

The diaspora of Filipino teachers leaving their home country for work in the United States

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Abstract: This study aimed to investigate the Filipino public school teachers' diaspora to the United States, focusing on the factors influencing their migration and the challenges they encountered in adapting to their new environments. To achieve this, a parallel convergent mixed-methods approach was employed. The study conducted qualitative interviews with five participants and surveyed 69 former DepEd teachers across various states in the United States, covering the academic years 2018–2019 to 2023–2024. The results showed that the main motivators were improved living conditions and higher income. They also acknowledged difficulties with personal sacrifices, student conduct, and cultural adjustment. Teachers who were relocating encountered many challenges that required resilience, even though they had access to better resources. As systemic constraints in the Philippines drive highly trained instructors abroad, the study highlights a global education dilemma. It is, therefore, essential to strengthen institutional support and policy coordination to ensure that teacher migration remains a choice rather than a necessity in order to preserve the Philippine educational system and the well-being of its instructors overseas.

Keywords: Cultural adaptation, Mixed-methods, Philippine education system, Teacher diaspora.

1. Introduction

The Filipino diaspora has become a huge global phenomenon that is influencing economies and societies all over the world, with more than 10 million Filipinos living and working in more than 200 countries [1]. Filipino teachers make up a growing portion of the workforce in this diaspora, looking for better job possibilities overseas [2]. This tendency has caused serious problems for the Philippine educational system, especially as industrialized countries aggressively seek out experienced Filipino instructors in response to a teacher shortage. The current issues with teacher retention in the Philippines are made worse by this recruitment [3].

The Alliance of Concerned Teachers' (ACT) reports vividly depict the extent of this migration, indicating a notable exodus of teachers, mostly from the Visayas region, who are looking for better opportunities overseas [4]. In order to combat this loss of educational potential, ACT Chairman Quetua has called on the Department of Education (DepEd) to act immediately [4]. The ongoing brain drain that affects both public and private educational institutions—with public schools bearing the brunt of the effects—was also described in a workforce study by the Philippine Overseas Employment Agency (POEA) [5]. The main reasons for this migration are the desire for financial gain, professional promotion, and personal development [6]. Notwithstanding the challenges they face, including linguistic obstacles, cultural adaptations, and instances of prejudice in the workplace, these educators exhibit incredible fortitude and flexibility. Their commitment to their students' academic success, excellent work ethic, and fluency in English make them invaluable additions to the global educational scene [7].

Furthermore, research shows that in addition to monetary incentives, teachers' decisions to migrate are significantly influenced by elements like professional development, exposure to different cultures, and improved working conditions [8]. Filipino teachers are further encouraged to look for work overseas by non-monetary advantages such as chances for social and intellectual growth, language learning, and teaching skill enhancement [9].

The study's main researcher, a Filipino teacher who migrated to the United States, has personally experienced the complexities of this journey. While overseas employment provides financial stability and professional growth, it also entails personal sacrifices and intensifies the ongoing brain drain in the Philippine education sector. At the same time, Filipino educators play a crucial role in enriching American classrooms with their culture and expertise, highlighting the increasingly globalized nature of education.

Given this context, this study looked at the characteristics of Filipino teachers who moved to the United States, their migration routes, the motivations behind their choices, the teaching benefits they brought, and the difficulties they faced during their career transfer. Policies and methods to address teacher retention in the Philippines while acknowledging the significant contributions made by Filipino educators to worldwide education systems could be informed by an understanding of these dynamics.

2. Literature Review

Filipino teachers' migration to the US is a component of a broader global labor movement trend that is fueled by systemic issues in the Philippines as well as economic incentives. Teachers are increasingly looking for greater pay, chances for professional growth, and better working circumstances, as Asis [10] explains. Labor migration has long been a defining feature of the Philippine labor market. According to the Philippine Overseas Employment Administration, the need for Filipino teachers in American schools is mostly a reaction to teacher shortages in districts, especially in high-demand disciplines like science, math, and special education [6, 11].

Filipino educators' overseas experiences disclose a range of opportunities and difficulties. Filipino instructors in Texas and South Texas must adjust to their new contexts through cultural changes, pedagogical practice changes, and personal sacrifices [12, 24]. Arcillo [12] delves more into the adaption process of Filipino educators in the Virgin Islands, stressing the value of social networks and resilience in facilitating their assimilation [12]. These results are consistent with a PBS NewsHour article from 2023 that emphasizes the difficulties Filipino teachers face in managing their classrooms, dealing with disruptive students, and overcoming language challenges. This research emphasizes the need for ongoing professional development and strong support networks.

Filipino educators contribute significantly to their new communities in spite of these obstacles. According to Batista and Narciso [13] the advantages of their migration go beyond monetary transfers and include the sharing of information and skills that assist both the host and home countries Batista and Narciso [13]. Brazas [11] cautions, however, that the Philippine educational system would suffer from this large-scale teacher movement, which will result in a teacher shortage Brazas [11]. Malipot [14] and Novio [15] share this opinion, calling the situation "heartbreaking" and urging policymakers to improve retention tactics in order to retain teachers in the Philippines. The role of social networks in the migration and integration process is also crucial [14, 15]. Blumenstock, et al. [16] demonstrate that the success of migrants often hinges on the strength of support systems and community ties, which facilitate smoother transitions into foreign work environments [17]. The Philippine Statistics Authority or Philippine Statistics Authority [18] provides a clear mapping of the global distribution of Filipino educators, showcasing concentrated clusters in the United States due to targeted recruitment efforts [18].

In the end, although the main reasons Filipino teachers relocate are for job progression and financial stability, the effects of this migration are intricate and varied. While Macapagong, et al. [19] underline the significance of bilateral agreements that prioritize ethical recruiting and the welfare of teachers [19, 20] emphasize the necessity of ongoing professional development to retain educators [20]. According

approach entails recognizing and putting aside one's own preconceptions, interests, and assumptions regarding the research issue [6]. Methods like member checks, code-recode tactics, thick descriptions, and data saturation were also used to support the reliability of the results further. These steps guaranteed that the research remained representative of participants' real-life experiences while also strengthening the analysis's rigor with regard to Filipino teachers' migration and adaption in the United States.

3.5. Ethical Considerations

This study upholds ethical principles, ensuring participant rights, confidentiality, and research integrity. It holds social value by contributing to discussions on teacher migration and its impact on education policies. Participation was voluntary, with informed consent obtained before data collection. Anonymity and confidentiality were strictly maintained to protect participants' identities. Potential risks, including privacy concerns and emotional distress, were carefully managed, while benefits include insights into teacher retention and policy improvement. To ensure credibility and reliability, the researchers, both Doctor of Philosophy degree holders with teaching experience in the Philippines and the U.S., employed bracketing to minimize bias.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1. Attributes of Public School Teachers (PSTs) Who Preferred to Leave the Home Country to Teach in the U.S.

The respondents' demographic profile shows that they are predominantly married, mid-career educators with graduate degrees and a range of professional training levels. Qualitative data supports these quantitative findings by offering a more thorough understanding of their origins, work experiences, and career paths. Their demographic traits indicate how teacher mobility and career development are changing and are in line with larger global trends in education.

The majority of mid-career educators are between the ages of 26 and 35 (34.8%) and 36 and 45 (49.3%), indicating a sizable workforce sector that strikes a balance between personal and professional obligations. According to studies, teachers in their mid-career frequently manage career changes while juggling family obligations and looking for stability in their work lives [20]. These experiences confirm that many Filipino educators working overseas are in a stage of career maturity where they strive for advancement while ensuring stability for their families. Dhup and May both state, "I am 34 years old and married" and "I am 39 years old and married," respectively, reflecting this reality in the qualitative narratives.

Cindy, Dhup, and May are all female educators. The high percentage of female teachers (73.9%) is indicative of the teaching profession's overall feminization, especially in elementary and secondary schools [24]. Furthermore, the quantitative result that 66.7% of respondents are married supports studies showing that family factors frequently influence teachers' career choices and mobility. According to studies on teacher migration and transnational employment, many Filipino educators migrate overseas in search of stable employment to support their families [25]. This trend is evident in the qualitative responses, where Cindy says, "I am 32 years old and married," and John shares, "I am 33 years old, um, married."

With 66.7% of Filipino educators possessing master's degrees and 7.2% obtaining doctorates, educational attainment further supports the focus on academic and professional progress. This is in line with a global trend that postgraduate degrees are becoming more and more important for both professional advancement and effective teaching [20]. Filipino teachers actively seek higher education to improve their credentials and competitiveness in global job markets [25] as evidenced by Dhup's statement that "I hold a Bachelor of Education...a Master of Arts in Education...and a Doctor of Education" and Cindy's statement that "I have completed the academic requirement for a Doctorate Degree major in Educational Management."

Differences in training backgrounds further highlight disparities in possibilities for professional advancement. Of those surveyed, 15.9% claimed no formal training, whilst 44.9% obtained pedagogical

or subject-specific training. This supports the results of studies such as TALIS 2018, which show that teachers around the world do not have equitable access to training opportunities [20]. While many Filipino educators teaching abroad are well-trained, others may find it difficult to adjust to new pedagogical settings due to limited access to professional development programs [25, 26]. Cindy's experience, that is, "My training includes Kagan Training, SIOP, and Reading Apprenticeship," contrasts with John's statement, "I did not have any special training."

The increasing number of Filipino instructors moving abroad is a result of a larger trend in international education, where there is a growing need for teachers who speak English. According to reports, some 1,500 Filipino educators are sent abroad each year to cover shortages in nations like Thailand, Vietnam, and the United States [15]. These teachers face difficulties such as cultural adjustment, disparities in educational systems, and differing expectations for classroom management, even while their knowledge is respected [25]. These incidents show how important it is to have support networks that help teachers integrate into foreign educational systems more easily.

The distinctive experiences of Filipino educators overseas are highlighted by the combination of quantitative and qualitative research, which also highlights the necessity of focused professional development initiatives. In addition to increasing their efficacy in foreign teaching settings, these interventions will help them transition more easily and advance their careers. Essential insights into the profiles of Filipino educators and their experiences overseas are revealed by combining quantitative and qualitative data, providing a thorough grasp of both individual travels and more general demographic patterns within the teaching profession. According to findings from the research, this integration is essential for addressing the various demands of educators, especially with regard to migration patterns and professional growth [27, 28]. For instance, Filipino teachers are acknowledged globally for their proficiency in teaching English, highlighting their important position in the global education scene [28].

The literature additionally stresses the significance of providing mid-career educators with structured training programs that address their personal adaptations to new teaching situations as well as their professional capacities. International teaching experiences, such as study abroad programs, improve instructors' global competencies and increase their effectiveness in a variety of educational contexts [27]. This supports the findings of Moorhouse and Harfitt [29] who observe that the sharing of educational techniques facilitates professional learning during such events [29]. All things considered, these extensive training and development initiatives are essential to boosting Filipino teachers' influence in international education as well as their stability and career growth.

Studies showing that teachers' motives for professional development frequently originate from internal drivers aimed at enhancing student results further emphasize the importance of customized professional development programs [19, 30]. This internal drive is indicative of a larger pattern in educational environments, wherein an awareness of the unique demands of educators results in efficient support systems. Research specifically shows that professional development needs to be collaborative, with a focus on shared learning experiences and peer assistance [31]. These cooperative components are essential for tackling the difficulties educators face, especially when they move to other cultural contexts overseas.

Table 1.

Demographic of Filipino teachers who left their home country to teach in the U.S.

Personal and Demographic Profile	n	%
Age		
26 to 35 years old	24	34.8
36 to 45 years old	24	49.3
46 to 57 years old	11	15.9
Sex		
Male	18	26.1
Female	51	73.9
Marital Status		
Single	21	30.4
Married	46	66.7
Separated/Annulled	2	2.9
Educational Background		
Baccalaureate	18	26.1
Masters	46	66.7
Doctorate	5	7.2
Training Background		
None	11	15.9
Subject-specific and pedagogical	31	44.9
Technology Integration	9	13.0
Assessment and data analysis	3	4.3
Professional development and leadership	12	17.4
Combination of training	3	4.3
Current Affiliation		
Total	69	100

4.2. *The Filipino Teachers' Pathways to the U.S.*

Filipino educators in the United States migrate in a variety of ways, with the most popular being through intermediary agencies (58.0%), which are followed by direct applications (33.3%) and personal referrals (8.7%). In addition to underlining the importance of professional networks and organized support structures in the relocation process, these pathways also illustrate the purposeful efforts made by educators to secure chances for teaching abroad.

The main route for Filipino teachers looking for work overseas is through intermediary agencies. John said, "I applied through the agency, which then assisted me in my application to move to the U.S." Specialized in recruiting foreign teachers, these agencies simplify the difficult process of finding work, acquiring visas, and acclimating to new work settings. Teachers can relocate abroad more easily and effectively because of their organized help, which includes job placements, interview coaching, and legal advice. These organizations assist in guaranteeing adherence to employment regulations while reducing the uncertainty surrounding relocation.

Another important pathway that shows how social networks can open doors to opportunities abroad is through personal recommendations. "Oh, from a referral from my friend, my dearest friend, Jo," Dhup recalled. This illustrates how personal ties act as reliable information sources, lowering worries regarding cultural changes, job stability, and working circumstances. In order to support and mentor their peers during the migration process, Filipino educators who are currently employed overseas are essential. Through first-hand experiences provided by these referrals, prospective migrants can make well-informed decisions and gain the assistance of established networks.

For Filipino instructors looking for jobs abroad, direct applications offer another path while being the least popular. With this approach, people must look for job openings on their own, apply, and handle the hiring and visa procedures without the help of an agency. "I applied for those states and got interviews," John explained his experience. "Their school extended a job offer to me... That's when it began." Although this method gives more freedom, it also has drawbacks because it lacks organized assistance, which makes it less popular with teachers.

The preference for intermediary agencies and personal referrals aligns with migration research emphasizing the role of networks and structured systems in facilitating global labor mobility. A study published in the *Review of Economic Studies* highlights that social connections significantly impact migration decisions by providing crucial information and reducing uncertainties associated with relocating [16]. Similarly, Batista and Narciso [13] argue that personal and professional relationships play a key role in mitigating risks and bridging information gaps in the migration process [13].

Filipino educators migrate to the United States through structured agencies, social referrals, or independent applications. While agencies provide the most comprehensive support, referrals offer a more informal but reliable approach, and direct applications grant autonomy at the cost of increased complexity. The findings underscore the significance of professional networks and recruitment structures in ensuring the successful integration of Filipino teachers into international education systems.

Filipino educators immigrate to the US either independently, through social referrals, or organized agencies [25]. Agencies give the most thorough support, although direct applications allow liberty at the expense of greater complexity, and referrals offer a more casual but trustworthy method. The results highlight how important professional networks and hiring practices are to the effective integration of Filipino teachers into global educational institutions.

Table 2.

Pathways Taken by Filipino Teachers to Secure Teaching Positions in the U.S.

Pathways to the US	n	%
Referral from a friend	23	33.3%
Through intermediary agencies	40	58.0%
Direct invitation	6	8.7%
Total	69	100.00

4.3. Factors Shaping the Diaspora of Filipino Teachers

A number of variables influence Filipino teachers' intentions to immigrate to the US, but the top three are family support, career advancement, and financial security. Qualitative testimonies support the quantitative data, which identifies greater prospects for professional growth and development (Mean = 4.31, SD = 1.07) and better pay packages and higher incomes (Mean = 4.26, SD = 0.93) as the main motivators.

Financial difficulty in the Philippines is a major factor in the decision of many instructors to relocate. According to Dhup, "I moved primarily for financial reasons—to earn a better salary and fund personal investments." May also agrees, saying that teachers in the Philippines are underpaid. There is a big pay gap between there and here, particularly in public schools where we only get paid once a month. Managing finances is quite difficult, particularly if you are the primary provider and have tuition payments.

These testimonies highlight how teachers are compelled to look for work in the United States due to economic hardships that are made worse by low pay and unpredictable pay schedules. "Salary was the primary factor in my decision, ranking as my top priority," Cindy continues. These remarks highlight the extreme financial strain teachers endure and their belief that working overseas is the only path to financial stability.

The desire for career advancement is another powerful motivator in addition to monetary rewards. The dearth of prospects for career progression in the Philippines is a source of dissatisfaction for many educators. According to Cindy, "I felt stuck in my role as Teacher III, with no chance of moving up to a higher rank." May agrees, saying, "There aren't many opportunities for promotions. This is consistent with research showing that professional stagnation, especially in systems where promotions are slow and frequently based on seniority rather than merit, pushes educators to look for opportunities elsewhere. Despite promises, promotions were elusive even after two years of waiting and taking on

extra responsibilities without compensation. Filipino instructors have a clearer route to career progression in the United States, which is thought to have a more meritocratic system.

Furthermore, one of the strongest arguments for migration is the need to provide for family members (Mean = 4.11, SD = 1.74). Filipino educators frequently see moving as a way to improve their families' financial situation. The chance to send money home and improve the lives of our loved ones surpasses the financial sacrifices, as May argues. Jerlu also emphasizes the traditional expectation of providing for both immediate and extended family. These results illustrate the strong influence of familial responsibilities on Filipino migration choices.

Other factors also come into play, like having access to higher educational resources (Mean = 4.00, SD = 1.29). John points out that there is a significant technological divide between the Philippines and the US: "In the Philippines, I have to supply my own Wi-Fi, and my students don't have Chromebooks." The fact that every student has a Chromebook here makes teaching easier. This testimony demonstrates how the lack of resources in Philippine schools leads educators to look for better-equipped settings overseas.

Personal reasons like the desire to experience a different culture and way of life also play a role in migration decisions (Mean = 4.08, SD = 1.46). Access to resources for higher education is one of the other characteristics that are taken into consideration (Mean = 4.00, SD = 1.29). The fact that every student has a Chromebook here makes teaching easier, but John notes that there is a big technology gap between the Philippines and the US: "In the Philippines, I have to supply my own Wi-Fi, and my students don't have Chromebooks." This testimony illustrates how educators in the Philippines seek out better-equipped environments abroad due to the dearth of resources in Philippine schools.

Although they are moderate variables, leaving the Philippines' educational realities (Mean = 3.40, SD = 1.57) and looking for a more secure and safe environment (Mean = 3.39, SD = 1.60) nonetheless influence migration decisions. May's dissatisfaction with the system is representative of a widespread opinion: "The system seemed unfair, with promotions frequently going to those with connections instead of hardworking individuals." These findings imply that, although monetary and professional incentives are crucial, structural problems in the Philippine education system also support the decision to migrate. This frustration prompted me to think about other options.

Financial stability, professional growth, and family responsibilities are the main reasons why Filipino teachers come to the United States, with access to superior resources and cultural experience acting as additional motivators. Their stories shed light on larger trends in labor mobility as highly qualified workers look for settings that offer both financial stability and career satisfaction.

Relevant literature demonstrates how discoveries about the experiences, motivations, and difficulties faced by Filipino educators overseas have been integrated. There are significant differences in the professional experiences of Filipino teachers in the Philippines and the United States, according to a study comparing job satisfaction among the two groups. Filipino teachers in the Philippines showed higher levels of satisfaction with student discipline and parental participation, whereas those in the U.S. reported higher levels of satisfaction with coworker connections [25]. According to these results, working in the United States offers better chances for professional cooperation and financial gains, but it also brings with it new difficulties with regard to community involvement and classroom management.

This movement's economic and career-driven nature is demonstrated by the relocation of special education teachers from the Philippines. Unfavorable working conditions, such as an overwhelming caseload, numerous administrative tasks, and a lack of professional support, cause many Filipino special education teachers to leave their homeland. A mutually beneficial link between supply and demand in the educational sector is demonstrated by their migration, which addresses the U.S. deficit of special education teachers [11].

Filipino teachers' experiences in the United States are significantly shaped by cultural adaption in addition to financial incentives. According to research, Filipino immigrant teachers in Texas saw their relocation as a challenge as well as an opportunity, requiring them to make changes to both their

personal and professional identities [24]. These results shed light on the general subject of migrant professionals' adaptability and resilience as they negotiate a new educational and cultural environment.

Economic considerations mostly drive Filipino migration, as evidence suggests that migrants often experience significant financial gains when they go to high-income countries such as the United States. A young, inexperienced worker coming to the United States, for example, may see an average wage boost of almost \$14,000 per year, with Filipino migrants experiencing their income rising three to six times after migration [21]. The glaring income gap between the Philippines and developed nations like the United States continues to be a significant draw, confirming that the fundamental driving force behind migration is the desire for better economic prospects [10].

Table 3.

Factors that influence Filipino teachers' decision to leave their home country for work in the U.S.

Factors	N	Mean	sd	IN
1. Higher salaries and better compensation packages	68	4.26	0.93	H
2. More opportunities for professional growth and development	67	4.31	1.07	H
3. Better working condition	66	3.80	1.18	H
4. To provide better support for families in the Philippines	66	4.11	1.74	H
5. Access to better educational resources and facilities	65	4.00	1.29	H
6. The appeal of experiencing a different culture and lifestyle	63	4.08	1.46	H
7. Escape from educational realities in the Philippines	62	3.40	1.57	M
8. The strong desire for a higher standard of living	59	3.92	1.70	H
9. To seek a safer and more stable environment	57	3.39	1.60	M
10. Opportunities for family reunification	55	2.91	1.74	M
11. Chance to travel	19	4.32	2.00	H
12. To experience diverse cultures	10	4.40	1.59	H
13. To escape from a negative work environment	6	4.00	1.16	H

Note: 1.00 to 1.49 – Very Low (VL); 1.50 to 2.49 – Low (L); 2.50 to 3.49 Moderate (M); 3.50 to 4.49 High (H); 4.49 to 5.00 Very High (VH).

4.4. The Advantages of U.S. Teaching Dynamics

Table 4 reflects the benefits of teaching in the United States, where most respondents cited the availability of structured support (89.9%) and reduced administrative obligations (88.4%) as major advantages. These elements imply that the American educational system provides a nurturing atmosphere and effective administrative procedures, freeing up teachers to concentrate on instruction. Although less often acknowledged, other benefits include the adoption of streamlined approaches (49.3%) and enhanced student involvement (40.6%). All things considered, the data highlights how crucial operational effectiveness and assistance are to improving the educational process.

A stark difference between professional experiences in the Philippines and the United States is brought to light by the combination of qualitative results with the benefits of teaching in the United States. Participants underlined how American teaching dynamics offer organized assistance, less administrative work, and chances for professional development, freeing up teachers to concentrate on individualized instruction and mentoring. May's reflections, "I came across a wealth of opportunities for community involvement, such as joining organizations like the Unified Federation for Filipino American Educators that foster mentorship and support networks, for example," highlight the abundance of options and community involvement she encountered, including joining groups that promote support networks and mentorship, such as the Unified Federation for Filipino American Educators. Jerlu added: "Because they have fewer administrative responsibilities, teachers in the United States can spend more time organizing lessons and catering to the needs of individual students." In contrast to the resource-constrained setting in the Philippines, these insights emphasize how structural differences—such as streamlined processes and an emphasis on tailored instruction—enhance teaching efficacy and professional satisfaction.

Numerous studies have examined closely at the experiences of Filipino teachers in the US, and the results show a complex interaction between professional development, resilience, and adaptation.

According to Chua [32] research on Filipino educators in Texas, one of the main reasons for migration is the desire for "greener pastures" or greater possibilities. However, this shift is not without its obstacles since teachers frequently struggle to adapt to the educational settings in the United States. Despite these obstacles, a lot of Filipino educators discover networks of support that help them deal with cultural differences and work-related demands [32]. Crucially, Chua [32] highlights the harm that microaggressions cause to these educators' mental health, which gives the conversation about their experiences a crucial new angle.

Drawing on this resilience theme, Arcillo [12] investigates Filipino teachers' experiences in the United States [12]. Virgin Islands, providing insight into their ability to surmount certain obstacles, including separation anxiety and the cultural adjustment process. Despite these challenges, these teachers are committed to providing high-quality instruction. Their beneficial impact on school communities, where they not only survive but flourish as successful teachers, is shown by Arcillo [12] findings. Their success in a variety of educational environments demonstrates their flexibility and commitment, supporting the idea that Filipino instructors are essential to the American educational system.

Expanding on these viewpoints, Modesto [33] examines the professional identities and development of Filipino immigrant teachers in South Texas Modesto [33]. Arcillo [12] builds on this concept of resilience [12]. These educators see their experiences as chances for both professional and personal growth despite the persistence of systemic and cultural hurdles. Modesto provides examples of how they intentionally create significant professional identities in order to establish themselves as important members of their educational communities. They have a tremendous influence on both students and coworkers, as demonstrated by their capacity to adapt to different educational systems while maintaining their cultural heritage.

Collectively, these studies show how Filipino educators successfully negotiate the difficult obstacles of migrating while enhancing the American educational system with their tenacity, knowledge, and varied viewpoints.

Table 4.
The advantages of teaching in the U.S.

Advantages	n	%
1. Adoption of a streamlined approach	34	49.3
2. Increased student involvement	28	40.6
3. Fewer administrative burdens	61	88.4
4. Provision of structured support	62	89.9

4.5. The Realities and Challenges of Filipino Educators Teaching in the U.S.

Commuting is the biggest obstacle that Filipino teachers in the United States experience (73.9%), underscoring the difficulties of adjusting to different transportation systems that may be different from the more available public transit in the Philippines. Differences in climate (69.6%) are similarly problematic since they have an impact on everyday life and health. These challenges are exacerbated by homesickness (69.6%), highlighting the psychological cost of migrating.

Managing student conduct (55.1%) and cultural diversity (53.6%) in the classroom are major challenges that call for modifications to instructional strategies and methods of discipline. Communication problems are also exacerbated by language hurdles (34.8%), which complicates adaption.

Discrimination (26.1%) and educational divergence (26.1%) are still issues that impair teachers' confidence and system integration, albeit being less commonly reported. Despite their difficulty, these obstacles highlight how resilient Filipino educators are. These transitions can be made easier, and their continued success in the American educational system can be guaranteed by offering focused support, mentorship, and community involvement. The qualitative results offer a more profound and intimate comprehension of the quantitative facts. Filipino teachers' experiences are greatly influenced by

emotional and cultural elements like homesickness, student conduct, and discrimination, in addition to practical difficulties like commute and temperature adjustment. Their tenacity in conquering these obstacles emphasizes the necessity of more robust support networks to facilitate their assimilation and adjustment to the American educational system.

May's narrative effectively illustrates the huge obstacles and difficulties in commuting (73.9%). She recounts, "I used to spend up to three hours every day on the road. My late evening returns and early morning routine really highlight how commuting throws off work-life balance and adds to stress and exhaustion." Long commutes are linked to lower job satisfaction and productivity, according to research, which explains why this is the problem that Filipino teachers mention the most.

For John, the difficulty of climate differences (69.6%) is closely related to commuting. He shared, "My struggles with colder temperatures and the societal pressure to change really highlight both the cultural transition and the physical suffering I had to endure." A constant challenge is adjusting to the changing seasons in the United States from the tropical climate of the Philippines, especially for people who are not used to extremely low temperatures.

Homesickness (69.6%) is a clear indicator of the emotional toll of migration, as May expressed her intense want to be with her family again, especially her daughter. She wants to go back home, but she is hesitant because of financial and professional factors. Cindy mentioned, "I felt alone at first during cultural holidays in the United States because it was less communal than in the Philippines." These incidents demonstrate the detrimental effects of being away from loved ones on one's emotional health, making homesickness one of the main issues faced by migrating instructors.

Adapting to student behavior (55.1%) is another major obstacle. John describes an incidence of open disrespect where a student instructed him to "go home," which stands in stark contrast to the Philippines' deeply rooted tradition of reverence. Dhup explained, "The additional challenges of working with special education pupils are significant, especially since customized lesson plans add to the burden." Cindy pointed out, "I've noticed that kids no longer treat professors with the formality I was used to."

These reports support the data by demonstrating the stark differences in student interactions and classroom discipline between the two nations.

Cindy's observations regarding extracurricular activities, which are organized differently than in the Philippines, highlight the larger problem of cultural diversity (53.6%). John goes on to explain how children refer to their instructors by their first names, which is not a custom that Filipino teachers are accustomed to since they value formal titles. May and Jerlu talk about their difficulties adapting their teaching methods to meet the standards of American education. These incidents demonstrate how difficult it may be to negotiate cultural differences in a classroom.

Even though they may not seem as prevalent as other difficulties, language barriers (34.8%) are nevertheless a significant problem, especially for educators who work with multilingual pupils. John talks about how he uses translation software to interact with Spanish-speaking pupils, and Jerlu remembers how difficult it was to modify his teaching style to fit the comprehension levels of his students. Their experiences show that language adaptation encompasses more than just fluency; it also includes slang, regional accents, and the capacity to interact productively with a variety of learners.

Despite being reported by fewer instructors, discrimination (26.1%) remains a serious issue. Integration is made more challenging by school administrators' mistrust over the hiring of Filipino instructors, according to May. The darker reality of working in some school environments is also shown by Dhup and May, who describe incidents of kids being aggressive and verbally abusive. These incidents imply that, despite its rarity, discrimination has a profound effect on those who experience it.

The thoughts of Jerlu and Cindy, who discuss their difficulties adjusting to various curricula, classroom arrangements, and pedagogical expectations, highlight the difficulty of educational divergence (26.1%). Teachers must adapt their methods to sustain effective student involvement because teaching styles in the Philippines and the United States sometimes differ.

Both quantitative and qualitative findings are supported by recent research, which highlights the main difficulties Filipino teachers in the US experience. Teachers encounter logistical challenges when acclimating to American transportation systems, which has a substantial impact on their well-being and productivity. Furthermore, adjusting to harsh weather conditions makes things more difficult because migration studies show that climate variations impact social integration and physical comfort, which is important to comprehend Filipino teachers' experiences. Additionally, homesickness continues to be a significant emotional burden for Filipino educators, escalating feelings of social exclusion and familial yearning. The authors note that these instructors' emotional pain is further exacerbated by being away from loved ones [19].

Another significant challenge is classroom management. Filipino teachers in the United States have more trouble disciplining students than their counterparts in the Philippines [25]. The difficulties teachers face in adjusting to American social norms, such as informal teacher-student interactions and disparate extracurricular structures, are further exacerbated by the cultural adjustment that makes their integration more difficult [19]. These challenges are made worse by language obstacles. Even Filipino teachers who speak English well struggle with regional dialects and communication styles [17].

As reported by Pontillas [28] professional integration is hampered by systemic issues, such as prejudice, which also notes that some administrators are skeptical about employing Filipino instructors [28]. Additionally, there are additional adjustment challenges due to educational divergence, which includes variations in curricula and teaching practices. Fabella, et al. [25] highlight how these disparities make it difficult for instructors to transfer into the U.S. educational system [25]. All things considered, the material that has been mentioned demonstrates the various difficulties that Filipino educators encounter when navigating their career paths overseas.

Table 5.

Filipino Educator's challenges in teaching in the U.S.

Challenges	n	%
1. Climate difference	48	69.6%
2. Difficulty in commuting	51	73.9%
3. Cultural diversity	37	53.6%
4. Discrimination	18	26.1%
5. Educational divergence	18	26.1%
6. Dealing with student behavior	38	55.1%
7. Homesickness	48	69.6%
8. Language barrier	24	34.8%

Overall, the average Filipino teacher in the United States is between the ages of 36 and 45, married, has a master's degree, and has had subject-specific pedagogical training. They frequently travel to the US by invitation, recommendation from friends, or through intermediaries. Their desire for better pay, better working conditions, career growth chances, and greater family support are some of the factors influencing their diaspora. A higher level of living, an escape from the difficulties of the Philippine school system, and the opportunity to experience a new culture and way of life all entice many. While there are benefits to teaching in the US, such as a more efficient educational system, greater student participation, and fewer administrative duties, there are drawbacks as well, such as climatic variations, cultural variety, prejudice, and homesickness.

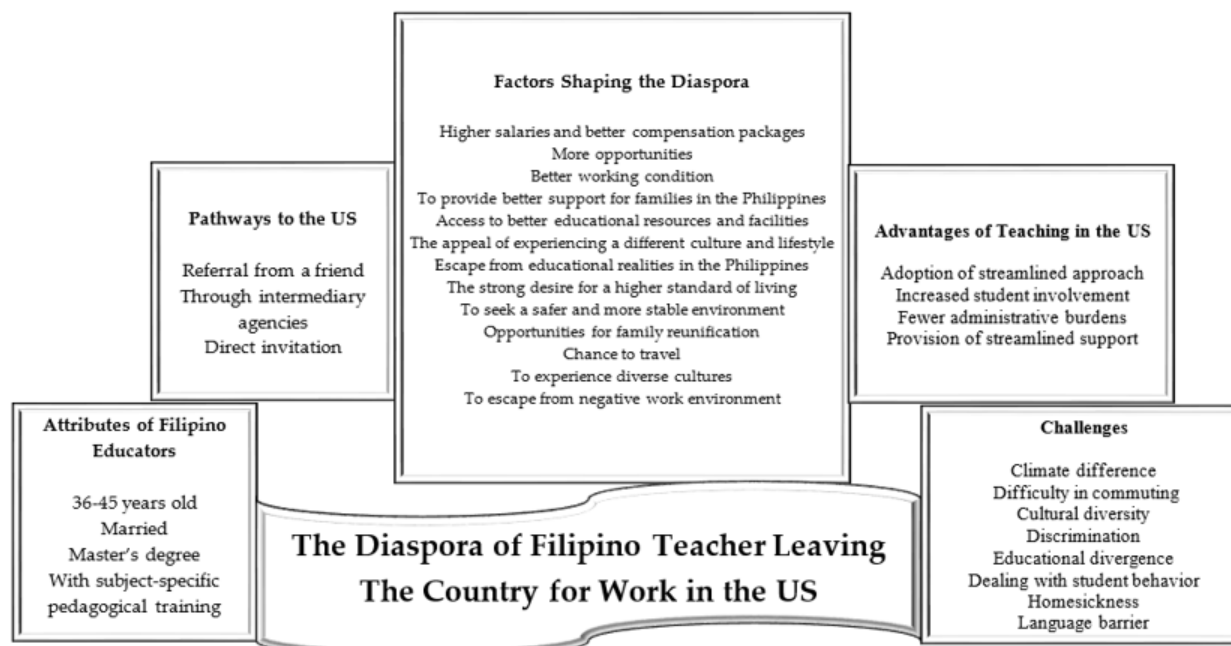


Figure 2.
Diagram representing the primary and secondary themes within the qualitative data.

5. Conclusion

The migration of Filipino teachers to the U.S. reflects a deeper global challenge in education: the pursuit of financial security, career advancement, and professional fulfillment in the face of systemic limitations at home. Predominantly mid-career educators with advanced degrees, these teachers leave not just for better salaries but for opportunities denied to them in the Philippines. Their migration pathways—often facilitated by agencies and professional networks—highlight the structured yet complex nature of global labor mobility. Without addressing these push factors, the Philippines risks a continued exodus of its most skilled educators.

While teaching in the United States provides access to superior resources, organized support, and less administrative work, so the process is far from easy. Filipino educators must modify their teaching strategies due to challenges with language limitations, student conduct, and cultural adaptation. Long commutes, drastic climatic changes, and severe homesickness are some of the issues that negatively impact student well-being outside of the classroom. Resilience is a necessary quality for survival since discrimination and structural divergence make integration even more difficult.

These realities demand action. Stronger institutional support—both in the Philippines and abroad—can bridge the gaps in teacher preparation, transition, and professional development. Governments and policymakers must work together to create sustainable solutions, ensuring that migration is not a necessity but a choice. If left unaddressed, the continued loss of highly qualified educators will weaken the Philippine education system while host countries benefit from their expertise. A collaborative approach that values, supports, and retains teachers—whether at home or abroad—is crucial for the future of education worldwide.

Transparency:

The authors confirm that the manuscript is an honest, accurate, and transparent account of the study; that no vital features of the study have been omitted; and that any discrepancies from the study as planned have been explained. This study followed all ethical practices during writing.

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