

Filipino Teachers Experiences in Embracing Vision, Mission and Objectives of Foreign Schools

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Abstract

The demand for Filipino teachers to teach in other countries provides boundless opportunities, including monetary reward, despite challenges concerning differences on curricula and cultures when teaching abroad. One thing that facilitates their adjustment is by embracing the Vision, Mission and Objectives (VMO) of the school where they teach. The focus of this inquiry is to gather teaching experiences of Filipino teachers in foreign schools, to share their perceptions and understanding of their present VMO's and how they managed to embrace all these through paradigm shifting. Purposive sampling was used to conduct interview to 6 Filipino teachers abroad through email, messenger, Skype application and data were analyzed through HyperResearch 4.0.0. The highest level of achievement is in improving the lives of the children towards success of schools and its student development. Communication barriers in understanding the native language and in producing appropriate accent, cultural differences and individual preferences hinder harmonious relationship; noted were minimal prevalence of discrimination.

Keywords: Vision, Mission, Filipino Teachers, Teaching Experiences, Foreign Schools, Paradigm Shift

INTRODUCTION

The Commission of Filipino Overseas listed registered Filipino emigrants working abroad since 1981 to 2015 in total of 2.19M and 10.56% were registered professionals, 332 were teachers. These teachers were raised and molded under the Philippine Educational system's vision, mission and objectives. As

Gamlan (2018) pointed out, teaching abroad offers great job opportunities, salaries and chances to immerse oneself in new cultures. Though trying at times, this can be exceptionally rewarding especially during the professional and personal development of the teacher.

The demand for Filipino teachers to teach in other countries provides boundless opportunities, including monetary reward despite challenges in differences on curricula and culture when teaching abroad. Hence, one thing that facilitates their adjustment is by following the Vision, Mission and Objectives (VMO) of the school where they teach.

A vision statement is a declaration of school's future high-level goals. It may describe the school's ideals, its core organizational values, and its long-term objectives. A mission statement on the other hand, is a description of school's purpose and commitments. It may define the school's routine operations, its instructional values, and its obligations to the community, while objectives are explicit plans, procedures, and outcomes influenced by the changes in instructional and support programs.

Since these VMO's were considered the core of every educational institution, no matter what culture nor country a teacher belongs, embracing VMO's facilitates the Filipino teachers' adjustments to the challenging conditions and needs of the different foreign schools.

The focus of this inquiry is to gather and describe first-hand teaching experiences of the Filipino teachers in foreign schools, to share their perceptions and understanding of their present VMO's and to identify how they manage to embrace all these through paradigm shifting.

Background of the Study

Comparative Education was the driving force that pushes the esteemed researchers to explore its application and opportunities in the post graduate program. It became one of the tools for these graduate students to grasp the significant contribution of this course as it deals with convergence of educational systems in a global society (Amal, 2017).

Consequently, the students' interest in comparing the Vision, Mission and Objective (VMO's of many foreign schools was the core topic of their class discussions and this impressed upon them to contribute one for better understanding on how fellow teachers performed their duties and responsibilities considering the fact that their understanding and context of VMO's were still rooted in Philippine Educational System.

The investigations on these experiences will pave the way to improved international understanding which partly resulted from the strategies and techniques they employed to adapt to the foreign teaching environment. Their inputs can be considered vital to cope for even they are first-hand and reliable and provided practices of different teacher-students cultures and educational systems.

Data have presented hundreds of teachers teaching in different parts of the world. Their daily encounters with foreign students, colleagues and administrators open the avenue to look for ways and to strategize to cope at their new environment. These were highlights of comparative education, that which give answers and solutions to the challenges and concerns met by Filipino teachers from different educational systems across the globe.

Previous researches on comparative education reported that school mission statements are valuable source for educational researchers (Stemler,et.al,2011). Vision and mission statements are vital tool for

strategic management and achieve greater performance in the organization (Ezekwe and Egum, 2016). On teachers working abroad, lack of knowledge on local language became its ultimate barrier that hinders cultural awareness and understanding in foreign land (Frederiksen, 2014).

To date, only few researchers dealing with comparative education have been published; and there were less contribution as regard Filipino teachers and their experiences, specifically on the strategies and approaches they employ toward an international understanding of different educational system.

In fact, comparative education gives benefits on discussing problems and how our fellow Filipino teachers teaching in foreign schools sought timely, reliable and effective solution towards understanding foreign students and educational system.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND METHODOLOGY

Research questions

The conceptualization and perspectives of graduate students in comparative education who study closely various educational systems of different countries led to the investigation of the experiences on how Filipino teachers embraced the vision-mission and objectives (VMOs) of foreign schools. These teachers who have held on the VMOs of the Philippine education system have adjustment issues while teaching their foreign students, working with their new administrators and fulfilling the VMO's of their present foreign school. Accumulating new personal experiences and addressing the difficulties and challenges they face on the new learning environment create an opportunity to provide solution in deepening their international understanding. The study set out to address the following research questions:

- What do Vision, Mission, and Objective mean to you as a Filipino teacher teaching in a foreign school?
- What are the challenges you encountered as a Filipino teacher, specifically in dealing with colleagues, students and administrators?
- What coping strategies have you applied to fully embrace and understand its Vision, Mission and objective?

Methodology

The study utilized a qualitative approach to gather various experiences of Filipino teachers teaching in foreign school. Qualitative research by Gelo (2012) is a technique for acquiring and analyzing qualitative human and social data such as experiences of Filipinos working abroad. To gather these experiences, researchers conducted online interviews through a telecommunication application such as email, messenger, and Skype to fellow teachers inquiring about how they have embraced and understand the vision-mission and educational objectives. As the definition advocated, qualitative approach seeks to study the paradigm shift that occurred to these teachers embracing new VMO's of foreign schools. Paradigm shift is reconfiguring (Chomal and Saini, 2013), collective sets of values and procedures (Sigri, 2010) and its reforms bring new conceptual frameworks (Irez and Han, 2011).

Purposive sampling was used to the participants. Selected Filipino teachers employed in foreign schools were asked permission and availability in an on-line interview. Researchers included only 3 years

and above service experiences as a beginning criterion which is enough to identify their understanding on the present VMO's of their schools. Structured interview was the main method of data collection. Questions were raised supporting the following investigation: first, the participants' various definitions of the vision, mission and objectives of their institution, second, the challenges these teachers have encountered in meeting the needs of their students, how they have established connection with their fellow teachers, and meet the expectations of their administrators. Lastly, this study included how these experiences have brought these teachers to find strategies in embracing the foreign schools' vision, mission and objectives.

The study included 6 participants (from five different countries of Australia, Saudi Arabia, Singapore, United Kingdom, USA) and used the following codes to identify their answers from the guide questions.: Filipino teachers (FT) followed by the respective countries where these professionals were employed namely; FT-Australia, FT-Saudi Arabia, FT-Singapore, FT-UK, FT-US1, FT-US2. Each country represents a participant except in USA where researchers interviewed teachers in Georgia and Texas.

All interview data were transcribed and their responses were coded appropriately through HyperResearch 4.0 that enables the researchers to analyze qualitative responses and helps to arrive in various themes. The software is a powerful tool in qualitative study. On-line interview were made possible through website application (email, Messenger and Skype, Video-Call) and to validate credibility of the participants in the said interview.

Results and Discussion

Findings of the interviews with Filipino teachers

What do vision, mission and objectives mean to you as Filipino teachers teaching in the foreign schools?

Filipino teachers who participated in this study were credible in sharing their experiences through acceptance of their new vision, mission and objectives. As a response, Filipino teachers strongly emphasized the concept of Vision-Mission and Objectives (VMO's) as they embraced these new set of guidelines in those educational system.

Filipino teachers use his/her own understanding of VMO's and make this suitable to the needs of their present employees that

The confidence in doing task guides [them] the teacher in early years of teaching using the Philippine educational system as their standard (FT-United Kingdom).

Teacher- participants share their answers in the meaning of VMO as teachers teaching foreign students and stated that

Vision allows them to have a nurturing and enriching environment (FT-Singapore) towards holistic culture (FT-USA1).

Vision is used as a bridge for better understanding, and stated that

The highest level of achievement (FT-US2) is in improving the lives of the children (FT-Australia) towards the success of the schools and the development of students (FT -Saudi Arabia).

As to school's mission, the participants shared their knowledge about the mission statement of their schools, declaring

Teacher should be knowledgeable about the students' needs (FT-USA1) and competitiveness (FT-Saudi Arabia), understanding aboriginal perspective towards the development of respectful relationships (FT-USA1).

Filipino teachers were co-missioned in child preparedness and love for learning and self-worth.

For students, they should be ready to start school and to be shaped (FT-Singapore) towards curiosity and confidence to instill within them love of learning and feeling of self-worth (FT-USA2).

Teacher's understanding of the mission was spearheaded by the institution towards students' achievement.

Some participants mentioned that

Administrators provide basis for developing other aspects of strategic plans (FT-Saudi Arabia) by integrating and using appropriate resources and providing best possible learning opportunities through continuous feedback (FT-Australia).

Teachers' experiences about their participation on their school's objectives, as stated that

Towards the end, as a Filipino teacher teaching abroad, he/she should have to:

- *cultivate an innovative teaching and learning philosophy based on high expectations (FT-USA1), schools should pursue*
- *achieve educational goals tailored to students' interest, abilities and aspirations (FT-USA2) and*
- *focus, coordinate and unify many programs that would individually contribute towards the priority on how to best educate each student, for them to demonstrate their proficiency in assessment to develop and consistently demonstrate character attributes necessary to be successful (FT-USA2).*

What are the challenges encountered by the teacher specifically in dealing with colleagues, students and administrators?

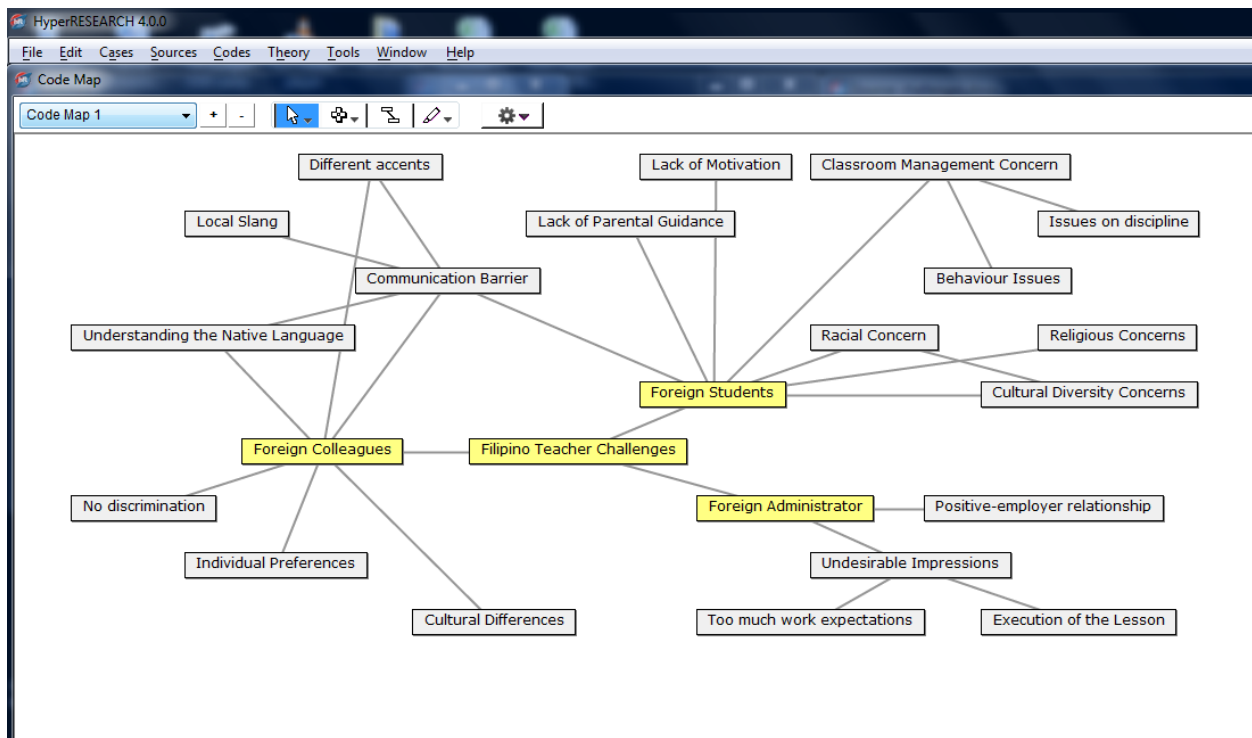


Figure 1. Coded map showing the challenges experienced by the Filipino Teachers teaching in the foreign schools using HyperRESEARCH 4.0.0.

Evidently, Filipino teachers were challenged despite the modern approaches to teaching and in facilitating knowledge to their students. Data shows that technology cannot really intervene on problems about

Communication barrier due to local slang (FT-Australia) or different accents (FT-USA2).

Two participants experienced how foreign students show

Lack of motivation (FT-USA1) resulting to low performance in school (FT-Saudi Arabia);

Challenging as it was, teachers encountered

Classroom management concerns related to discipline and behaviour issues (FT-USA1);and

The lack of parental guidance (FT-USA1) as stated in one of the interviews.

Filipino teachers’ foremost responses

Indicated challenges that resulted from religious (FT-Australia), racial and cultural diversity concerns (FT-UK)

On dealings with colleagues, some participants stated that

Communication barrier either in understanding the native language (FT-Saudi Arabia) or in producing appropriate accents (FT-Australia) should be settled first.

Many of them were challenge to various

Cultural differences (FT-Singapore) and individual preferences (FT- Australia)[that] hinder harmonious personal relationship (FT-UK);

There was liberation and no longer an issue as one participant stated that

There is minimal prevalence of discrimination (FT-UK).

One of the most crucial points in teaching career in the foreign land is to establish a good relationship with superiors and administrators. Data revealed that there was

(FT-UK) *a very positive employee-employer relationship* in United Kingdom contrary to what the teacher-participants from Singapore and Saudi Arabia who stated *undesirable impressions* (FT-Saudi Arabia) about their administrators such as *too much work expectations and execution of the lessons* (FT-Singapore) were encountered.

What strategies have you applied to fully embrace and understand its Vision, Mission and objective?

One strategy applied by a Filipino teacher to embrace their schools' VMOs

...are personal initiated actions such as engaging themselves in all school activities (FT-Saudi Arabia),

Another participant resolved these concerns through

attending meetings and conferences, by reading journals and following up memos to be abreast with trends in education (FT-USA2),

Professionalism is a requirement as stated

by working with colleagues professionally (FT-Australia), and
by being professional (FT-Singapore)[by](*finishing all tasks on time, providing and choosing interesting materials*),

Filipino teachers received an opportunity as to

...coaching students in competitions, and devising strong classroom management consistent with rules and routines (FT-USA1).

Embracing how foreign educational system allowed them to exercise that

...even went beyond their functions by providing 'open policy' where students can correct teachers politely in initial pronunciation and thanking them in return (FT-USA2).

Cultural obstacles for students were addressed and managed for

They [foreign students]were also offered Filipino songs, dances and cultures (FT-USA2) *as a form of motivation, introduced games and competitions with rewards* (FT-USA2), *were given lab pass* (FT-USA2) *wherein they can work on projects or play games at the computer laboratories.*

Teaching expertise became a bridge of communication as

Some students were also made to be creative in fostering engagement (FT-USA1) *like to prepare essays using Math or write practical application and prepare problems involving applications and show solutions* (FT-USA2).

For problems that is beyond the teachers on

More disruptive students, they are asked to work in another room to keep them busy (FT-USA2).
Others were also assigned to peer tutors.

Many Filipino teachers find support as

School and teachers also put greater emphasis on respecting individual differences (FT-Singapore), pupil achievement and parents communication (FT-UK). They could either reach out to parents about their children's behaviour through texting (FT-USA2), phone calls or letters (FT-USA1).

Philippine Educational standard the basis of reference,

Although most activities are routinary, evident are its similarities with that of the Philippines (FT-UK) except on the 'No Repeater' policy in every school in UK (FT-UK)

Discussion

The Philippine Education system compared to other educational system around the world is still very young and so dynamic. From a third class nation, Filipino teachers would usually be forced to teach abroad out of economic and personal constraints, which make teaching in foreign schools an option for these professionals nowadays.

Findings imply how Filipino teachers scrutinized and evaluated foreign schools vision as nurturing and enriching. *Vision is enriching*, educational systems were created to flourish and allow every components to be inspired and be moved. *Vision is nurturing*, educational system outcomes make every individual a nurturer and caring for others. *Vision is the highest level of achievement* ones may purposely follow in light. It is in education that an individual makes themselves worthy and with goal in life. This is indeed important in enhancing educational structures in order to maintain its endeavor, its worth and value. Vision is towards success of schools and development of students, a context to which success is assessed. Through vision, students' understanding of him as educated and an important part of an educational process drives a child towards accomplishment, becoming a victorious man.

Vision allows these Filipino teachers to make a context about the effectiveness of education program and its initiative as it drives them to have the *confidence in teaching* regardless of their students' background, cultural upbringing and societal origin. These teachers who have deeply rooted national educational system manifest their caring and nurturing nature that resulted from their environment since the beginning of their teaching career. These teachers manifest the confidence and potent ability to blend themselves among foreign counterparts.

These teachers also contributed to the success of their institutions regardless of the cultural background of their students; the improvement of the lives of children is actually their ultimate goal. Filipino teachers are considered the most adaptable and universally 'vision-oriented teachers. They shed light to any students of any nation and cultural background because their fuel is based on the Philippine educational system.

Mission drives these teachers towards *understanding individuality and diversity*. Firstly, showing and developing their respectful attitude towards others teach others to develop respectful relationship towards others as well. Filipino teachers were committed to shape *students towards curiosity* and *instill within them the love of learning*. As comparative education proves its purpose on assisting education around nations in

the development of educational practice, a teacher's mission provides best possible learning areas, opportunities through continues feedback and views.

Schools missions as revealed by these teachers integrate and use appropriate resources contributory towards understanding individual preference and diversity in opinions and beliefs. Through these, respect and competitive relationships makes an edge for every student. Foreign schools' mission highlighted how successful relationships will lead to harmony in education and in community. Indeed, a valid truth about understanding foreign schools vision and missions operationally nurtures a child towards their enrichment; provide a feeling of self-worth and love of learning.

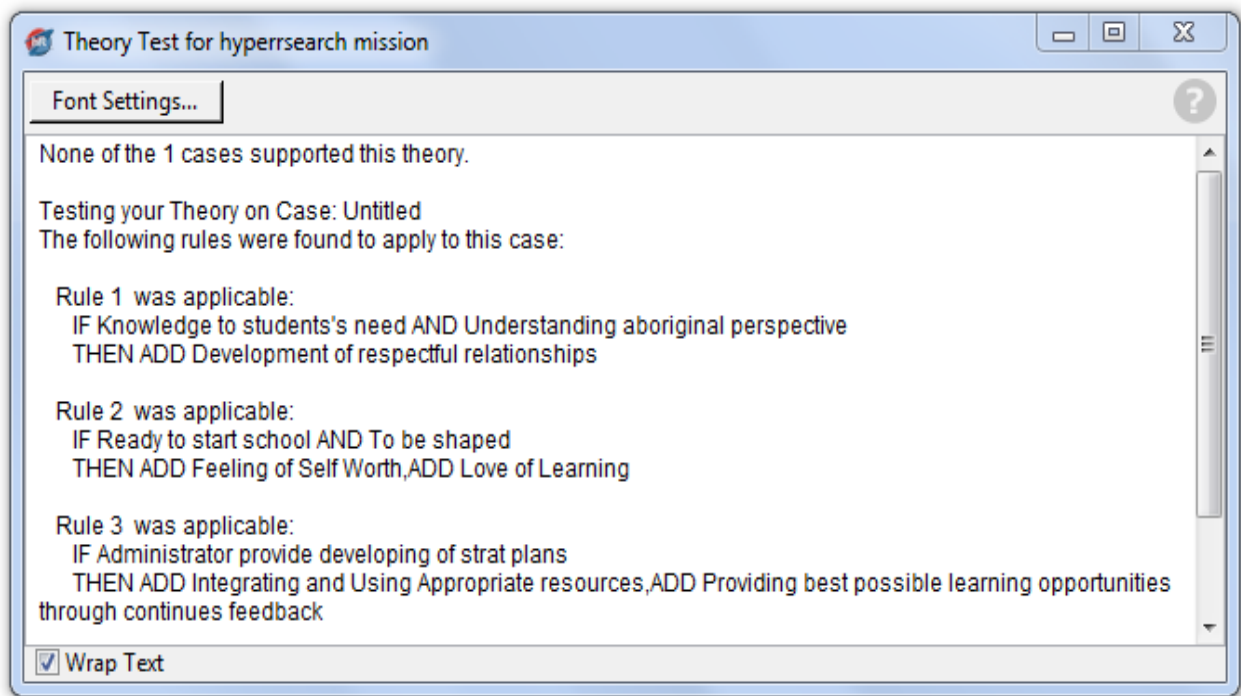


Figure 2. Figure showing how Filipino teachers' responses on mission were transformed using theory builder of HyperRESEARCH 4.0.0.

Based on the generated theory from HyperResearch 4.0.0, Filipino teachers' responses in terms to its mission to 'self' was applicable. It implies that through this method and understanding of the need and perspective of students there will be development of respectful relationships. There is a culturally and communication- challenged bond that existed between a Filipino teacher and their foreign students.

Another interesting and tested observation was that Filipino teachers aimed to make the students ready to start school and allowed students to be open for changes and molding. These experiences not only promote love of learning but student's feeling of self-worth.

It was also applicable that the administrators were the ones who provided them in developing strategic plans for the institution and it was observed by these teachers that through these partnership, both of them provide best possible learning opportunities through continuous feedback.

In cultivating innovative teachings and learning philosophy, educational innovations should be on teaching and learning theory and practice that will benefit the learners as well as the other

members of the school community. It should promote and value the experiences and lifelong developments of the learners.

According to one of the Filipino Teachers (USA2), they motivate their students through various activities that match each individual ability, interest and aspirations. One of the specific objectives is all students must demonstrate proficiency in state assessment and achieve goals in reading, writing, mathematics and science. The subjects should have a correlation to the learner's capacity and interest.

There should be a focus and effort in synchronizing programs that would contribute in educating each student to the best of their potentials. Knowing that teachers are the best source of motivations and knowledge, learners are guided through good curriculum.

Filipino teachers make known of objectives from a global perspective, to cultivate innovating teaching and learning philosophy using the existing standards and guidelines of their institutions, aimed to achieve educational goals that will be tailored and shaped on students' interests, abilities and aspiration towards life and for his country. Being focused and demonstrate proficiency not only in teaching but also in coordinating and unifying schools program that will lead to the enhancement of educational processes and outcomes.

Two of the Filipino teachers in UK and Australia recognized the diversity in learners thus, one of the objectives that is to demonstrate proficiency in assessment is much taken considerably because assessment should be done with accuracy and effectiveness. There are certain factors that may have an impact in the learners learning and knowledge that has to be considered in assessment like the student proficiency and achievements, family values, health, and as such the lower the assessment, the more important it is to use assessment techniques beyond pencil and paper tasks.

Challenges encountered by Filipino teachers overseas were easily identified. As per students, these challenges are not overwhelming and untimidating to manage other than communication barrier and cultural gaps. Most issues were similar to what they have already encountered while teaching in the Philippines. Flexibility and adaptability of Filipinos have become important factors in contact to new culture and language abroad especially in dealing with colleagues. These characters and positive outlook in life of Filipino teachers give way to have a harmonious relationship with their administrators.

Strategies were also employed to handle the downsides of teaching abroad. Filipino teachers were supported by their administrators to seminars and conferences. Some were methods applied to self to cope up and overcome with this adjustment and be abreast with new trends in education. Professionally, working in team with colleagues, mentoring students during competition and being consistent with rules became valuable assets both professional and personal growth. To bridge cultural gaps, creativity with Filipino songs and dances undermine this gap, some Filipino teachers even strengthened their skills to work with students who have diverse needs and spark motivation for learners.

For Filipino teachers handling disruptive behavior, these fellows will "isolate" these students and let them finish the assigned tasked to keep them busy. Participants in the US find them effective to respect their students by giving them time to work alone and have a productive output in their independence. Peer tutoring was still an effective method for foreign students who have lack of motivation to study hard and

excel in their studies. The Filipino teachers were embracing the VMO's of other schools commit themselves for the welfare of their students.

Another successful strategy employed of these Filipino teachers was putting emphasis on the following: the school in Singapore stressed on the importance of respect on individual differences, in United Kingdom and the US, their schools emphasized on the pupil's achievement and communicating to parents either through text, letters or phone calls.

Philippine standard is the basis of reference among these Filipino teachers teaching and embracing the *vision, mission and objectives* of their present institution, No matter what country or culture exist in their new learning and teaching environment, The Philippines still offers a very friendly environment to its own teachers and students that there is a Second Chance policy” unlike in other countries.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

Filipino teachers working in foreign schools imbibe the Vision, Mission and Objectives of their individual institutions to thrive with their daily teaching challenges. Personal strategies were applied to embrace these VMOs. Evidently, these strategies were rooted from the very VMOs they have grown to acquire and get accustom with when they were still teachers in the Philippines. The Department of Education system would be their usual reference and basis when dealt with personal and professional challenges in foreign schools, be they with students, colleagues and administrators.

Since the conduct of this study was put under time constraint, the researchers hope for more studies to be conducted about these similar phenomena on a deeper perspective. The results of this study will surely prove useful and exciting for Comparative Education classes and students while they delve on the discussions of the complex education systems of different countries, with emphasis on the National Education System of the Philippines as their reference of discussions. The study has been proved worthwhile for the graduate student-researchers who have given much of their time interviewing Filipino teachers teaching abroad instead of just hearing lectures from one another. It (the process and the results) made them (the researchers) realized the significance of understanding diversity of educational systems which likewise could be learned in such a manner that is engrossing, exciting and enjoyable for all them.

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