

## TRIALS AND TRIUMPHS OF OVERSEAS FILIPINO TEACHERS IN BAHRAIN: A KEY TO AN INCLUSIVE PRE-DEPARTURE EDUCATION PROGRAM

RAMIL ALLAN A. RAMOS\*<sup>1</sup> & A. C. BASBAS<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Doctoral Researcher, St. Louis College, City of San Fernando, La Union, Philippines;

<sup>2</sup>Doctoral Researcher, University of Bohol, Tagbilaran, Bohol, Philippines

<sup>1</sup>\* +973 36907674 & <sup>2</sup>+97333662389

<https://doi.org/10.37602/IJREHC.2025.6205>

### ABSTRACT

As the demand for Filipino teachers never waned across the globe, the migrants themselves are facing an overwhelming myriad of challenges in adaptation to a multicultural environment. This study explored the international migration and experiences of the Filipino teachers in Bahrain on their job-related challenges, coping mechanisms, motivations, and satisfactions. Utilizing a descriptive phenomenology of the data obtained through interview, the responses from the members of the Philippine Teachers Association Bahrain endured through thematic analysis, which led to the identification of keys to an inclusive pre-departure orientation program for migrating Filipino teachers. Findings demonstrated an adaptation model exhibiting teachers' job-related difficulty in adapting to a new working environment and lack of social interaction along with their work commitment and dedication to elevate career opportunities and incentives. This manifested a stronger emphasis on deeper integration of results into an inclusive program, improving multicultural connectivity, and facilitating smoother cross-border deployment in international schools.

**Keywords:** overseas Filipino teachers; job-related challenges; coping mechanism, motivation; OFWs in Bahrain

### 1.0 INTRODUCTION/ BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

The Sustainable Development Goals Report of UNESCO (2024), particularly SDG 4, revealed that many countries face significant challenges on teacher shortages, which entails catalytic action on achieving nearly 44 million teachers to provide quality universal primary and secondary education by 2030 to make the goals a reality. However, such a goal is so far-reaching, impacting educational quality and access (United Nations, 2024), and development initiatives in hiring teachers from overseas have been set in and by many countries, the Kingdom of Bahrain is indeed included.

Of all major migrant-sending countries, the Philippines has the most to deploy international labor migration (Barsbai et. al., 2016). In fact, with a very large Filipino population of migrant workers, Bahrain is a predominance of countries belonging to the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) as a career destination among Filipino teachers aside from the industries of oil, engineering, information technology, and finance (Tarrazona, 2018).

Among the migrants themselves, some issues have been raised by the overseas Filipino teachers who are facing an overwhelming myriad of challenges. Aside from their absence in their respective families for the pursuit of better opportunities, Filipino teachers are tremendously dealing with multicultural students, and diverse working environments, which whisk them out of the comfort zones of their own sociocultural adjustments. It becomes particularly a problem in the workplace as it could also translate to negative stereotypes, varied professional etiquette, and conflicting working styles across teams (Arras-Djabi et. al., 2024). Just like other expatriate teachers in Bahrain, Filipinos generally blend well with other races and continuously evolve to meet the dramatic transformation from their home country prompted by massive attachment to the new environment and new system by restructuring and reinventing themselves (Tate, 2022).

Certainly, Filipino teachers in other parts of the world contend with difficulty and adjustment to the culture and practices of local citizens of the country (Nunez, 2020), coupled with a lack of exposure and a lack of teachers' professional development (Ulla, 2021). Likewise in South Texas, Filipino teachers underwent tremendous challenges in their workplace, such as adjusting to the poor motivation, performance, and behavior of students, meeting the demands of high stakes testing administered to students, adjusting to new ways of teaching, even being criticized for their accents, and working with an administrator who was unsupportive (Modesto, 2020). These prevailing scenarios are alarming in their effects on the mental health of our fellow educators who encountered microaggressions (Chua, 2021) in pursuit of personal growth and professional empowerment (Alcibar, 2021).

There is a dearth, subsequently, in the lives of Filipino teachers in Bahrain, in which this study takes an interest in exploring the challenges, motivations, and satisfactions of Filipino teachers in this country and in narrating thematically their trials and triumphs. This could put stronger emphasis on deeper integration of facts and experiences into an inclusive pre-departure education program for overseas teacher-applicants and for government agencies handling the process, including initiatives such as harmonizing pre-departure seminar framework and improving multicultural connectivity to facilitate smoother cross-border deployment.

## 2.0 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Ahdiani and Maulana's (2023) arguments on Abraham Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs deeply supports these circumstances that people tend to satisfy their needs in specified order from the most to the least basic, that each lower-level needs becomes a motivation. It pertains to the needs for security/protection of a person in an organization, which relate to social needs for belongingness, support, and acceptance for a better mutual relationship among the people in an organization (Albaram & Lim, 2023). Moreover, it states that there are characteristics that have great impact on job outcomes including job satisfaction based on Hackman and Oldham's model (Anush & Kumar, 2024). The five core job characteristics (skill variety, task identity, task significance, autonomy, and feedback) which impact three critical psychological states (experienced meaningfulness, experienced responsibility for outcomes, and knowledge of the actual results), in turn influence work outcomes (job satisfaction, absenteeism, work motivation, etc.) (Anush & Kumar, 2024; Monyei et. al., 2023). Additionally, in the context of satisfaction, the study is also anchored in gratifications theory which suggest that gratification is associated with satisfaction in the process, content, and compatibility (Wang et. al, 2021).

To facilitate Filipino teacher's satisfaction, it is undeniable that the impact of quality work environment to individual's sentiments or mental state resembles fulfilment and contentment. Various elements, such as the quality of one's connection with their supervisor, the quality of the physical environment in which they operate, the degree of fulfilment in their work, may impact job satisfaction (Hosseini, 2021). Dureza (2020) revealed that only few Filipino educators in Bahrain are satisfied on their job due to their personal reasons and modest professional growth, they are not treated fairly in terms of pay, recognition, promotions to the amount of the work they do, mismanagement etc.

The authors have dissected these theories magnified by their own beliefs and views why some Filipino educators prefer to teach abroad. Besides the experiential and educational rewards, teaching overseas also comes with profound benefits which are always accompanied with a unique non-monetary benefit. So, the interplay of financial aspects, positive multicultural connections, making positive motivations, gaining work experience, and changing lives for the better come to play as among the reasons to be unravelled in this study.

### **3.0 LITERATURE REVIEW**

Poverty and search for a better life are the reasons why Filipino teachers leave the Philippines to work abroad (Chua, 2021). They present themselves to this trend to improve their economic status and give support to their families in the Philippines (Ulla, 2021). In a press release by the Bahrain Economic Development Board for Vision 2030, Bahrain remains to be an easy place for expatriates, with 70% of them feeling financially secure which includes professionals in the education sector, along with finance, manufacturing, technology, tourism, healthcare, logistics, and transport (Bahrain Portal, n.d.). Consequently, in a 2022 report of the Philippine Statistics Authority (2022), among the 1.96 million overseas Filipino workers, 50.2 percent of them are mobilized in the Middle East and 11.5 percent are in professional fields including managers, associate professional, and teachers.

#### **3.1 Pre-departure education program**

The Philippine Overseas Workers Welfare Administration (OWWA, 2007), in cooperation with the Commission on Filipinos Overseas (CFO), introduced the Comprehensive pre-departure education program (CPDEP), which provides classes in language training, culture familiarization, and stress management to potential overseas Filipino workers. One of the CPDEP regular programs is the institutionalized Pre-departure orientation seminar (PDOS), a legal requirement to attend by the migrant workers before leaving the country and this program has been running since 1983 (BusinessMirror, 2017). Including teacher applicants, this seminar aims to protect millions of temporary migrant Filipino workers by conveying the facts and knowledge with respect to various aspects of their destination country, particularly how to navigate a completely different system. It is also designed to prepare them for their new life overseas, and during this training, workers are given basic instruction in the language of their countries of destination, information on the culture of their destinations, and tips on how to manage the challenges (Barsbai et. al., 2016).

However, despite all these, the program delivery of the PDOS providers outweighs the challenges far from the actual scenarios prevailed during the mobilization of the overseas Filipino workers. Somehow it slightly addresses potential cultural barriers that workers may

face abroad and its effects and helps to prepare emotionally and mentally for the challenges of working abroad. Barsbai et. al. (2016) highlighted that currently there is no rigorous evidence on the effectiveness of CPDEP and PDOS, particularly on the content of training modules. In response, the Commission on Filipinos Overseas (CFO) developed a pre-education program with enhanced training modules to improve the design, implementation, and evaluation, including migrants' welfare and protection from exploitation.

Though this inclusive and enhanced training module is yet to be implemented, the Philippine Institute for Labor Studies (ILS, 2021) has started to evaluate the implementation of the pre-departure orientation seminar to measure the content and the conduct of the program and how to improve the administration and for reconsideration of policymakers. The issue is whether PDOS providers implement the standards stipulated in policy since the framework assumes that the standards, if faithfully conveyed by the providers, will significantly result in the protection of overseas Filipino workers from adaptation to the multicultural environment, including work satisfaction, motivation, and coping mechanisms (OWWA, 2023; ILS, 2021). In fact, from 2014 to 2017 the research committee of the Overseas Workers Welfare Administration (OWWA) and Asian Institute of Management (AIM) surveyed more than 2,000 first-time Filipino domestic workers who have taken the pre-departure orientation seminar to test the impact of modules of PDOS, as well as to elicit theories, rigorous statistical techniques and evidenced-based development policies and program for impact evaluation (BusinessMirror, 2017).

Reports from mobilized foreign workers claim that there is a discrepancy between the implementation of the PDOS as prescribed by OWWA and the actual implementation of the PDOS providers (Barsbai et. al., 2016). This incongruence is pointed out as the cause behind overseas workers' ignorance of the regulations and dire circumstances in the host country and of their obligations as migrant workers. In addition, the training design of the PDOS as well as the method of delivery have been clearly spelled out in Memorandum of Instruction No. 13 Series 2023 (OWWA, 2023) and emphasized that the PDOS providers should issue updates concerning modifications in the regulations and guidelines in the country of destination. In practice, however, PDOS providers are inclined to misalign from the general procedures and execute the PDOS according to their own convenience (ILS, 2021).

### **3.2 Objectives of the Study**

Chanting for positive transformation, the groundwork for an inclusive pre-departure education program would be obtained from this study not only from the overseas Filipino teachers in Bahrain but also from other skilled Filipino migrants who are in the ground to disclose evidence, claims, authentic experiences, conditions of deployment, and the host country's social, economic, religious, political, and cultural background. This will envision a wide-ranging training design and standardization of all CPDEP programs focused on capability building, on-site immersion, job-related concerns, challenges, and even success stories.

### **3.3 Research Questions**

A semi-structured interview was examined through thematic analysis, including coding qualitative data into clusters of similar entities or conceptual categories from the four (4)

questions focusing on the experiences of the Filipino educators in Bahrain, particularly on their challenges, coping mechanisms, motivations, and satisfaction towards working overseas.

#### **4.0 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

##### **4.1 Design of the Study**

This qualitative research utilized the descriptive phenomenology to understand the personal lived experiences of the overseas Filipino teachers in Bahrain. It is considered a powerful tool to describe such experiences as it focuses on interpreting concealed or discrete meanings in phenomena that are not immediately revealed during investigation and analysis (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The study was conducted among the private international schools in Bahrain, particularly Abdul Rahman Kanoo International School, Al Majd Private School, Creativity Private School, Britus International School, Al Jabriya Secondary School, and Hawar International School. Filipino teachers from these schools, who are also members of the Philippine Teachers Association Bahrain, were chosen through purposive sampling since they have been teaching for ten years and beyond. The reason behind the selection of such a small sample was that, only active members of the Philippine Teachers Association Bahrain were selected, having 1 to 10 years of teaching experience in Bahrain, regardless of age bracket. This confers authenticity and sophistication from greater gains of teaching experience in a collegial environment (Podolsky et. al, 2019).

All participants were offered the advantage to respond freely and in detail to elicit their candid experience, ideas, and contexts of international migration and teaching abroad. The questionnaire included a portion where the participants indicated they understood the fundamental objectives of the study and provided their approval to participate or opt not to answer the questionnaire.

##### **4.2 Population of the Study**

Of 30 purposefully selected participants of both genders, the response rate was 95% among overseas Filipino teachers in Bahrain. The ones who refused to participate conveyed the lack of time and workload. Their responses to the semi-structured interview were examined through thematic analysis, including coding qualitative data into clusters of similar entities or conceptual categories from the four (4) questions focusing on the experiences of the Filipino educators in Bahrain, particularly on their challenges, coping mechanisms, motivations, and satisfaction towards working overseas. Also, it involves identification of consistent patterns and relationship between themes to come up with a theoretical explanation of the phenomenon under study.

#### **5.0 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

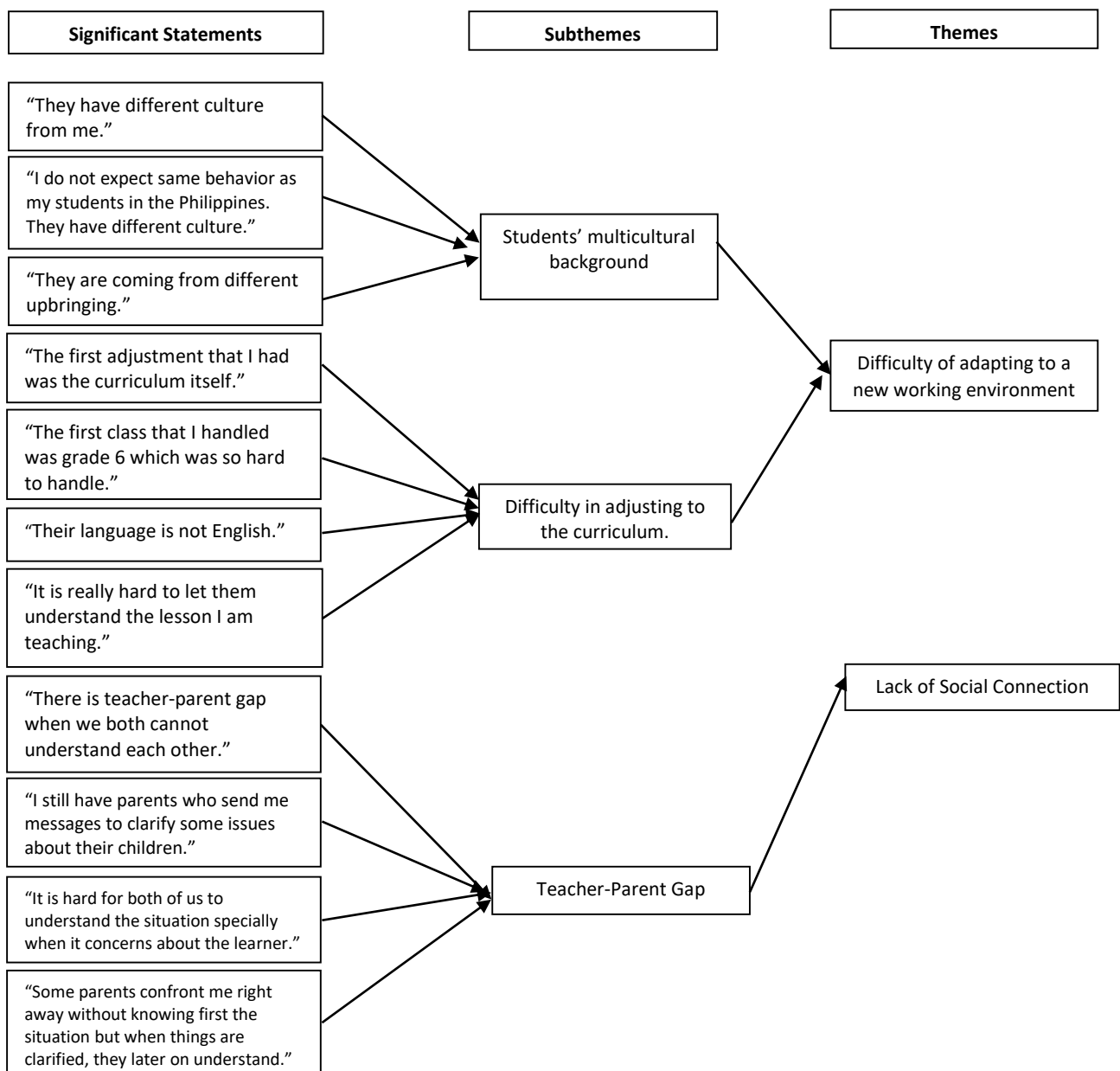
This section presents the four major indicators that emerged from the findings and analysis of detailed answers that have contributed to the depth of the interpretation and implications.

##### **5.1 Job-related challenges encountered by overseas Filipino educators**

It is noteworthy to mention that Bahrain belongs to the Arab world, which has a global population that carries a vastly different set of norms (BTI Report, 2024). Hence, adjustments abound as educators are with various students with different behaviour, beliefs, and practices.

From the participants' narratives, it is observed that they are describing their early years in teaching in the international schools in Bahrain, which showed some negative encounters, as well as their difficulties in grasping a whole new set of teaching experiences.

As shown in Figure 1, the job-related challenges of Filipino teachers in Bahrain are adapting to a new working environment related to students' multicultural backgrounds and adjusting to a diverse curriculum. There are also struggles in handling social connections derived from the teacher-parent gap and interpersonal relationships, which the individuals can overcome and choose to see the positive side in the situation (Paik, Choe, & Witenstein, 2017).



**Figure 1. Job-related challenges encountered by overseas Filipino educators**

Adaptation to a new working environment, which is the process of adjusting to students' multicultural backgrounds and being adaptable in the workplace, is important for a few reasons (Soetjipto, 2020). The findings show that the Filipino teachers in Bahrain struggled and did subtle moves to establish themselves in the school as the teachers. Figure 1 divulged that the Filipino teachers who have started a new job in Bahrain have seen how difficult it was to get settled in as there is so much information to absorb, new school systems, so many new rules, particularly for a Muslim country, and workarounds to learn, including beliefs and practices. From the informants interviewed:

*I could hardly start the lesson because students look at me differently as I have different nationalities, so I have to find ways to establish connection so that I can build a rapport with them, and we can start the lesson right... Participant added, "Students come to the class with different behaviours, as it is important for some to listen to the lesson as others also do not mind what is being discussed...I do not expect the same behaviour as my students in the Philippines. They have different cultures.*

It is noted therefore that teaching in a foreign school comes with a caveat, which is to deal with learners whose language, behaviour, and modes of expression are diverse. Recognizing and being able to distinguish these multicultural differences allows the teacher to form a safe environment for all students (Khalifaoui et. al, 2021). It is important to recognize and understand these differences to be able to implement culturally responsive teaching and pedagogical practices in the classroom to ensure the success of every student. Indeed, the result is parallel to the finding of Black (2021), who revealed that race, ethnicity, and gender of an educator affect the student's teaching expectations. This creates difficulty for some Filipino teachers in Bahrain in being able to connect with their students. In return, the teachers also have a hard time dealing with students who have different cultures and races.

Furthermore, adjustments in a new country are not only limited to multicultural and weather. Other countries adopt international standards when it comes to curricula. The curriculum is what makes up the academic content that is taught in schools or specific course programs (Shirokikh, 2018). Adjusting to a new curriculum then for overseas Filipino educators is also a challenge to them. On those notes in Figure 1:

*"The first adjustment that I had was the curriculum itself. It is totally different as in this school, we are following the Cambridge Curriculum and International Baccalaureate. Of course, I never had those exposures in the Philippines." "It is a big challenge for me as a Filipino teacher here in a foreign country especially that their language is not English. So, it is hard to let them understand the lesson I am teaching."*

Certainly, compliance with a foreign or international set of standards proved to be a challenge for the overseas Filipino educators in Bahrain. In fact, lack of social interaction with parents becomes challenging for them, while they were particularly commended for doing their best on their job. Participants mentioned:

*"Some parents are uncooperative. Sometimes there is a teacher-parent gap when we both cannot understand each other as to how the child will work on the given*

*assignment or as to how the child behaves in the class.” “I still have parents who send me messages to clarify some issues about their children. Sometimes, it is hard for both of us to understand the situation, especially when it concerns the learner.”*

With the responses, they affirmed the problem existing between parents and teachers. This is the most challenging part of dealing with parents about the way teachers are treated on their jobs. Teachers’ teaching style is not what the students are used to, as they do not like strict teaching. This rigid teaching would reach the parents, and some of them would not like the limited freedom of their children. Parents, then, who take the side of their children, talk to teachers regarding strict implementation of classroom rules and details. On the contrary, Corno (2023) found that there is an improvement in the children’s work habits, perception of school, and even grades when there is a social connection for better communication between the teacher and the students’ parents. Thus, teacher-parent relationships can be a significant factor in the performance of the students (Fu et al., 2022). Furthermore, the challenge of working in a multicultural setting is experienced among teachers and school administrators. Participants shared:

*“There are things I would like to clarify to the school manager, but because I am hesitant to approach, I do not have the guts to speak out.” “I started being afraid if in case I will be asking questions to the school manager and I will be scolded, but later, I found that if you deal with them in a friendly way, they are very supportive, if you are open in sharing with them whatever ideas you have, they will also do the same thing to you.”*

These narratives imply the reluctance in approaching school administrators for some student or classroom concerns and issues. On those notes, a trusting relationship between school administrators and teachers is a crucial component of the educational process and lack of social interactions. A school climate without trust is an unhealthy climate and ultimately affects the students’ opportunity to grow (Liang et. al., 2020). On the other hand, a climate with trust gives opportunity for everyone in the school to grow and thrive. The responsibility of building trust and healthy professional relationships between all parties usually begins at the top with the administrator, who engages and empowers their teachers by allowing them to grow personally and professionally.

## **5.2 Coping mechanisms to address the challenges**

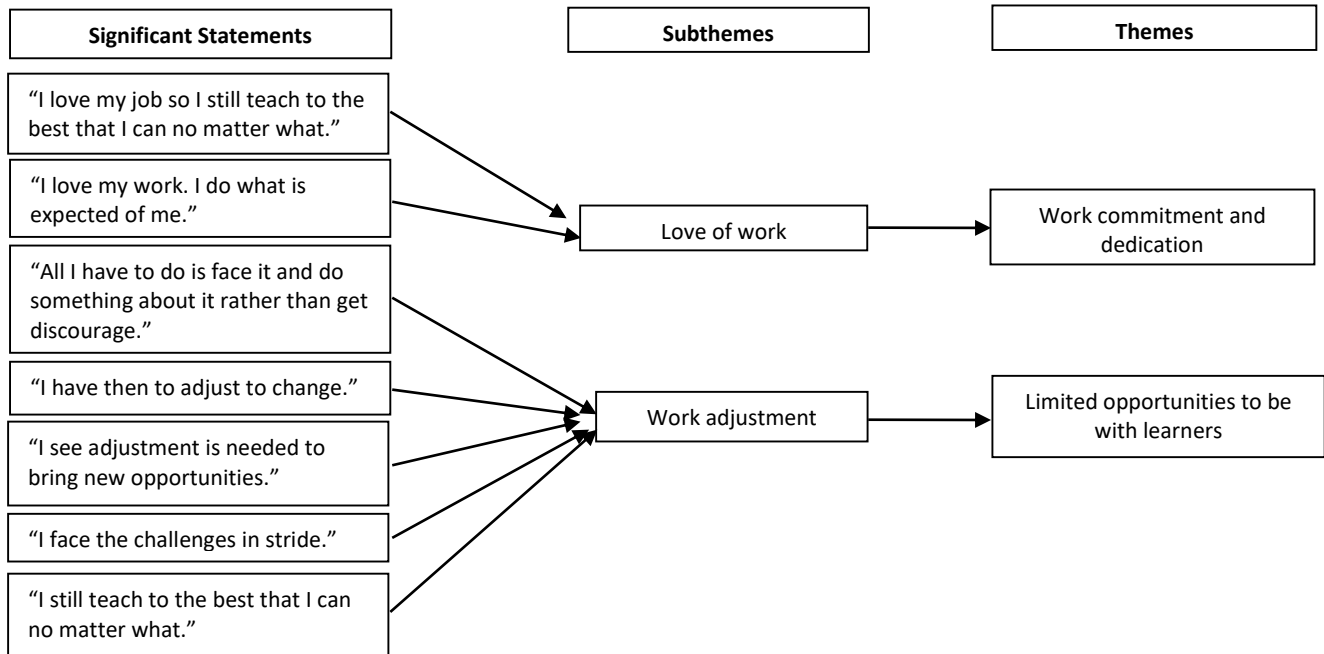
Coping mechanisms are the strategies people often use in the face of stress and/or trauma to help manage painful or difficult emotions (Raj & Bajaj, 2023). They can help people adjust to stressful events while helping them maintain their emotional well-being.

When the Filipino teachers were asked how they coped with the challenges they encountered in teaching, they exemplified love on their job. Even when they do the same tasks day after day, they are still ready for something new. With the variety of tasks and responsibilities they have and the goal they want to achieve, they still feel more engaged and fulfilled. Participants pointed out:

*“Since I had experienced teaching in the Philippines, I still show that I love my job, so I still teach to the best that I can no matter what.” “I keep in mind why I came to teach*



*here in Bahrain, so I face the challenges in stride. Since I love my work, I do what is expected of me." "I have a clear understanding of what I need to accomplish, so I still enjoy the work environment to avoid stress."*

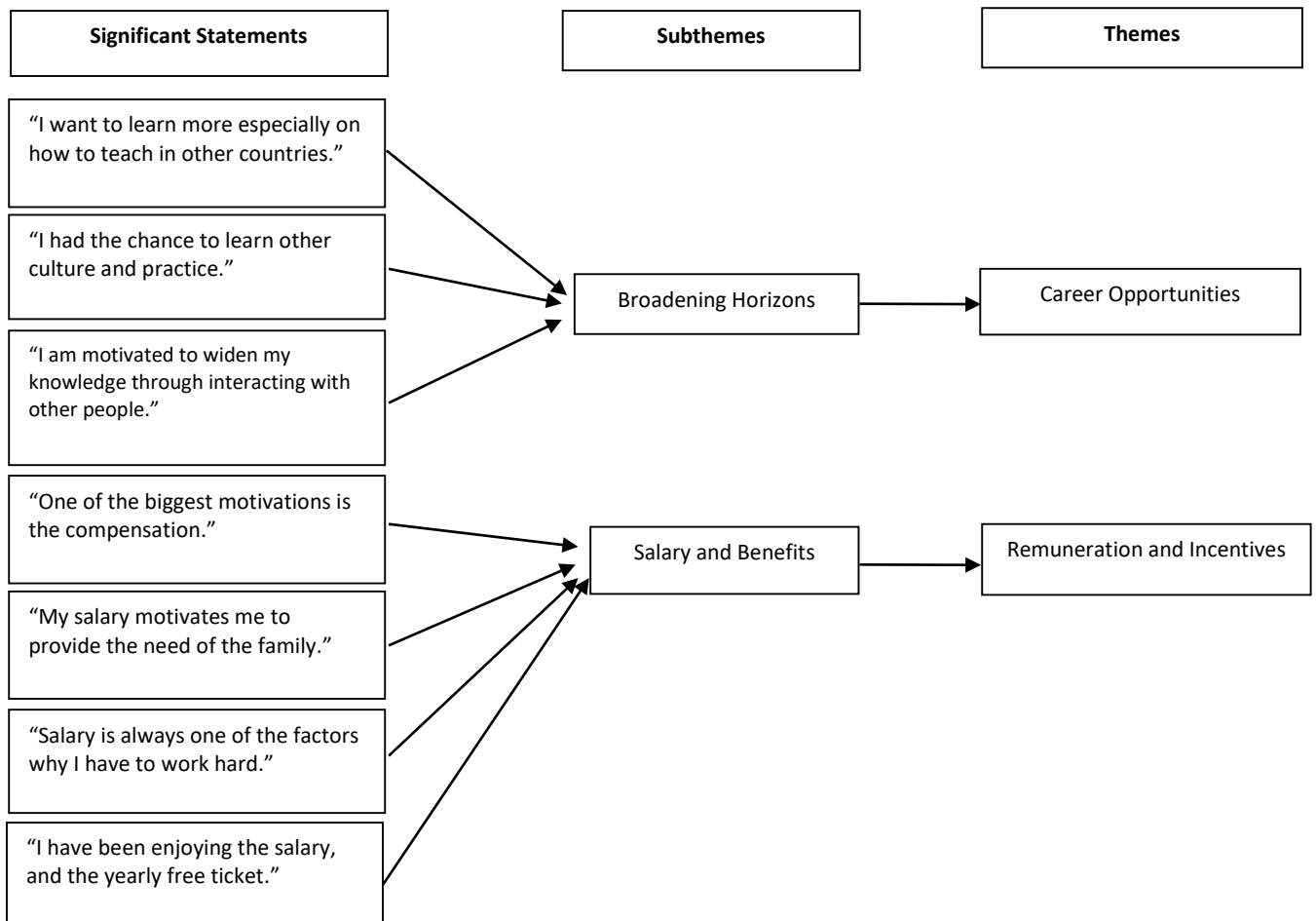


**Figure 2. Coping mechanisms to address the challenges**

Accordingly, being happy at work and loving what is done boosts the overall productivity and enhances performance (Charles-Leija et.al., 2023). Just like other Filipino migrant workers who enjoy their jobs abroad, they are more likely to be optimistic, motivated, learn faster, make fewer mistakes, and make better decisions. As shown in Figure 2, another sub-theme on the manifestation of love of work is work adjustment as a coping mechanism. The Filipino teachers in Bahrain shared how they cope with the challenges and how they recognized and accepted that change is a natural occurrence in the workplace. They take a proactive approach to facing challenges in teaching multicultural students and explore change management to ensure the success of their change initiatives, like seeking support and reskilling themselves to adapt to the situation. This shows that the more adaptable the Filipino teachers are, the more quickly they embrace new ways of doing things, such as learning a new skill, implementing a new workplace application or system. Subsequently, the concepts of where management of change is a challenging process and often requires the dedicated support and vision of a school manager to overcome the often-difficult range of change barriers (Bojesson & Fundin, 2021).

### 5.3 Job-related motivation of overseas Filipino teachers

Aside from discovering the cultures of other people, teaching overseas also allows individuals to better understand and improve themselves. The Filipino teachers in Bahrain shared how they are motivated through their career moves, where they broaden their horizons. Motivation is commonly defined as what explains why people initiate, continue, or terminate a certain behaviour at a particular time (Wasserman, 2020).



**Figure 3. Job-related motivation of overseas Filipino teachers**

As stated in Figure 3, the elicited theme in this field is that Filipino teachers are motivated to perform an action as they believe that they have better career opportunities and remuneration and incentives. Certainly, their specific interests have been given to the effects of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation in this field (Katz & Shahar, 2015). Indeed, participants shared:

*“Because I am here teaching in a foreign land, I had the chance to learn about other cultures and practices. This is a big motivation for me.” Participant 2 disclosed, “Personally, I want to learn more, especially on how to teach in other countries. This motivated me to pursue this goal.” For Participant 5, “With my dream to look for a greener pasture, I am motivated to widen my knowledge through interacting with other people. With this, I can realize my dream.”*

These statements imply how much the Filipino teachers in Bahrain want to learn more through widening their knowledge on different aspects of life. In which, learning from other people is a great motivation and one of the most effective ways to stay educated. Also, in today's technology-driven world, having other people around can sharpen personal and professional skills (Pescuela, 2015). Thus, Filipino teachers' experiences in different international schools in Bahrain is a challenge as well as a motivation and opportunity for professional development,

especially when teachers are encouraged to show their creativity, initiatives, and productivity. Gheith and Aljaberi (2018) concurred that a teacher's attitude towards their professional development is directly proportional to their practices which shows that a teacher's positive attitude towards their teaching leads to an improvement in their performance.

On the same figure, another motivation of overseas Filipino teachers is remuneration and incentives. Their narratives in Figure 3 imply that, relative to the salary of Filipino teachers, this can influence how they are motivated to work and do their best in teaching. For they know, they are given competitive salaries, which they considered an important way to acknowledge the hard work they do each day, as they mentioned that:

*“One of the biggest motivations is the compensation. Every end of the month that is all what I am looking forward to.” “When it comes to our family financial status in the Philippines, we are not that able when it comes to that. We do not have resources. I always think for them, especially now that I have my own family, it is still the family that motivates me to work harder.”*

It is observed that to meet the requirements, Filipino teachers in Bahrain work hard when they are given bonuses or incentives for good work done. Bonus pay is also offered to improve employees' morale, motivation, and productivity (Gheith & Aljaberi, 2018). Indeed, international schools in Bahrain offer bonuses for outstanding performance that encourage teachers to reach their goals, which in turn helps the school reach its goals too (Dureza, 2020).

#### **5.4 Job-related satisfactions of overseas Filipino teachers**

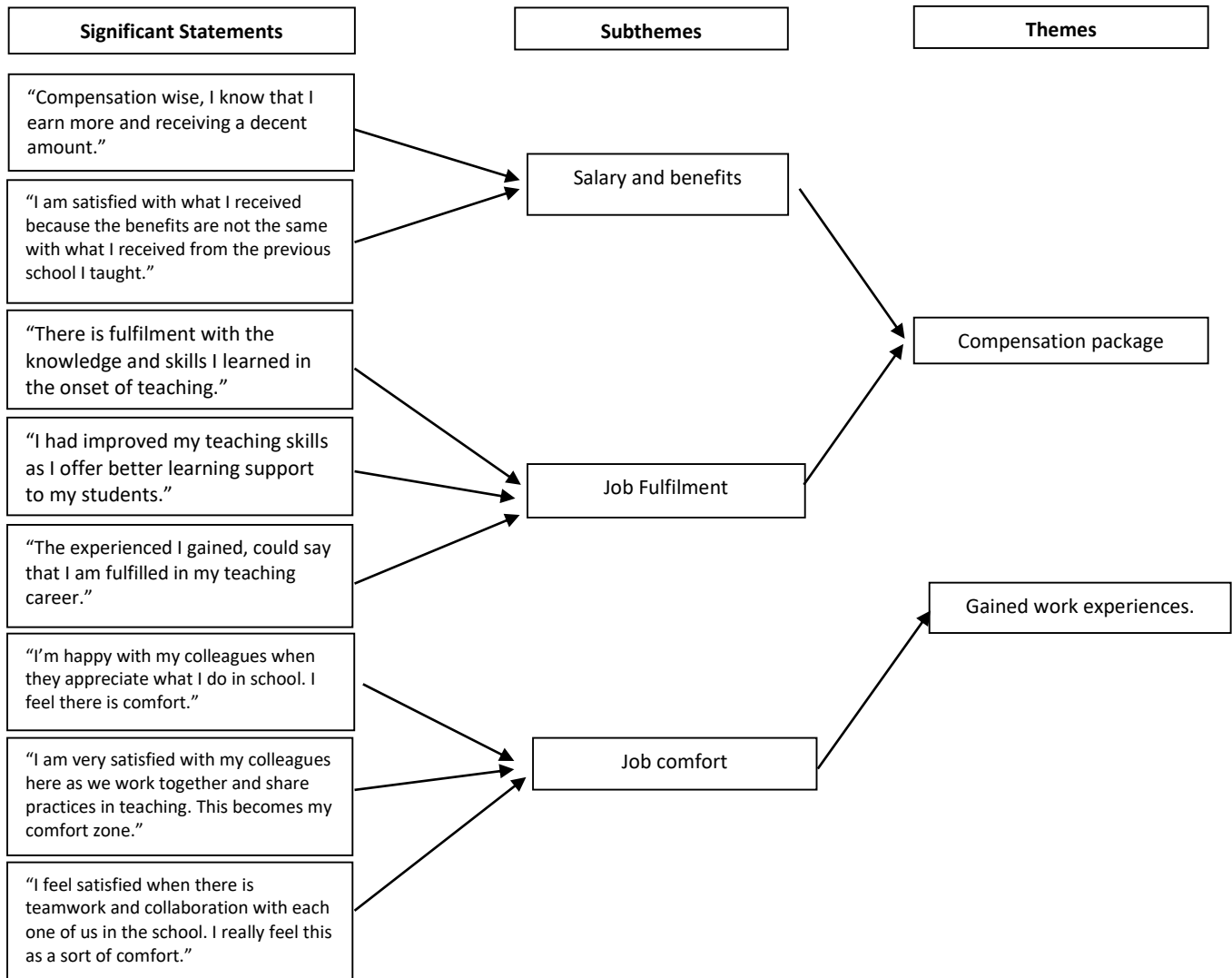
A significant part of overseas Filipino workers' lives is dedicated to work and job satisfaction, which are crucial indicators of employment abroad (ILS, 2021). In the context of job-related satisfaction, the experience of the Filipino teachers in Bahrain is a representation of the most satisfying areas in relation to overseas employment. Many studies, indeed, have demonstrated an unusually large impact on job satisfaction on the motivation of employees, while the level of motivation has an impact on productivity, and hence also on performance in the organization (Inayat & Khan, 2021).

In figure 4, the considerable job-related satisfactions of overseas Filipino teachers in Bahrain fall to themes related to compensation package, including salary, benefits, and job fulfilment, coupled with the satisfaction on gaining work experience. When informants were asked of their job satisfaction, they noted that:

*Compensation wise, I know that I earn more and I'm receiving a decent amount...I am satisfied with what I received because the benefits are not the same as what I received from the previous school, I taught...I am very satisfied because we know that we are getting a good salary.*

Reasonably, salary and benefits are important for overseas Filipino teachers to work and stay longer in their present job. Their feelings of satisfaction attest to the standard of human needs and self-actualization do correlate with salary that can serve to prompt a stronger sense of self-worth and accomplishment (Ulla, 2021). Similarly, the associated theme in this field demonstrates how Filipino teachers in Bahrain work persistently as they prefer to choose a

better salary and a good working environment. This demonstrates how salary adds to the satisfaction not only for teachers but also for other migrant workers who sacrificed a lot to be away from their families, and so in return, they strive to provide well for them (ILS, 2021).



**Figure 4. Job-related satisfactions of overseas Filipino teachers**

The findings also proven that one of the job satisfactions shared by the Filipino teachers was on job comfort as gain in the teaching profession. This was validated by the informants as shown in Figure 4, when they were asked of their satisfaction.

*With the number of years here in Bahrain, I can say that I have improved my teaching skills as I offer better learning support to my students. This makes me feel fulfilled... With the salary I received, the experience I gained, I can say I am fulfilled as to my teaching career...there is fulfilment with the knowledge and skills I learned at the onset of teaching.*

The overseas Filipino teachers describe that they feel fulfilment when they love and enjoy what they do to make a difference in a meaningful way. They are energized and satisfied in teaching

multicultural students when they know they did their best and that students also learn something from them. Also, according to the Filipino teachers they can attest to the job-related satisfaction where they are satisfied when they feel comfort. This may come from colleagues who show support for their achievements at work.

*I'm happy with my colleagues when they appreciate what I do in school. With this, I feel there is comfort ... Yes. I am very satisfied with my colleagues here as we work together and share practices in teaching. This becomes my comfort zone... Despite the very hard situation, I feel satisfied when there is teamwork and collaboration with each one of us in the school. I really feel this as a sort of comfort.*

Most Filipino teachers' intangible satisfactions are truly on job comfort. They exemplified a quality relationship with co-workers embroidered from good working relationships and more enjoyable work. Other Filipino teachers in Bahrain also indicated that close-knit teams are more productive, which frees up their time to innovate and focus on their personal and professional development. Besides, professional connections help in furthering one's career, especially working as a team day to day would build trust, team members respect to one another, and inclusive communication leading to job comfort (Admiral et. al, 2021).

### 5.5 Adaptation model: An implication for practice

Linking to gratification theory and Hackman and Oldham's model, the elements and characteristics that have great impact on job outcomes, including the process, content, and compatibility, can facilitate a model that can improve a transformative framework (Anush & Kumar, 2024; Wang et. al., 2021). Correspondingly, the lived experiences of Filipino teachers in Bahrain are exposed and contributed to the literature by offering an adaptation model as an implication for practice by exemplifying the indicators and factors raised in the study. More importantly, this would serve as key elements to an inclusive pre-departure education program.



**Figure 5. Adaptation model on teaching abroad: An implication for practice**

As presented in Figure 5, it establishes the four-fold orbicular model with corresponding levels to represent the in-depth responses in terms of challenges, coping mechanisms, motivations,

and satisfactions of the Filipino teachers in Bahrain. Although the levels are not equally exclusive and the process is not necessarily homogeneously lined, all participants in this study went through this adaptation model in order to adapt to the new multicultural environment. Specifically, with the thematic approach, their experiences start off with profound challenges, such as difficulty adapting to a new environment with multicultural students and difficulty in adjusting to the curriculum. Also, their lack of social interaction embodies teacher-parent communication gap and hesitation to approach the school manager. With those challenges, it is believed that they have identified applicable coping mechanisms through their own commitment, dedication, adjustment, and love of work. These have been driven them to be motivated by broadening career opportunities not only in classroom teaching, perhaps, but also for potential educational leadership even outside Bahrain. Lastly, they have reached the level of satisfaction by taking into consideration the salary and benefits of teaching abroad with favourable compensation package and for greater gain of experience, self-fulfilment, and job comfort. This final layer completes the continuous cycle of the adaptation model. It is worth noting tracking cases from the challenges until the satisfaction that overseas Filipino teachers' satisfaction is greater than the challenges, which could also be another reason why they stay long.

## 6.0 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the foregoing findings, the authors derived the conclusion that the job-related challenges experienced by the overseas Filipino teachers in Bahrain are part of the adjustment process in the new multicultural environment and their relationship with the people in the organization. Their positive attitudes toward working abroad greatly helped them in meeting the profound challenges. The job-related motivation of the overseas Filipino teachers reflects their value system on material and self-actualization. They employed productivity and great work opportunities as manifestations of their job-related satisfaction. Through thematic approach, the adaptation model validates mechanisms for overseas Filipino teachers to describe their trials and triumphs they experience in teaching abroad.

The authors recommended the key results herein to bring into inclusivity the pre-departure education orientation program for overseas Filipino workers and should be adopted for all members of the Philippine Teachers Association Bahrain and other countries with Filipino teachers. The adaptation model should be considered as the basis for addressing the challenges of Filipino teachers teaching abroad and key to standardization of the orientation policies, mobilization process, and most importantly, the training design, modules, and syllabus of the pre-departure seminar through the Overseas Workers Welfare Administration (OWWA) and the Commission on Filipino overseas (CFO). The Department of Education in the Philippines and other educational institutions should impose better policies on salaries and benefits that would encourage Filipino teachers to stay in the Philippines. The Philippine Commission on Higher Education (CHED) should revisit the pre-service curriculum on teacher education programs and expand the global educational settings, including the understanding of the culture of the organization or workplace, and intensify coping mechanisms for the challenges that may arise.

Furthermore, international schools' administrators should provide more trainings and seminars for teachers' professional growth and development. Schools should cultivate stronger teacher-

administrator relationships for a positive school culture that ultimately leads to better classroom instruction. Also, overseas Filipino teachers should establish peer collaboration to improve professional relationships and allow them to share best practices as a chance to learn from more experienced teachers. Intensify the international schools', communities', and teachers' relationships by emphasizing the community awareness and involvement program on the school's integration of the teachers' learning and experiences of multiculturalism from their community involvement activities. Establish teachers' programs in accordance with interpersonal and professional needs to fortify their knowledge and skills in the international education community. Lastly, future researchers should conduct a similar study considering other variables about overseas Filipino teachers teaching abroad.

## REFERENCES

- Admiraal, W., Schenke, W., De Jong, L., Emmelot, Y., & Sligte, H. (2021). Schools as professional learning communities: what can schools do to support professional development of their teachers?. *Professional development in education*, 47(4), 684-698. <https://doi.org/10.1080/19415257.2019.1665573>
- Ahdiani, U., & Maulana, A. (2023). Abraham Maslow's hierarchy of human needs building self-actualization reflected in a Broken Home child character. *Notion: Journal of Linguistics, Literature, and Culture*, 5(2), 151-168. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.24815/siele.v10i3.28402>
- Alcibar, W. (2021). A more complete pictures of overseas Filipino teachers. Center for Migrant Advocacy/Inquirer.net USA. Retrieved from <https://bit.ly/3MGLdrK>
- Albaram, B. M., & Lim, Y. M. (2023). Conceptualization social influence from the need to belong perspective on psychological needs' satisfaction to share knowledge. *Heliyon*, 9(2). DOI: 10.1016/j.heliyon.2023.e13764
- Anush, H., & Kumar, K. R. (2024). Revitalizing motivation for healthcare office workers: An Analysis of Job Diagnostic Survey Through the Lens of Hackman and Oldham's Model. *Journal of Business and Retail Management Research*, 18(02). DOI: <https://doi.org/10.24052/jbrmr/v18is02/art-02>
- Arras-Djabi, M., Cottard, L., & Shimada, S. (2024). Understanding the stereotypes of Millennials in the workplace. *European Management Review*, 21(1), 45-65. <https://doi.org/10.1111/emre.12559>
- Bahrain National Portal (n.d). Bahrain Economic Vision 2030. Empowering the Kingdom of Bahrain for a Sustainable Future Retrieved from Sustainable Development (bahrain.bh)
- Barsbai, T., Tiongson, E.R., Yang, D., Steinmayr, A., Licuanan, V. (2019). "Harnessing the Development Benefits of International Migration: A Randomized Evaluation of Enhanced Pre-Departure Orientation Seminars for Migrants from the Philippines." AEA RCT Registry. October 20. <https://doi.org/10.1257/rct.1389-2.1>

- Black, M. D. (2020). Exploring relationships between a teacher's race-ethnicity and gender and student teaching expectations. *Education Inquiry*, 12(2), 202–216. <https://doi.org/10.1080/20004508.2020.1824343>
- Bojesson, C., & Fundin, A. (2021). Exploring microfoundations of dynamic capabilities—challenges, barriers and enablers of organizational change. *Journal of Organizational Change Management*, 34(1), 206-222. <https://doi.org/10.1108/JOCM-02-2020-0060>
- BTI Report (2024). Bahrain Transformation Index. Bahrain country report 2024. Retrieved from <https://bit.ly/3Xna3St>
- BusinessMirror (2017, October 25). Conference highlights results of 3-year OWWA and AIM study on OFWs. Retrieved from <https://rb.gy/ml0r2n>
- Charles-Leija, H., Castro, C. G., Toledo, M., & Ballesteros-Valdés, R. (2023). Meaningful work, happiness at work, and turnover intentions. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, 20(4), 3565. <https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph20043565>
- Chua, J. (2021). The lived experiences of filipino teachers teaching in Texas: A Transcendental Phenomenological Study. *Electronic Theses and Dissertations*. 415. <https://scholarworks.sfasu.edu/etds/415>
- Corno, L. (2023). Student volition and education: Outcomes, influences, and practices. In *Self-regulation of learning and performance* (pp. 229-251). Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203763353>
- Creswell, J. W., & Poth, C. N. (2018). *Qualitative inquiry research methods: Choosing among five approaches* (4th ed.). Sage Publication, Inc.
- Dureza, J. D. G. (2020). Welfare satisfaction as predictor of well-being at workplace, organizational commitment, job satisfaction and teaching performance of Filipino educators in Bahrain. (Doctoral dissertation, Central Luzon State University).
- Fu, W., Pan, Q., Yuan, Y., & Chen, G. (2022). Longitudinal impact of parent-teacher relationship on middle school students' academic achievements in China. *Frontiers in psychology*, 13, 872301. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2022.872301>
- Gheith, E., & Aljaberi, N. (2018). Reflective teaching practices in teachers and their attitudes toward professional self-development. *International Journal of Progressive Education*, 14(3), 160-179. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.29329/ijpe.2018.146.11>
- Hosseini, S. (2021). The Causal Relationship Between Job Characteristics, Organizational Support, Stress and Performance (Doctoral dissertation, Université d'Ottawa/University of Ottawa). DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.20381/ruor-27194>



- ILS (2021, January 20). Institute for Labor Studies. An Evaluation of the Implementation of the Pre-Departure Orientation Seminar (PDOS) by OWWA-Accredited PDOS Providers. Retrieved from <https://rb.gy/o6753g>
- Inayat, W., & Jahanzeb Khan, M. (2021). A study of job satisfaction and its effect on the performance of employees working in private sector organizations, Peshawar. *Education Research International*, 2021(1), 1751495. <https://doi.org/10.1155/2021/1751495>
- Katz, I., & Shahar, B. H. (2015). What makes a motivating teacher? Teachers' motivation and beliefs as predictors of their autonomy-supportive style. *School Psychology International*, 36(6), 575-588. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0143034315609969>
- Khalifaoui, A., García-Carrión, R., & Villardón-Gallego, L. (2021). A systematic review of the literature on aspects affecting positive classroom climate in multicultural early childhood education. *Early Childhood Education Journal*, 49(1), 71-81. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10643-020-01054-4>
- Liang, C. T., Rocchino, G. H., Gutekunst, M. H., Paulvin, C., Melo Li, K., & Elam-Snowden, T. (2020). Perspectives of respect, teacher–student relationships, and school climate among boys of color: A multifocus group study. *Psychology of Men & Masculinities*, 21(3), 345. <https://doi.org/10.1037/men0000239>
- Modesto, O. P. (2020). A phenomenological study of Filipino immigrant teachers in South Texas. *The Qualitative Report*, 25(8), 3149-3162. Retrieved from <https://bit.ly/4dXXfc9>
- Monyei, F.E., Ezinwa, P.N., Agbaeze, E.K., Ukpere, W. I., Ugbam, C.O. & Ndu. V. (2023). Workplace conflict and the productivity of employees in the healthcare sector: A case study. *Corporate governance and organizational behavior review*, 7(3), 70–79. <https://doi.org/10.22495/cgobrv7i3p6>
- Nunez, K. (2020). Madelyn, from the Philippines, teaching at an International School in Dubai. Retrieved from <https://bit.ly/3XEfLRi>
- OWWA (2007). Overseas Workers Welfare Administration. Migrations Practices. Comprehensive Pre-Departure Education Program. Retrieved from <https://bit.ly/3zq8Str>
- OWWA (2013). Overseas Workers Welfare Administration. Amendment on the specific provisions of MOI no. 13 series of 2003 or the policies and guidelines for managing the pre-departure orientation seminar (PDOS). Retrieved from <https://rb.gy/k920dn>
- Paik, S. J., Choe, S. M. M., & Witenstein, M. A. (2016). Filipinos in the US: Historical, social, and educational experiences. *Social and Education History*, 5(2), 133-160.

- Pescuela, C. (2015). Extent of school administrators' implementation of instructional leadership and its relationship to their teachers' performance. Unpublished Thesis. Foundation University. Dumaguete City.
- Philippine Statistics Authority (2022, October 11). Survey on overseas Filipinos. 2022 survey on overseas Filipinos. Retrieved from <https://psa.gov.ph/statistics/survey/labor-and-employment/survey-overseas-filipinos>
- Philippine Statistics Authority (2020, March 7). 2020 Overseas Filipino Workers (Final Results). Retrieved from <https://bit.ly/47nz0lm>
- Podolsky, A., Kini, T., & Darling-Hammond, L. (2019). Does teaching experience increase teacher effectiveness? A review of US research. *Journal of Professional Capital and Community*, 4(4), 286-308. <https://doi.org/10.1108/JPCC-12-2018-0032s>
- Raj, T., Bajaj, A. (2023) Living alone in lockdown: Impact on mental health and coping mechanisms among young working adults. *Current Psychology*, 42 (4), 2657–2669 <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12144-021-01511-2>
- Shirokikh, A. (2018). Glossary Compilation: Cultural Implications, Learners' Autonomy, Mnemonics, Professional Development and Motivation. *Modern Journal of Language Teaching Methods (MJLTM)*, 8(12), 279-297.
- Soetjipto, M. (2020). The effects of leader-member exchange and fun at work on work engagement and deviant workplace behavior in Indonesian Telecommunication Company. DOI: 10.18502/kss.v4i6.6603
- Tarrazona, N.T. (2020 May 20). For skilled Filipinos, Middle East remains a career destination. *Alarabiya News*. Retrieved from <https://bit.ly/4eaD1vS>
- Tate, J.P. (2022). *The holistic curriculum*, Second Edition. Toronto: University of Toronto Press. p. 11. ISBN 978-0-8020-9218-2.
- Ulla, M. B. (2021). Filipinos as EFL teachers in Bangkok, Thailand: Implications for language education policy in the ASEAN region. *RELC Journal*, 52(3), 588-602. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0033688219879775>
- UNESCO (2024, June 28). The sustainable development goals report 2024. 16-17. Retrieved from — [SDG Indicators \(un.org\)](https://sdgindicators.un.org/)
- United Nations (2024, February 29). UN issues global alert over teacher shortage. UN Organization. Retrieved from <https://news.un.org/en/story/2024/02/1147067>
- Wang, C., Teo, T. S., Dwivedi, Y., & Janssen, M. (2021). Mobile services use and citizen satisfaction in government: integrating social benefits and uses and gratifications theory. *Information Technology & People*, 34(4), 1313-1337. <https://doi.org/10.1108/ITP-02-2020-0097>

Wasserman, L. (2020). Motivation: state, trait, or both. Motivation, effort, and the neural network model. pp. 93–101. doi:10.1007/978-3-030-58724-6\_8. ISBN 978-3-030-58724-6. [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-58724-6\\_8](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-58724-6_8)

**Acknowledgement**

We thank all the members and officers of the Philippine Teachers Association – Bahrain for their cooperation and support in the success of this study.

**Disclosure statement**

No potential conflict of interest or disparities was reported by the author(s).

**Funding**

This study was not supported by any institute or organization.