance between authority and approachability."

Respondent 7:

"Disruptive behavior in my classroom is often related to boredom or lack of connection to the topic. To solve this problem, I use real-world case studies and encourage discussion to make lessons more dynamic and connected. I also implement technology, like business simulation games, to keep students engaged. When issues arise, I use restorative conversations to help students reflect on their behavior and its impact."

For other teacher-respondents, a reward system is their key to help them make the learners cooperate during lessons and class discussions.

Respondent 1:

"In managing disruptive behaviors, I use a reward system to motivate students. Positive reinforcement works well in this cultural environment, which students appreciate the recognition of good behaviors. I also set clear rules at the beginning of the semester and ensure consistency in enforcing them."

Based on the following answers of the respondents, teachers abroad adjust their teaching style and classroom environment to manage disruptive behavior or classroom difficulties using strategies rooted in positive reinforcement, cultural sensitivity, building relationships, rewards system and teaching using different strategies. Personal behavior plan Examples related to culture Working together with friends and interactive activities Teachers also emphasize creating an inclusive and supportive environment through clear communication. consistent routine and promote mutual respect between students and educators.

Educators also stress building welcoming nurturing classrooms through open dialogue steady schedules and growing mutual appreciation between pupils and instructors. The feedback shows that connection and emotional bonds are key to stopping or reducing unruly conduct. Also, teachers count on forward-thinking steps, like calm-down exercises healing methods, and adaptable lesson speeds, to tackle the root causes of disruption and boost good student behavior.

This discovery matches what Bandura's Social Learning Theory and Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory say. Bandura's Social Learning Theory stresses how watching, copying, and following examples help people learn and control their behavior. Teachers use rewards and show good behavior to let students see and copy what they should do.

Furthermore, Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory highlights how culture and talking to others matter for learning. Teachers use examples from different cultures, get students to work together, and help with language problems.

The step-by-step help seen in things like personal behavior plans and pictures, helps students handle classroom issues and meet behavior goals.

Values, traditions, and cultural artifacts Filipino teachers experience in public –schools in the United States

Filipino teachers in public schools across the United States experience a unique mix of values, traditions, and cultural elements that influence both their professional and personal lives. They encounter the American focus on independence, inclusivity, and critical thinking, along with well-known traditions like Thanksgiving and various cultural heritage celebrations. Additionally, these educators work in diverse classrooms that are enriched by multiculturalism and access to advanced educational resources. While these experiences offer chances for growth and cross-cultural understanding, they often stand in contrast to deeply ingrained Filipino values such as bayanihan (community spirit), pakikisama (harmony), and utang na loob (debt of gratitude). This blend of cultural differences and shared learning experiences plays a significant role in how Filipino teachers adapt and succeed in U.S. schools.

When the respondents were asked about the values, traditions, and cultural artifacts Filipino teachers experience in public –schools in the US, they have given their answers:

Respondent 1

“In the United States, I observed a significant focus on individualism among students, which is quite different from the collective approach seen in Filipino classrooms. Here, students are encouraged to express their opinions openly, even when they go against authority, which took me by surprise at first. Events like Thanksgiving are prominently featured in the school calendar, providing me with a deeper understanding of the values of gratitude and community in American culture. While I appreciate this openness, I occasionally find myself longing for the Filipino tradition of respecting elders and working together as a community.”

Respondent 2

“One of the values that really stood out to me in the U.S. is inclusivity. Public schools dedicate a lot of resources to support students with disabilities, which contrasts with my experience in the Philippines, where special education programs are still in the early stages of development. I also noticed the celebration of various cultural backgrounds, like Black History Month and Hispanic Heritage Month, which helped me appreciate the richness of multiculturalism. However, I felt that Filipino values such as pakikisama (harmony) and bayanihan (community spirit) are less prominent in the competitive atmosphere of U.S. schools.”

Respondent 3

In U.S. schools, there is a strong emphasis on time management and punctuality. Meetings and classes begin precisely on time, contrasting with the more laid-back attitude often seen in the Philippines. I also encountered cultural elements such as science fairs, which showcase innovation and critical thinking. While I appreciate the focus on independence and creativity, I occasionally sense that the Filipino value of emotional connection and interpersonal relationships is lacking.

Respondent 4

“The cultural diversity found in U.S. public schools is remarkable. Students from different backgrounds contribute their unique traditions, which are frequently highlighted during cultural awareness events. This spirit of inclusivity is uplifting, yet it stands in stark contrast to the more uniform atmosphere of schools in the Philippines. Values such as utang na loob (debt of gratitude) and deep family connections are less prominent, which can sometimes leave me feeling out of place in a professional environment.”

Respondent 5

“The sports culture in the U.S., particularly in football and basketball, is deeply rooted. School spirit shines through pep rallies and homecoming events, creating a strong sense of community. This mirrors the pride seen in Filipino barangay sports, though the scale and resources are significantly greater here. However, I believe that the U.S. emphasis on competition can sometimes overshadow the Filipino values of camaraderie and teamwork.”

Respondent 6

“In American schools, children are encouraged to be independent from a young age, contrasting with the more nurturing style found in the Philippines. I noticed cultural elements such as classroom reward systems and personalized projects that highlight the importance of individual accomplishments. While I value this independence, I find myself missing the Filipino tradition of teaching hiya (a sense of modesty) and humility to children.”

Respondent 7

“Music education in U.S. public schools typically emphasizes Western classical traditions and popular American music. This was a shift for me, as I am more familiar with Filipino folk music and indigenous instruments. I observed that students have the opportunity to explore their musical identities, which encourages creativity. However, I believe there is a lack of exposure to Filipino cultural music, something I’ve attempted to introduce in order to expand their perspectives.”

Respondent 8

“U.S. schools value critical thinking and encourage students to question and justify their answers, which is different from the rote memorization approach often used in the Philippines. The use of technology in classrooms, such as interactive whiteboards and online platforms, is a cultural artifact I found fascinating. While I appreciate the forward-thinking approach, I miss the Filipino tradition of instilling discipline and respect through strict classroom management.”

Based on the answers of the teacher-respondents, the researcher could infer that Filipino teachers in U.S. public schools face a diverse mix of values, traditions, and cultural elements that both enhance and challenge their experiences. They notice a strong focus on independence, critical thinking, inclusivity, and punctuality, along with distinctly American custom-like Thanksgiving, sports culture, and multicultural celebrations. These experiences often stand in contrast to Filipino values such as bayanihan (community spirit), pakikisama (harmony), and utang na loob (debt of gratitude), which prioritize collaboration, interpersonal relationships, and humility. Despite these differences, Filipino teachers value the chances for professional development and cultural exchange, frequently incorporating aspects of their own heritage into their teaching methods. This fusion of cultures showcases their adaptability and resilience as they navigate new educational and cultural environments.

Promoting a Positive School Climate and its Impact by Frequent Teacher Turnover

A positive school climate is essential for promoting academic success, emotional well-being, and a strong sense of community among students and staff. It includes supportive relationships, respect, inclusivity, and shared values within the school setting. However, high teacher turnover presents significant challenges to sustaining this climate. Frequent turnover disrupts continuity, weakens the connections between students and teachers, and complicates collaborative efforts among educators. This section looks at how to foster a positive school climate in the face of frequent teacher turnover, exploring its impact on the learning environment and identifying strategies to address the challenges that arise from these transitions.

When the respondents were asked whether the school administrators are promoting positive school climate, these are the answers of the following respondents:

Respondent 1

“School administrators strive to create a positive environment by organizing regular team-building activities and professional development sessions. They aim to cultivate a sense of belonging among staff, despite the challenges posed by high teacher turnover that disrupts continuity. This frequent turnover results in the need to repeat orientation programs and rebuild relationships, making it more difficult to sustain a consistent school culture.”

Respondent 2

“International school leaders foster a positive environment by keeping communication open through regular meetings and surveys to collect feedback from teachers. However, when there is a high turnover of teachers, administrators tend to concentrate on recruitment and onboarding efforts. This shift can put a strain on resources and take attention away from enhancing the school culture, leading to temporary lapses in support for the staff that remains.”

Respondent 3

“Administrators foster a positive environment by celebrating cultural diversity through various events and acknowledging the contributions of teachers. However, high turnover rates can hinder the sustainability of long-term initiatives. New teachers require time to adjust, which can lead to an unstable school climate for both staff and students during that transition.”

Respondent 4

“A positive school climate is typically established through clear policies, fair treatment of teachers, and availability of resources. High turnover can disrupt this balance, as new staff members may need time to grasp the school’s vision and policies, resulting in inconsistencies in how well the staff aligns with the institution’s objectives.”

Respondent 5

“Administrators promote collaboration through mentorship programs that pair experienced teachers with newcomers. However, due to high turnover rates, these programs can lack consistency. This inconsistency can impact staff morale, as seasoned teachers may feel overwhelmed, while new teachers often find it challenging to receive reliable support.”

Respondent 6

“The administration fosters a positive environment by implementing recognition programs like ‘Teacher of the Month’ and offering wellness initiatives, including stress management workshops. However, the ongoing turnover leads to a feeling of impermanence, causing teachers to often feel detached from the school’s long-term vision.”

Respondent 7

“The administration creates a supportive atmosphere by introducing recognition programs such as ‘Teacher of the Month’ and providing wellness initiatives like stress management workshops. Nevertheless, the persistent turnover results in a sense of impermanence, making teachers frequently feel disconnected from the school’s long-term goals.”

Respondent 8

“A positive school climate thrives on a shared leadership model that values teachers' input in decision-making. However, high teacher turnover often redirects attention to administrative duties such as hiring and training new

staff. This shift can limit chances for meaningful collaboration, ultimately impacting the sense of community among the faculty.”

Based on the answers of the respondents in promoting a positive climate as to the answers of the teachers, the researcher could conclude that the responses indicate that international school administrators are vital in creating a positive school climate through methods like open communication, team-building activities, professional development opportunities, cultural recognition, and shared leadership. These initiatives help cultivate an environment where educators feel supported, valued, and motivated, fostering a sense of community within the school. However, frequent teacher turnover presents significant challenges to maintaining a consistent and cohesive school climate. High turnover forces administrators to shift their focus toward recruitment, onboarding, and rebuilding relationships, which can stretch resources thin and disrupt long-term initiatives. This instability can negatively impact staff morale, collaboration, and alignment with the school's vision, leading to a feeling of transience that detracts from the overall school environment. While administrators work to tackle these issues, the findings highlight that retaining teachers and promoting continuity are crucial for sustaining a positive and stable school climate in international schools. Implementing strategies to reduce turnover and enhance staff cohesion can improve the effectiveness of efforts aimed at fostering a supportive and inclusive atmosphere.

Cultural Backgrounds and Experiences of Teachers and How It Shape their Instructional Methods and Classroom Interactions

The cultural backgrounds and life experiences of teachers play a crucial role in shaping their teaching methods and interactions in the classroom. These elements influence their values, beliefs, and strategies for teaching, which in turn affect how they manage their classrooms, engage with students, and create learning activities. A teacher's cultural viewpoint often influences their perspectives on discipline, teamwork, and inclusivity, as well as their capacity to handle diverse classroom settings. By leveraging their individual experiences, teachers modify their teaching styles to align with both their own heritage and the cultural context of their students, thereby fostering meaningful connections and establishing culturally responsive learning environments.

The following are the responses of the teacher-respondents when asked about how cultural backgrounds and experiences and how it shape their instructional methods and classroom interactions, these are the following answers:

Respondent 1

“Having been raised in a culture that prioritizes discipline and respect, I naturally integrate structured routines and clear expectations into my classroom. I place a strong emphasis on fostering solid teacher-student relationships, as I believe that mutual respect is crucial. Coming from a collectivist background, I promote group work and collaboration, which aligns well with students in East Asia, where teamwork is also highly valued.”

Respondent 2

“My cultural background has instilled in me the values of hospitality and empathy, shaping the way I engage with my students. I frequently incorporate storytelling, a traditional teaching method in the Philippines, to make lessons more relatable and captivating. Additionally, I pay close attention to cultural norms, including gender interactions, and adjust my classroom practices to resonate with the local culture.”

Respondent 3

“In the Philippines, inclusivity tends to be a natural part of community life, which has influenced how I teach students with special needs. I prioritize creating a supportive and inclusive atmosphere where every student feels appreciated. My background with limited resources has also encouraged me to be more resourceful and inventive in crafting activities that address various learning styles.”

Respondent 4

“Having been raised in a results-oriented educational system, I place great value on hard work and determination. Yet, my teaching experience in Europe has allowed me to incorporate a more student-focused approach, prioritizing the comprehension of concepts over merely attaining high grades. My ability to adapt to different cultures helps me merge these viewpoints, fostering a learning atmosphere that honors both educational traditions.”

Respondent 5

“My cultural background has given me a strong sense of warmth and care, which is at the heart of my teaching approach. I weave in Filipino values such as ‘bayanihan’ (community spirit) into my lessons by motivating young learners to support each other and collaborate. Additionally, I incorporate plenty of songs and games, which embody the joyful and interactive essence of Filipino early childhood education.”

Respondent 6

“Having grown up in a tropical country where outdoor activities were a big part of life, I have developed a strong appreciation for active, outdoor learning that I bring to my PE classes. I like to introduce games and sports that are popular in the Philippines, like ‘patintero’ and volleyball, to share a piece of my culture with the students. Inclusivity is also a priority for me, as I strive to make sure that students of all skill levels feel welcomed and encouraged to join in.”

Respondent 7

“My time in the Philippines, a place that truly values entrepreneurship, influences my approach to teaching business studies. I use examples of small businesses and the resourcefulness found in my home country to demonstrate practical applications to my students. Additionally, I emphasize the importance of interpersonal skills and teamwork, inspired by my own cultural background that highlights strong community connections and collaboration.”

Respondent 8

“Having grown up in a developing country, I deeply understand the importance of accessible technology. This perspective shapes my approach to teaching students to utilize tech tools not merely for convenience but as a way to address real-world challenges. I incorporate lessons on the ethical use of technology, embodying the values of respect and responsibility instilled in me during my upbringing. Additionally, I promote open communication in the classroom, reflecting the communal and interactive learning style prevalent in Filipino culture.”

The findings reveal that teachers' cultural backgrounds and experiences play a pivotal role in shaping their instructional methods and classroom interactions. Filipino teachers abroad draw heavily on their cultural values, such as respect, collaboration, inclusivity, and resourcefulness, to create engaging and culturally sensitive learning environments. Their experiences in a collectivist society influence their emphasis on building strong relationships, fostering teamwork, and promoting mutual support among students.

Furthermore, their adaptability allows them to blend traditional Filipino teaching practices with the educational norms of their host countries, resulting in innovative approaches that cater to diverse student needs. By integrating their cultural heritage into their teaching, these educators not only enhance student engagement but also contribute to cross-cultural understanding, demonstrating the importance of culturally responsive pedagogy in global education.

Lessons Gain regarding Intercultural Competence and Fostering Global Citizenship through Experiences Abroad

International Filipino teachers should embrace the opportunity of teaching abroad simply because of the high potential that such exposure has for personal development alongside global skills of citizenship. Being in other cultures, teachers become aware to a greater degree of the role that the cultural matrix plays in the learning and behavioral patterns of an individual. Such experiences permit teachers to modify their pedagogical techniques, universalize their approaches and foster respect among children. Since relations between canon and context are of primary importance, and many global issues are addressed, teachers are also seen as figures that can develop empathy, curiosity, as well as the feeling of being a part of an intricate mosaic, which is crucial for a well-rounded global citizen.

When the teacher-respondents were asked about the insights they gained regarding intercultural competence and fostering global citizenship through experiences abroad, the following are the answers:

Respondent 1

“Teaching abroad has significantly underscored the need to respect and integrate local customs and traditions into my teaching practice. I realize that cultural difference necessitates a framework for approaching such differences with sensitivity and curiosity rather than with judgment. I draw on examples from different cultures, including my own, to help students appreciate diversity and, ultimately, to accommodate their worldviews in a way I think is vital for global citizenship.”

Respondent 2

“Working in Europe has expanded my understanding of how different cultural contexts shape students' learning styles and attitudes toward education. I've gained the ability to adapt my communication style and teaching methods to meet the needs of a multicultural classroom. Through discussions about global issues, I encourage students to see mathematics not just as a subject but as a universal language that connects people worldwide.”

Respondent 3

“Teaching students with different cultural and linguistic backgrounds in special education has given me insights into the importance of empathy and flexibility. I have come to avoid making assumptions about students' abilities because of their respective cultural or linguistic backgrounds. Instead, I focus on creating an environment that welcomes and values all its students. This encounter has made me appreciate that nurturing global citizenship begins with teaching respect and understanding for differences in individuals.”

Respondent 4

“My years in teaching abroad have highlighted the utmost importance of establishing a common ground amid disparate cultures. I have come to the conclusion that science serves as a splendid field for serving the purpose of instilling intercultural competence through consideration of globally important issues such as climate change or public health. When students are encouraged to think about such problems through different cultural lenses, they become more compassionate and globally minded.”

Respondent 5

“Teaching international students has shown me how intertwined cultural norms are with gender roles and participation in sports. I became quite adept at walking the balance of all this with the utmost respect while encouraging inclusivity. By introducing sports from various cultures, I help students see sports as a global entity and stimulate them to have the feeling of connection within a bigger world.”

Respondent 6

"The teacher's work with immigrant and other international students in Arizona has allowed me to gain a perspective on how migration has affected their identities and learning. I have gleaned insights into learning variability, resilience, and adaptability in students from diverse cultural origins. It is through lessons that involve their life stories that I promote shared learning and, thereby, help the students see themselves as global citizens giving unique perspective upon society."

Respondent 7

"Teaching young learners abroad has shown me the importance of the early introduction of cultural diversity. I have had the chance to see how children naturally embrace differences when properly guided. With stories, songs, and games from quite different cultures, I help create an attitude of curiosity and empathy in my students. This would make them grow into global citizens who respect diversity and celebrate differences."

Respondent 8

"My time here in Arizona helped me embrace the part sports can play when it comes to mending the differences in culture. In some countries, sports are used for community building and cultural exchange. I use this insight to encourage cooperative behavior and respect for one another through sports in Arizona. I also provide opportunities for students to play traditional games of different cultures to enrich their understanding of diversity and global citizenship."

Responses from teachers in Arizona indicate that experiences abroad add significantly to their understanding of intercultural competence and their competence in fostering global citizenship into their classrooms. Teachers emphasized how living and working in cross-cultural environments expanded their minds, providing a myriad of perspectives from which empathy, flexibility, and cultural humility can develop. They also discussed needing to acknowledge the limitations of their own cultural worldviews, as well as the need to engage in multiple perspectives in order to build inclusive, globally minded classrooms.

A common theme among all the participants is the importance of recognizing diversity and how this can help reduce cultural barriers within education. The teachers evolved from within themselves to help change their teaching practices by integrating global perspectives into their curricula while encouraging multilingualism and discussions on such issues as migration, human rights, and environmental challenges. This practice equips students with developing critical thinking and interpersonal skills to thrive in an interconnected world.

Another important point made was an understanding of how cultural values influence education systems. The teachers mentioned the importance of harmonizing communal and individualistic approaches toward learning, differentiation among lessons to cater to individual students' needs, and creating an inclusive environment for all students. Exposure to differing methodologies away from Arizona allowed them to return with newfound zeal and creativity in their approach to teaching.

Lastly, the teachers spoke about using creative mediums such as art, sports, and collaborative projects to build cultural bridges and foster mutual respect among students. Incorporating traditional games, stories from around the world, and artistic traditions encourages appreciation of cultural diversity while inviting reflection upon one's cultural identity. These strategies build intercultural competence and provide inspiration to students to think of themselves as active participants in the global community.

To conclude, these insights learnt by the educators upon their international experiences show the very large impact of intercultural exposure on education. These experiences arm the teachers with tools to nurture culturally aware, empathetic, and globally minded students who are competent enough to deal with challenges connected to interdependence in the 21st century. This result also brings into the open the need to advocate for those international teaching opportunities, as a professional development strategy for educators.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter presents a summary of the findings, offering a definitive perspective on the study's objectives. It outlines the primary outcomes of the research and aligns these findings with the research questions. The conclusions are drawn from an in-depth interpretation of the findings, situating the study within the context established by the evidence and data discussed. Recommendations are provided to address the issues identified in the research and propose directions for further exploration of the lived experiences of international educators in Arizona.

Summary of Findings

The findings of the study are presented in the context of the research questions in the summary that follows. To analyze qualitative data, thematic analysis was employed. It was typically employed in a compilation of written works, such as interview transcripts. The researcher thoroughly examined the data to identify recurrent themes, or subjects, concepts, and meaning patterns. The following themes and sub-themes emerged from the primary theme, which were centered on the teacher-respondents actual experiences overseas:

Main Theme: Challenges faced by teachers in Arizona and issues related to teacher-student relationships and the classroom environment

Sub-Themes:

- Cultural and Educational Adjustments
- Classroom Management Challenges
- Communication Barriers
- Adaptation to Teaching Practices
- Emotional and Professional Growth

In the next part, the exploratory or process stage of research involved the main discussion in which the respondents were guided to share their thoughts based on the pre-set questions. This stage also ensured full participation and kept the discussions focused. The moderator also encouraged a variety of extended insights about the study purpose while allowing participants to express their thoughts and experiences freely. The following sub-themes emerged from the main theme of teaching styles to manage disruptive behavior or other classroom-related issues.

Main Theme: Teaching Styles to Manage Disruptive Behavior or Other Classroom-Related Issues

Sub-Themes:

- Classroom Management Strategies
- Adapting to Diverse Student Needs
- Differentiated Instruction
- Cultural Sensitivity
- Encouraging Positive Student Engagement
- Incorporating Student Interests
- Balancing Discipline with Empathy

- Building Mutual Respect and Trust
- Effective Use of Technology
- Motivating Disengaged Students

Main Theme: Values, traditions, and cultural artifacts Filipino teachers experience in public –schools in the United States

Sub-Themes:

- Cultural Differences in Education
- Values in Education
- Educational Practices and Traditions
- Emotional and Social Aspects of Education
- Reflection on Personal Experiences

Main Theme: Promoting a Positive School Climate and its Impact by Frequent Teacher Turnover

- Efforts to Promote a Positive School Climate
- Challenges of High Teacher Turnover
- Impact of Teacher Turnover on the School Climate

Main Theme: Cultural Backgrounds and Experiences of Teachers and How It Shape their Instructional Methods and Classroom Interactions

- Cultural Influence on Teaching Approach
- Adaptation to Educational Systems
- Resourcefulness and Creativity in Teaching
- Promotion of Practical Skills and Ethical Values
- Interactive and Engaging Teaching Methods

Finally, the session concluded without incident, offered a synopsis of the key points discussed, thanked everyone for their time, and told the teacher responders about the usage of the data while allowing them to ask any final questions or add any further comments.

The following sub-themes emerged from the final primary theme:

Main Theme: Insights Gain regarding Intercultural Competence and Fostering Global Citizenship through Experiences Abroad

- Cultural Sensitivity and Awareness
- Global Citizenship
- Adaptation to Cultural Differences

- Intercultural Competence
- The Role of Sports and Extracurricular Activities

CONCLUSIONS

The thematic analysis concerning the scourge of the various experiences of the teachers working overseas brought to understanding some of the challenges and opportunities of teaching in Arizona. Certain key themes and sub-themes also surfaced and so forth: the challenges of cultural integration; the complex nature of classroom dynamics; professional development; etc.

1. The leading theme of challenges articulated the troubles experienced by teachers due to adjustments in culture and education. Other sub-themes such as communication barriers and managing challenges in classroom management were evident, citing most issues with the adjustment into local teaching practices and managing the diverse needs of students. They posed both emotional conflicts and chances for professional growth, both of which were taxing but also opened some avenues for personal growth in that regard. The teachers were able to identify several problems associated with cultural and educational adjustments related to relocating to Arizona. There were significant obstacles identified concerning cultural differences in communication, classroom management, and expectations for teaching. Among those issues were communications barriers, adapting to the local way of teaching, and difficulties in classroom management. However, these also presented challenges that led to emotional and professional growth by teaching one to adapt strategies and develop new skills. This sub-theme reiterates the resilience that teachers mustered in a new cultural and educational territory.
2. Teachers explained how their adaptable teaching skills helped them cope with problem behaviors in the classroom. Some of the essential strategies included differentiated instruction, the balance of discipline with empathy, and promoting student engagement to ensure sensitivity in culture. Mutual respect and trust and effective use of technology are among the essentials that foster a positive learning environment and stimulate disengaged students. The teacher-respondents' ways of handling unruly student behavior and classroom dynamics depicted the role of flexibility and cultural sensitivity in teaching. Some strategies included differentiated instruction, the balance between discipline and empathy, and creating positive engagement among students as core competencies in teaching. Other strategies that came out involved mutual respect and trust to establish an effective learning environment. Additionally, technology integration and the involvement of students' interests were often used as strategies for handling disengaged or disruptive students. These strategies show that a subtle understanding of the student's behavior is what led to the positive atmosphere in the classroom through cultural sensitivity, empathy, and engagement.
3. Cultural influences from the Philippines were seen in the reflection of the Filipino teachers on educational values and traditions. Teachers indicated that their educational practices and values influence their interactions with students, both academically and emotionally. Differences in educational practices between the U.S. and the Philippines highlight challenges in adapting to new norms but also provide teachers with the opportunity to inject personal and cultural experiences into teaching. They were very much concerned with cultural differences, which should be understood and respected in education. These aspects not only shaped their instructional methods but also made the overall educational experience both for teachers and students rich.
4. Teacher turnover was one of the issues that emerged as a major theme in the study. Teachers reported that high turnover in schools impacts the school climate, making it difficult to maintain consistency and long-term relationships with students. Some efforts were made to create a positive school climate, but the effects of high teacher turnover were often devastating, impacting morale and continuity in instructional practices.

This finding shows that teacher retention and support systems in schools are essential for a stable and effective learning environment. Teachers mentioned and highlighted differences in educational practices and how it shaped the approach of teaching according to cultural values. The other emotional and social aspects relating to education also helped these teachers adapt to the foreign environment while reflecting on experiences abroad.

5. The study revealed that the cultural backgrounds of Filipino teachers greatly affected their teaching methods and student interactions. Teachers showed ingenuity and resourcefulness in adapting to the American educational system, integrating traditional Filipino teaching methods with new approaches. The teaching philosophy focused on the promotion of practical skills and ethical values. This adaptation process, which enhanced their teaching practice, contributed to the diversity and richness of the classroom environment and was further supported by the fact that they were able to engage students through interactive and culturally relevant methods.
6. The study explored how experience abroad contributed to the development of intercultural competence and global citizenship in the teachers. Teachers were observed to be more aware of cultural differences, which they actively incorporated into their teaching. The concept of global citizenship was particularly relevant in the current times, as teachers realized that they were contributing to broader worldviews among their students. Through the adaptation of cultural differences, promoting global dialogue, and incorporating intercultural understanding, teachers not only helped their professional growth but also fostered globally minded students. Extracurricular activities, such as sports, were also highlighted as a great way to facilitate intercultural competence and build community.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The researcher made the following suggestions in light of the study's results and the conclusions mentioned above:

1. District superintendents should have to set up comprehensive cultural adaptation training programs based on the challenges Filipino teachers face in adapting to a new educational system. These programs would familiarize teachers with local educational practices, cultural norms, and communication styles that would smooth their transition.
Programs that focus not only on teaching skills but also on the personal and emotional growth of teachers should be implemented. The superintendents can offer resources in mental health, emotional well-being, and professional development to help teachers better manage the emotional challenges associated with teaching abroad. In recognition of the fact that adjustment will continue, district superintendents should also institute mentorship programs or peer networks where more experienced teachers can advise and assist the newly arrived Filipino teachers.
2. School heads must be trained in culturally responsive leadership. This will allow them to effectively manage and support culturally diverse teaching staff. School leaders will be better positioned to offer the proper guidance and resources to Filipino teachers in their unique struggle to create a positive work environment.
3. School culture should promote collaboration, inclusivity, and mutual respect among teachers from diverse cultural backgrounds. Filipino teachers should be encouraged to share their cultural perspectives, teaching practices, and educational experiences as part of creating a more inclusive learning environment. School heads may facilitate collaborative teaching strategies and professional learning activities that integrate these diverse perspectives into classroom instruction and school programs.
4. Furthermore, in response to the emotional and professional challenges encountered by Filipino teachers abroad, school heads should adopt management approaches that are more empathetic, supportive, and responsive to teachers' needs. Establishing regular check-in sessions, open communication channels, and

feedback mechanisms may help identify concerns early and provide timely interventions before these issues escalate. Such practices can contribute to the overall well-being, job satisfaction, and professional growth of Filipino teachers in international educational settings.

5. For Filipino teachers who will be teaching abroad, there must be a detailed pre-departure orientation which will highlight the potential challenges in Arizona, such as cultural differences and classroom management strategies. Teaching abroad has its reality compared to home teaching. Emphasis on emotional resilience when dealing with cultural shock must be added at the start. There must be emphasis on the need for emotional preparedness because a lot of the burdens endured by Filipino teachers abroad have to do with emotional adjustment, preparation programs for pre-service persons should include modules regarding emotional intelligence, stress management, and mental health preparation towards emotional challenges.
6. There must be a cultural sensitivity training that will focus on working in an international setting. Aspiring teachers need to be given cultural sensitivity training that will help them navigate the cultural differences between them and their students and the greater community.
7. Future teachers will benefit from case studies and real-world scenarios drawn from the experiences of teachers abroad. Such experiences should be integrated into teacher preparation programs so that future educators get a clearer picture of the types of challenges they may face and how to overcome them.
8. The lived experiences of teachers in diverse cultural settings should be reflected on by undergraduate students. Such reflection can increase their understanding of the complexities of teaching abroad and provide insight into teaching practices in culturally diverse classrooms.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A

INTERVIEW GUIDE QUESTIONNAIRE AND CONSENT LETTER

Name of Researcher: ANNE T. CUEVAS

Thesis Title: **The Journey of a Thousand Miles: Exploring Experiences of Filipino International Teachers**

Engagement/Introduction:

Please describe your work.

What are the experiences that you have encountered in teaching abroad?

Process Questions:

What challenges do Filipino teachers experience while working abroad?

1. How do Filipino teachers adapt to the cultural differences in their host countries?
2. What values, traditions, and cultural artifacts did Filipino teachers experience in public –schools in the United States, and how do they perceive the essence of these compared to their own cultural traditions and values?
3. How do the cultural backgrounds and experiences of teachers shape their instructional methods and classroom interactions?
4. What lessons do Filipino teachers gain from their experiences working abroad?

Exit Question:

1. What insights/learning do teachers gain regarding intercultural competence and fostering global citizenship through their experiences abroad?

Thank you for being a part of this study!

June 18, 2024

LOVELY ANN P. PACITE

Teacher 2, HUMSS Strand/Science

Doña Hortencia Salas Benedicto National High School – Senior High School

La Carlota City, Negros Occidental

Madam:

I hope this message finds you well. My name Anne T. Cuevas, a teacher currently working in Arizona, and I am conducting a research study titled “Lived Experiences of Filipino International Educators” as part of my academic endeavors. The study seeks to explore the lived experiences of Filipino educators in Arizona public schools, focusing on their challenges, adaptations, and intercultural insights.

As part of the research process, I have developed a questionnaire designed to gather qualitative data from participants. I am writing to humbly request your assistance in validating this questionnaire to ensure its clarity, relevance, and appropriateness for achieving the objectives of my study. Your expertise in Science and Humanities in Social Sciences makes you an ideal validator for this instrument.

Your feedback and suggestions regarding the content, structure, and wording of the questionnaire will be invaluable in refining the instrument and ensuring the reliability and validity of the data collected.

Thank you very much for considering this request and for your valuable contribution to my research. Your expertise and support are greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,

ANNE T. CUEVAS

Researcher

Noted:

LORELIE D. HONESTO, PhD

Adviser

June 18, 2024

ALEN A. SIAPOC

Teacher 2, HUMSS Strand/English

Doña Hortencia Salas Benedicto National High School – Senior High School

La Carlota City, Negros Occidental

Madam:

I hope this message finds you well. My name Anne T. Cuevas, a teacher currently working in Arizona, and I am conducting a research study titled “Lived Experiences of Filipino International Educators” as part of my academic endeavors. The study seeks to explore the lived experiences of Filipino educators in Arizona public schools, focusing on their challenges, adaptations, and intercultural insights.

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Thank you very much for considering this request and for your valuable contribution to my research. Your expertise and support are greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,

ANNE T. CUEVAS

Researcher

Noted:

LORELIE D. HONESTO, PhD

Adviser

June 18, 2024

ROSEVIE M. OBELIDON

Master Teacher II, English Department

Doña Hortencia Salas Benedicto National High School – Junior High School

La Carlota City, Negros Occidental

Madam:

I hope this message finds you well. My name Anne T. Cuevas, a teacher currently working in Arizona, and I am conducting a research study titled "Lived Experiences of Filipino International Educators" as part of my academic endeavors. The study seeks to explore the lived experiences of Filipino educators in Arizona public schools, focusing on their challenges, adaptations, and intercultural insights.

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Thank you very much for considering this request and for your valuable contribution to my research. Your expertise and support are greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,

ANNE T. CUEVAS

Researcher

LORELIE D. HONESTO, PhD

Adviser

Criteria for the Validation of the Research Instrument

Using the content validity proposed by C.H. Lawshe, kindly validate the questionnaire to be used in my study entitled "Lived Experiences of International Filipino Educators." Check the column corresponding each item if "essential", "useful but not essential", and not necessary." Thank you very much for your time.

ANNE T. CUEVA

Researcher

Item Number	Essential	Useful but not essential	Not necessary	Comments/Remarks
1				
2				
3				
4				
5				
6				

Name of Validator: _____ Signature: _____