

Original Paper

Filipino Teachers' Revelations in Working Abroad

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Abstract

This study explored the reasons and lived experiences of 20 Filipino teacher respondents in the school year 2023-2024. The qualitative method through phenomenological research was adopted. It is the method of discovering and structuring the meaning of human incidents through interviews with people involved in the real-life experience (Creswell, 2007; Polit & Beck, 2012). Patton (2002) describes that determining sample size in qualitative research does not follow one rule. There is no one rule related to sample size when using a qualitative research design. The respondents expressed heart-warming and overwhelming insights into their acculturation in the USA and Southeast Asian countries. Homesickness was the only negative thought, but it was easily overcome due to the availability of social media, which established the communication link with family members. Teaching abroad served as the turning point as their personal and professional "inputs" were outweighed by the "outputs" in terms of financial benefits, perks, and other work-life balance initiatives by schools abroad. Hence, the Department of Education should improve the economic conditions of teachers to avoid the exodus of a greater number of trained teachers in the service years ahead.

Keywords

Teachers, Experience, Employment, Acculturation, Qualitative Research

1. Introduction

In the Philippines, teaching is a respected profession, and teachers are viewed as catalysts of social transformation and nation-building. Despite the prestige of teaching in the home country, there have been increased employment opportunities abroad that have enticed Filipino educators for the last decade for various reasons, including better pay, opportunities for professional growth, and the chance to experience different cultures. Those who have left comprise the new generation of teachers with certain levels of career satisfaction, working enthusiasm, and productivity that remain to be desired

until they have left the country. Those who have stayed may have re-imbibed their enthusiasm and dynamism in their service to the learners, the school, and the community as well.

Corollary, Cahilog et al. (2023) revealed that both emotional and practical considerations influence teachers' decisions to migrate. Foremost among the concerns is the desire for financial stability, which is contrasted by their deep emotional connection to students and the local education system. Other significant challenges include the need for comprehensive health and well-being provisions, operational efficiency, professional development, and an inclusive work environment.

Apparently, the Philippine Overseas Employment Administration (POEA), which recorded a total of 1,711 (2013), 1,439 (2014), 1,426 (2015), 1,821 (2016), and 1,328 (2017) OFW teachers, respectively, deployed to various countries all over the globe. Judging from the trends, the Philippines has been deploying an average of 1,500 teachers worldwide every year (<https://poeajobs.ph/job-category/education/>).

Against this backdrop, the study is pursued to explore the prevailing reasons for the Philippine teachers to work abroad, the challenges they have encountered, the benefits of working abroad, the factors of satisfaction they have experienced in working abroad, and the implications of the findings of the study against the existing practices and policies of the Department of Education in the retention and promotion of teachers in the service.

2. Method

2.1 *Qualitative Phenomenological Research*

This research employed a qualitative approach known as phenomenological research. This method involves the exploration and organization of the meaning behind human experiences by conducting interviews with individuals who have direct involvement in those real-life situations. The primary aim of the researcher is to gain a deep understanding of and insight into the importance and outcomes of the phenomenon as conveyed by the participants. Throughout the phenomenological research process, the researcher is expected to set aside any personal biases, as emphasized in works by Creswell (2007), Polit and Beck (2012).

Phenomenological researchers seek out individuals who have experienced or are currently experiencing the phenomenon under investigation, as outlined by Creswell (2007). These researchers gather data from participants, which can be in the form of written documents or oral accounts. The number of interviews conducted depends on the researcher's chosen analytical approach. Researchers may administer written questions and request written responses, or they may schedule interviews where conversations are recorded. Typically, the determination of the number of interviews is guided by data saturation, which occurs when recurring themes emerge without introducing new categories. This signal, as described by Leihir and LoBiondo-Wood (2006), usually indicates that the research should be concluded.

Finally, to complete the information gathering processes, Husserl's phenomenology, also known as the Descriptive Phenomenological Research Approach (DPRA), is adopted by the researcher to describe the phenomenon investigated and free themselves from any bias that may likely be expressed during the investigation.

2.2 Participants of the Study

The study involves 20 Filipino teachers who are teaching abroad, and their responses were gathered through adapted online Google Form questionnaires and, in some instances, through online Focus Group Discussions (FGD).

2.3 Roles of the Researcher

In qualitative research, the primary research instrument is the researchers themselves. Any personal perspectives and background that the researcher brings to the study should be recognized as their own biases, as noted (Maxwell, 2005). Since qualitative research involves description, interpretation, and analysis, the researcher's biases, beliefs, and assumptions can potentially influence the analysis of data, as highlighted by Strauss & Corbin (1998). Social researchers should strive to mitigate or set aside these biases through full disclosure, as advocated by Altheide & Johnson (1994) and Locke, Spiriduso, & Silverman (1978). As a result, the personal circumstances and biases of the researcher are an inherent part of their interaction with the participants and the data collected during both questionnaire administration and factual narration of events in interviews. Maxwell (2005) further argued that there isn't a single definitive model for qualitative or applied research design. Nevertheless, the model presented here proves useful for three main reasons: (1) It explicitly identifies the key aspects of design for which decisions must be made, making it less likely for these critical issues to be overlooked and allowing them to be addressed systematically. (2) It underscores the interactive nature of design decisions in qualitative and applied research, emphasizing the interconnectedness among various design components. (3) It provides a structural model for a qualitative study proposal, one that effectively communicates and justifies the major design decisions and their interrelationships.

2.4 Research Environment

A qualitative research study that utilizes Messenger application in conducting interviews with a diverse set of respondents. Specifically, the teacher respondents are presently teaching in American public schools and in Southeast Asia. The identification of specific US states or Southeast Asian countries was not taken into consideration.

2.5 Research Instrument

The researcher utilized a researcher-made questionnaire designed to explore two key aspects—inputs and outputs. This questionnaire seeks to extract insights from Filipino teachers regarding their significant roles while working abroad, as well as their motivations for teaching abroad, the challenges encountered, the financial benefits they have accrued, and the factors contributing to their overall job satisfaction.

2.6 Research Procedures

After the final review of the experts, the researchers gathered the data using the Messenger application or through email by sending the modified Google Form questionnaire. In the event that there were some ambiguous responses, the researchers requested a video call interview with some respondents via the Messenger application or Zoom.

2.6.1 Stage 1

The video call dialogue was conducted by the researchers among the respondents who are teaching in American public schools and some parts of Southeast Asia to orient and establish rapport with them. The purpose of the study was explained by the researchers, and the expectations. After an hour of orientation, the researchers shared the link of the online questionnaire to them and sent it back to the researchers in the same way it was received.

2.6.2 Stage 2

After several days of waiting, the questionnaires in Google Forms were retrieved. However, an online Focus Group Discussion (FGD) was conducted to clarify some ambiguous responses from the respondents. As said by Bailey (1996), Jacelyn & O'Dell (2005), Lincoln & Guba (1985), and Sharts-Hopko (2002), within the qualitative paradigm, the researcher is an essential instrument of data collection and analysis. In Focus Group Discussion (FGD), the researcher and the participants, both questing for truth and meaning, are partners in the research process. This relationship is critical to obtaining and interpreting dependable data. By telling their stories, participants invite the researcher to share their experiences. The researcher must be credible, trustworthy, non-judgmental, and open to the participants' narratives. Each researcher brings prior knowledge, values, beliefs, and biases to the research process. Therefore, a researcher needs to bracket or set aside personal assumptions throughout the research process, particularly during data collection and analysis, thereby recognizing that others' experiences or cultures may vary from his or her own. However, it is the researcher's personal experiences and beliefs that enable him or her to thoughtfully analyze the data and interpret the findings.

2.6.3 Stage 3

The viewing and transcription of the recorded interview were done after the interview to validate the narratives of the teachers vis-à-vis their verbal utterances through clarification and comparison.

2.6.4 Stage 4

After the gathering of narrative data, these were examined, coded, and analyzed. The recorded online Focus Group Discussion (FGD) was revisited to finalize the data. At this point, the researchers applied theorizing to the data, which creates the link between data analysis and theory, thus providing structure and applicability for findings and connecting them with the greater body of knowledge (Morse & Field, 1985). Theories comprise concepts and statements of relationships among the concepts. Theories vary in stages of development, and these stages reflect various purposes of theory: to describe, explain,

predict, or control. Some research studies generate theory that describes or explain phenomena; others test theories to predict or control phenomena (Hall & Roussel, 2017).

2.7 Data Analysis

The analysis of data involved four phases: (1) the researchers collected, documented, and described the narrative data that were taken from the teacher respondents; (2) the data were transcribed after the questionnaires (in Google Form) were retrieved and from the recorded Focus Group Discussion (FGD); (3) the significant details and categorized descriptors and components were identified; and (4) major themes were identified and compared relative to the lived experiences of teachers abroad. Data collection for a phenomenological study involves extended interviews with participants. Typically, participants are asked to convey their experiences with the phenomenon being studied while the researcher collects and stores the information communicated by each participant (Tilley, 2011). Burns and Grove (2009) insisted that researchers can use more than one method or a combination of methods to collect data when using the phenomenological research process by engaging both behaviors and intuiting. Intuiting involves the researcher concentrating all attention and enthusiasm on strengthening and understanding the concern. One method for collecting phenomenological data includes interviewing participants. The researcher must be patient and supportive in permitting the participants to use as much time as needed for them to present comprehensive explanations of their experiences. Instead of verbally communicating their experiences, participants could be allowed to provide the researchers with a written account of their encounters with the phenomenon (Burns & Grove, 2009).

The researcher plays an important role in another method for collecting data for phenomenology research, including the researcher in the phenomenon. The researcher participates in the experience as an observer concerning all behaviors, the setting, and the researcher's reactions to what is occurring. The researcher takes notes, tape records, or videotapes (Burns & Grove, 2009).

2.8 Scope of the Study

The study was conducted online using the questionnaire in Google Form to gather the insights and true-to-life experiences of the teachers abroad. Other than the chosen respondents, other teachers who are not teaching outside the Philippines cannot qualify as respondents of the study because the inclusion and exclusion criteria apply.

2.9 Limitation of the Study

There were four identified limitations of the study: (1) there were only 20 teacher respondents, hence purposive sampling was utilized. It is also known as judgmental, or selective, or subjective. Sampling is a form of non-probability sampling in which researchers rely on their judgment when choosing members of the population to participate in their surveys; (2) the collected data were drawn from the teacher respondents; (3) the study focused exclusively on the teacher respondents; (4) the research instrument used does not need to be validated since the unstructured online Focus Group Discussion (FGD) was employed (<https://www.alchemer.com>, 2021). The conversation (formal or informal) with

the teacher respondents was noted down in the researcher's field notes. Patton (2002) succinctly describes that determining sample size in qualitative research does not follow one rule. Sample size depends on what the researcher desires to learn, the purpose of the study, useful data choices, the trustworthiness of the data, the amount of money available, and scheduled time constraints. He further argued that there is no one rule related to sample size when using a qualitative research design.

2.10 Research Ethics Committee

The Research Ethics Committee of Villaflores College, Philippines has granted approval for the conduct of this study on August 15, 2023 under Reference No. 001-2023. The research proposal has shown substance and purpose in compliance to the policies and standards of the Research Ethics Board of the Philippines.

3. Result

The purpose of the study is to investigate the lived experiences of Filipino teachers who are teaching in public schools abroad in the school year 2022-2023. Moreover, this chapter has answered and discussed the four statements of the problem based on the direct testimonies of the respondents.

3.1 Demographic of the Participants

The results of this qualitative study were based on the narratives of the 20 Filipino teacher respondents who are teaching abroad. The study utilized Focus Group Discussion (FGD) on a virtual platform and a researcher-made questionnaire in Google Form. The open-ended questionnaire was validated by four educators who constituted the panel of reviewers and evaluators of the Villaflores College Graduate School. The review was conducted to make sure that the structure and contents of the research instrument can draw out comprehensive information from the respondents. In some instances where the responses of the respondents were not clear and substantive, the focus group discussion was done online and recorded to validate the reliability and consistency of the responses from the teachers.

3.2 Review of the Interview Protocol

A Focus Group Discussion (FGD) was conducted by the researchers to inform the 20 teacher respondents concerning the objectives of the study. The key points were written down by the researcher as a guide for the proper conduct of the FGD. The components of the questionnaire using Google Forms were discussed with the respondents concerning the needed insights and information on their employment abroad as teachers. In like manner, an individual interview was also conducted with a respondent whose responses may appear vague or need further discussion.

On this note, Hall & Rousell (2017) contended that an individual interview (IE) and Focus Group Discussion (FGD) are particularly useful during the initial stages of research when little is known about the phenomenon of inquiry. Individual interviews are typically more efficient at data gathering, whereas focus groups are typically more cost-effective. They are not substitutes for one another because they yield different information about the target population.

In like manner, another technique used in the data gathering was probing, which is a specific research technique used by interviewers in individual and group interviews and focus groups to generate further explanations from research participants (Given, 2008). The more experiences revealed by the respondents, the more comprehensive the study. The dialogue was conducted in a friendly manner, which placed the teacher respondents in a comfortable environment. It adopted a free-flowing technique, so questions were asked following an outline prepared by the researchers. However, some questions that arose at the spur of the moment were asked that were not included in the outline. A closure question (among the outlines) ended the dialogue, creating a feeling of camaraderie, empowerment, and attention among the respondents as provided by the researchers. Finally, the researchers extended their warmest appreciation and thanked the respondents for their involvement in the study—hence, debriefing.

3.3 Emerging Themes

Four major themes emerged, namely: (1) the prevailing reasons for Filipino teachers to work abroad; (2) the challenges encountered by Filipino teachers in working abroad; (3) the benefits of Filipino teachers working abroad; and (4) the factors of satisfaction experienced by Filipino teachers in working abroad. According to Vira International (2023), a UK-based recruitment agency, teaching in the USA can provide you with the following benefits: (1) career opportunities: Teaching in the USA can help you develop professionally and learn a range of transferable skills that will be appreciated by future employers. (2) Excellent environment: Teaching in the USA will allow you to explore and experience new situations without the difficulties of a language barrier. (3) Financial incentives: Many international schools offer excellent salaries, some of which are tax-free. (4) Teaching in the USA and some parts of Southeast Asia will make you stand out above your peers, providing you with a wealth of experience that employers will love and making it far easier to start a new career path in the future.

Thematic analysis is a method of analyzing qualitative data. It is usually applied to a set of texts, such as an interview or transcripts. The researchers closely examined the data to identify common themes—topics, ideas, and patterns of meaning—that come up repeatedly. Additionally, a deductive approach to data analysis was utilized, which involves coming to the data with some preconceived themes you expect to find reflected there, based on theory or existing knowledge (Caulfield, 2023).

Table 1. Emergence of the Concept: Prevailing Reasons for Filipino Teachers to Work Abroad

#	Transcripts	Emergent Concepts	Category	Sub-Themes	Themes
1-TR-Abroad	Teaching abroad is for greener pasture	Genuine Response	Sincerity	Better living conditions	Prevailing reasons for Filipino Teachers to work abroad Prevailing reasons for Filipino Teachers to work abroad
2-TR-Abroad	Greener Pasture's higher salary offers personal growth and development	Genuine Response	Being hopeful	Better Living conditions	
3-TR-Abroad	Poor working conditions; a dim chance at career advancement; and low salaries	Acceptance of economic hardships in life	Understanding	Better Living conditions	Prevailing reasons for Filipino Teachers to work abroad

4. Discussion

Theme 1: Prevailing Reasons for Filipino Teachers to Work Abroad

Subtheme 1: Better living conditions

1-TR-Abroad admitted:

“Teaching abroad is for greener pasture.”

2-TR-Abroad confirmed:

“Greener Pasture: A higher salary offers personal growth and development. Living and working abroad allow individuals to immerse themselves in new cultures, languages, and experiences. This can lead to personal growth, increased cultural awareness, and the development of a global perspective. Adventure and exploration—a new environment and a new culture—can be exciting. Enhanced Quality of Life: Some countries offer a higher quality of life in terms of healthcare, education, safety, and overall well-being, which can be appealing to expatriates.”

3-TR-Abroad expressed the deplorable working conditions while working in the Philippines:

“1) Poor working conditions. 2) A dim chance at career advancement. 3) Low salaries. These are the common reasons that push me to venture greener pastures abroad.”

Table 2. Emergence of the Concept: Challenges Encountered by Filipino Teachers in Working Abroad

#	Transcripts	Emergent Concepts	Category	Sub-Themes	Themes
4-TR5-Aborad	Cultural differences may somehow lead to miscommunication.	Adaptation to a new environment	Understanding and Change	Culture Shock	Challenges encountered by Filipino Teachers in Working Abroad
5 - TR-Abroad	I have to adapt to another climate. Everything is new.	Positive perspective in life	Optimism	Better Living conditions	Challenges encountered by Filipino Teachers in Working Abroad
6-TR-Abroad	Immerse ourselves in the new culture but keep our identity and culture as Filipinos	Positive perspectives	Optimism and love of the American children	Culture Shock	Challenges encountered by Filipino Teachers in Working Abroad

Theme 2: Challenges Encountered by Filipino Teachers in Working Abroad

Sub-theme 2: Culture Shock

4-TR-Abroad affirmed:

“Adjusting to a different work culture can be one of the challenges of working abroad, but it’s important to learn the local norms and expectations. Language barrier. It’s so challenging to communicate with people who are unable to speak a common language, especially when teaching. Cultural differences may somehow lead to miscommunication. Eye contact, for example, is very important in some cultures but rude and disrespectful in others. When teaching, we must be careful with our actions and word choices because some children are very sensitive. Professional adjustments: The work that we teachers do is personal and meaningful. Unlike many other professions, we become emotionally invested in our learners’ progress and outcomes, which can be a difficult burden to carry over, such as understanding different learning styles, lack of effective communication, communicating with parents, pressure from school administrators, behavior and classroom management, time-consuming administrative work, and burnout. With the high demand from all of the teachers their responsibilities, sometimes become the feeling of being drained, dreading going to work, and lacking the motivation to be productive. Homesickness. It’s just a normal and natural reaction since I am working in a different country and culture. It’s natural to feel sad about not being able to sleep in your bed and eat home-cooked food surrounded by your family.”

5-RT-Abroad admitted:

“I have to adapt to another climate. Everything is new. So I have to take good care of my health and observe health protocols to stay healthy. I have to adjust to the apartment where I stay. I have to do marketing and do things all by myself. Unlike in the Philippines, where we can request somebody to do an errand for us, I did bother myself to drive a 4-wheel vehicle, but here in the USA, I have to learn and be on the wheel, or else it is extremely difficult to move around. Ospina & Medina (2020) cited that many who work in the United States learned how to drive because it is a necessity.”

6-TR-Abroad asserted:

“One of the most common challenges these teachers have to face is the wide disparity of the Oriental vis-à-vis the Occidental (otherwise known as Western culture). As claimed by Quinopez et al. (n.d.), culture’s principle includes a wide range of human actions, products, and institutions for people with varied educational backgrounds, experiential backgrounds, and life experiences. Teachers from the Philippines are well-prepared to teach considering the level of in-service training we had previously attended; however, adjustment to the new academic environment takes time as we Asians behave differently from the Americans. There are ‘dos and don’ts’ in the Philippines, in the same manner as there are also in the USA. We have to immerse ourselves in the new culture but keep our identity and culture as Filipinos.” Thomas (2019) reported that instead of passing judgment on the host culture, the participants changed their expectations in response to the cultural variations. Through this flexible adjustment, a positive personal and work life can be established in a foreign land. Working in a foreign environment necessitates becoming adaptable to communicate socially and sustain a suitable relationship. People must acclimate to the host culture while navigating a foreign environment with a different culture (Reyes et al., 2020).

Table 3. Emergence of Concept: Benefits of Filipino Teachers Working Abroad

#	Transcripts	Emergent Concepts	Category	Sub-Themes	Themes
7-TP- Abroad	To explore new places	Adventure and Fun	Change of Environment	Financial Freedom	Benefits of Filipino Teachers Working Abroad
8-TR- Abroad	Teachers are paid up to ten times more than what they are earning back home	Substantial remuneration	Comfort and Joy	Financial Freedom	Benefits of Filipino Teachers Working Abroad

Theme 3: Benefits of Filipino Teachers Working Abroad

Sub-theme 3: Financial freedom

7-TP-Abroad confirmed:

“Aside from the fact that we are receiving a good salary here, another benefit of working abroad is being able to learn new culture and explore new places.”

8-TR-Abroad averred:

“Higher salary and benefits.” A tangible reward for living and working abroad is its financial compensation. Needless to say, teachers are paid up to ten times more than what they are earning back home.” This monetary aspect is what mainly lured these teachers to work abroad in the first place. They can pay off their loans, have some funds for leisure, and even better, they have prospects of investing in business. They know they have a contract to fulfill, and as the money is still pouring in, a plan is put in place that they may have something to show for all the work they do in the US (Modesto, 2020).

Table 4. Emergent Concept: Factors of Satisfaction Experienced by Filipino Teachers in Working Abroad

#	Transcripts	Emergent Concepts	Category	Sub-Themes	Themes
9-TR-Abroad	Employees are well taken care of.	Sense of Belongingness	Love and Friendship	Win! Win! Condition	Factors of Satisfaction Experienced by Filipino Teachers Working Abroad
10-TR-Abroad	Our focus is just to teach. We are not given any admin tasks here.	Freedom from the administrative task	People empowerment	Win! Win! Condition	Factors of Satisfaction Experienced by Filipino Teachers Working Abroad
11-TR-Abroad	An opportunity to travel internationally	Work and Pleasure	Journey of a lifetime	Win! Win! Condition	Factors of Satisfaction Experienced by Filipino Teachers Working Abroad
12-TR-Abroad	I will be engaged in business as I have spent substantial years already in teaching after long years of teaching.	Positive outlook	Life in Business	Win! Win! Condition	Factors of Satisfaction Experienced by Filipino Teachers Working Abroad
13-TR-Abroad	Pursue our master's degree and finish it, then, hopefully, pursue our doctorate and finish it.	Professional growth	Optimism	Win! Win! Condition	Factors of Satisfaction Experienced by Filipino Teachers Working Abroad

14-TR- Abroad	At first, I felt homesick, but through the usage of social media, like Facebook Audio-Video Application, I can meet and talk with my husband and children during off hours.	Sense of Belongingness	Family life	Win! Win! Condition	Factors of Satisfaction Experienced by Filipino Teachers Working Abroad
15-TR- Abroad	I will enrol in short-term courses that will enhance my professional outlook in life, like fashion and design, culinary arts, etc...	Professional growth	Optimism	Win! Win! Condition	Factors of satisfaction Experienced
16-TR- Abroad	I learned and improved my command of the English language, which I never had the chance before I came to the USA.	Professional growth	Journey of a lifetime	Win! Win! Condition	Factors of satisfaction Experienced
17-TR- Abroad	At first, I was hesitant. But when I was convinced of the genuine purpose of the program – Cultural Exchange, my thoughts shifted from negative to positive, so I applied and processed the documents.	Professional growth	Optimism	Win! Win! Condition	Factors of satisfaction Experienced
18-TR- Abroad	Until today, I could not believe I was already teaching outside of the Philippines. It was an overwhelming	Professional growth	Optimism	Win! Win! Condition	Factors of satisfaction Experienced

	experience that came unexpectedly.				
19-TR-Abroad	American culture is different from Philippine Culture." The style of teaching is similar but we are relaxed here compared to Philippine teaching.	Professional growth	Journey of a lifetime	Win! Win! Condition	Factors of satisfaction Experienced
20-TR-Abroad	Well, America is America, so to speak. The Philippines is Philippines. Indeed, life in America is "First World". Life in the Philippines is "Third World".	Professional growth	Journey of a lifetime	Win! Win! Condition	Factors of satisfaction Experienced

Theme 4: Factors of Satisfaction Experienced by Filipino Teachers in Working Abroad

Sub-theme 4: Win! Win! Conditions

9-TR-Abroad avouched:

"Employees are well taken care of."

10-TR: Abroad confirmed:

"If I were to compare my work here with my previous work in the Philippines, I would probably say that we have fewer loads here. Our focus is just to teach. We are not given any admin tasks here."

11-TR-Abroad declared:

"Teaching abroad is a win! It offers the opportunity to develop connections with people from other cultures. It also offers an opportunity to travel internationally and immerse yourself in a foreign culture while earning more."

12-TR-Abroad professed:

"If, by chance, I go back to the Philippines for good and rejoin completely with my family, I will be engaged in business, as I have spent substantial years already teaching. By the grace of God, perhaps I will be teaching, probably at the tertiary level. Well, I still have to figure out the situation properly when I get back to the Philippines. Hopefully, I can still come back here (in the USA) and teach again, not just as a cultural teacher with a J1 Visa but with a HIB Work Visa to gain my green card and sponsor my family to join me here. Only time can tell. God's will be done upon me."

13-TR: Abroad affirmed:

"Serin (2017) pinpoints the desire of teachers who have worked in the international scene to pursue professional development to develop their teaching abilities more. Also, having higher degrees will prepare them for higher pay in the US. Here are the parts of the interview in which three teacher respondents expressed themselves in unison. Concerning their plans for further studies, "Through the

will of God, we are going to pursue our master's degree and finish it, then, hopefully, pursue our doctorate and finish it also with the hope to become more professionally qualified than at present time."

14-TR: Abroad expressed:

"At first, I felt homesick, but through the usage of social media, like Facebook audio-video applications, I can meet and talk with my husband and children during off-hours. The feeling of belonging is re-established between my family and me, although virtually, not physically. After all, I am in America!"

15-TR-Abroad affirmed:

"If given the opportunity and luxury of time and a financial budget, I will enroll in short-term courses that will enhance my professional outlook in life, like fashion and design, culinary arts, etc. These are professional experiences that we never had the chance to learn while teaching in the Philippines due to lack of time and finances."

16-TR-Abroad openly revealed:

"I usually take a walk in the park and talk with the Americans who are native speakers of the English language. I learned and improved my command of the English language, which I never had the chance to do before I came to the USA."

17-TR-Abroad candidly explained:

"I never dreamed in the past of leaving DepEd, until an opportunity came. I was just told about the teaching employment. At first, I was hesitant. But when I was convinced of the genuine purpose of the program, Cultural Exchange, my thoughts shifted from negative to positive, so I applied and processed the documents. After which, when I was confirmed for my teaching job, I immediately applied for a US visa. Upon my return from the US Embassy in Manila, I tendered my resignation as a DepEd teacher."

18-TR-Abroad added:

"Until today, I could not believe I was already teaching outside of the Philippines. It was an overwhelming experience that came unexpectedly. I hope to continue teaching here until I reach the retirement age of 60 or 65 and receive my monthly pension in US dollars aside from my Philippine pension. Thank you, Lord God, for this opportunity."

19-TR-Abroad quipped:

"American culture is different from Philippine culture." The style of teaching is similar, but we are relaxed here compared to Philippine teaching."

20-TR-Abroad concluded:

Well, America is America, so to speak. The Philippines is the Philippines. Indeed, life in America is "First World." Life in the Philippines is "Third World."

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