

## Teaching competencies and expatriate experiences of Filipino educators in Indonesia: Basis for an enhanced school management support program

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### Abstract

Given the economic reasons of moving to another country to teach, Filipino teachers in Indonesia face challenges in terms of cultural adaptation, pedagogical adjustments, and professional development including the danger of undocumented migration. All these appear to be blind spots when they decide to teach outside the country. Receiving schools must be able to establish programs to aid foreign teachers in these aspects as this will also determine the effects on aligning with the school's goals. With these, the researcher examined the teaching competencies, perceived leadership practices, and the different experiences of the Filipino expatriate teachers in Indonesia. Using a convergent parallel mixed-method design, the study surveyed 60 Filipino teachers and conducted semi-structured interviews with 10 Filipino teachers and 5 administrators and local teachers in one international primary school in Jakarta, Indonesia

Results revealed that teachers demonstrated an overall competence quantitative described as "expert" ( $M = 3.58$ ) strong competence in integrating educational technologies and using technology to enhance engagement ( $M = 3.82$ ). However, participation in professional development activities related to innovation was relatively lower ( $M = 3.10$ ). Moreover, the perceptions of Filipino educators regarding leadership and management practices in Indonesian schools reveal generally positive experiences ( $M = 3.22$ ) with the participatory goal-setting as having the lowest mean ( $M = 3.10$ ). Additionally, the result of the simple linear regression revealed that the leadership practices significantly affected teaching competence but modestly predict teaching competence [ $F(1, 58) = 5.53, p = .022, R^2 = .087$ ]. The experiences of the expatriate Filipino teachers vary on different dimensions. Filipino teachers in Indonesia experience a mix of professional fulfillment and systemic challenges. They are celebrated for their creativity, adaptability, and strong classroom management, which make them highly valued in international schools. However, their journey as expatriates is marked by gaps in structured support for cultural integration, professional development, and participatory leadership.

To support Filipino educators in Indonesia across the four stages of cultural adjustment, the researcher proposes the school management support program tagged as "Fil-Indo Series". The program includes four main phases/stages patterned from Lysgaard's U-Curve Theory of Cultural Adjustment. Each stage has its program designed to address the needs of the Filipino expatriate teachers, which likewise highlights the role of school management support. From these, future studies should include other predictors (e.g., expatriate adjustment, teaching resources, language proficiency) to build a more comprehensive model.

**Keywords:** U-Curve Theory; JD-R Model; Filipinos in Indonesia; Educational Management

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## 1. Introduction

One of the significant aspects of educational management is the challenge that is posed by teacher attrition. This concern affects both the quality of education and the stability of the academic environment. While many studies on education management focus on students' academic achievement and curriculum effectiveness, research has also put emphasis on teacher efficacy and job satisfaction, which are considered contributing factors to teacher attrition.

The movement of professionals from one nation to another has significantly increased in the contemporary world. High rates of teacher attrition constitute a worldwide issue of concern. Multilayered social, economic, and political factors are seen to have resulted in this migration, including the fact that the number of professionals working abroad continues to rise. To accomplish personal academic objectives, develop intercultural awareness, and attain a sense of autonomy, many educators and students in the field of education are actively seeking opportunities to travel internationally. Furthermore, educators are increasingly expected to cultivate cultural sensitivity and expand their professional and personal horizons (Ospina & Medina, 2020).

In the case of the Philippines, its teachers have been in demand in different parts of the world including of the neighboring Asian countries. Reports have been made about Filipino teachers being preferred over other nationalities because of their linguistic competence and work ethics inclined towards hard work and resilience. Filipino teachers' placement in Asian schools could be seen as a great advantage for rates for these teachers are much lower than their western counterparts. Because of this, retaining them in these schools would mean exerting efforts from the school management to address their needs professionally as this is a factor in teacher attrition.

It is important to take into consideration that Filipino teachers' main reason for moving to another country to work is economic. According to the Alliance of Concerned Teachers (ACT), underpaid is the description of teachers in public or private schools in the Philippines on their condition (Santos, 2023). The group advocates an increase from P27,000 to more than P36,000 per month for the Teacher 1 category. Several factors are said to contribute to the condition of Filipino teachers. These include problems of unmanageable class sizes which results in time-management challenges, and low wages, resulting in poor student performance. An average of 1,500 teachers left annually to work abroad as reported by the Philippine Overseas Employment Administration (POEA) show that from 2013 to 2017 (Santos, 2023). This is a scenario that host schools of Filipino teachers abroad must consider so that they can retain the high quality of teachers that Filipinos are.

This scenario of teachers going abroad for better working conditions caused the researcher to conduct this study. While the researcher has his own share of experiences as an expatriate in Indonesia, he would want to analyze further this situation from an educational management perspective considering the educational landscape in Indonesia and if it fosters professional development and wellness and welfare for Filipino teachers in the country.

### 1.1. Statement of the problem

This study aims to analyze the level of teaching competence and the actual experiences of Filipino teachers under the school management and practices in a primary school in Indonesia and come up with a proposal on school management support programs, especially in professional development.

Specifically, it sought answers to the following questions:

- What is the level of teaching competence in terms of:
  - Innovative Teaching Methods,
  - Adaptability and implementation of Diverse Learning Needs,
  - Classroom Management,
  - Student participation, and
  - Reflection to practices?
- What are the perceptions of Filipino teachers about the leadership and management practices in Indonesian schools?
- To what extent do school leadership practices and management predict the teaching competence of Filipino educators?
- What are the experiences of the Filipino teachers as expatriates?
- What support programs for professional development may be proposed to aid the teachers with their teaching competencies and experiences as expatriate educators based on the results of the study?

## 2. Methodology

This section discusses the methods and techniques, population and sample of the study, the instrument to be used, data gathering procedure, and data processing and statistical treatment.

### 2.1. Research design

This mixed method research is aimed at examining the teaching competencies and experiences of expatriates about Filipino teachers. In mixed methods of research, a technique for gathering, evaluating, and "mixing" quantitative and qualitative research and methodologies in one study to grasp a research problem. Convergent parallel design is a mixed-method approach whereby concurrently gathered qualitative and quantitative data are then evaluated for convergence. Triangulating data from several sources helps researchers to have a thorough awareness of the research issue and provide insights from both qualitative richness and quantitative rigor.

This design is deemed fit for the goal of this current study as the combination of quantitative data (to be gathered through self-report survey) and qualitative data (key informant interviews) provided more comprehensive data, which were helpful in coming up with conclusive results and well-informed recommendations. In a convergent parallel type of mixed methods research design, the triangulation is made by comparing and merging the results from both data sets to identify convergences, divergences, and complementarities. This type of mixed method allowed the researcher to establish validity and reliability of the results.

The quantitative part of the design included data to answer the level of competence and the level of management practices. These were more descriptive in nature, while determining the relationship between these variables underwent inferential statistics. On the other hand, the qualitative part of the design was done following an examination of the experiences of the participants and the perspective of school administrators and local teachers. These follow the structure of the model The U Curve Theory of Cultural Adjustment (Cultural Orientation Resource Exchange (CORE), 2024) exploring the different phases of adjustments.

### 2.2. Population and sampling

The target population of this study are the Filipino teachers in a school in Indonesia. These include an approximate of sixty (60) individuals. Of these teachers, the researcher used the complete enumeration for the part of the quantitative data. Given the small number of individuals that comprise the population, it was fitting to use complete enumeration to have statistically sound results for the quantitative aspect of this study.

On the other hand, the participants who were included were selected through purposive sampling comprise a cohort composed of ten (10) teachers. Another cohort to provide some data for triangulation composed of five (5) individuals with a combination of school administrators and local teachers. The following table illustrates the different criteria to be used for the selection of participants for the qualitative aspect of the research.

**Table 1** Population and Sampling

Cohort	Criteria	Number of target participants
1	Filipino teacher With at least 12 months of experience in the Indonesian school With at least 12 months of experience in a Philippine school Willing to be interviewed	Ten (10)
2	2.1. must be a school administrator of the Indonesian school (principal, department head, administrative officer) or Indonesian teacher 2.2. With at least 12 months of experience with Filipino Teachers 2.3. Willing to be interviewed	Five (5)

### 2.3. Respondents of the study

The main respondents of this study are Filipino teachers in Indonesia. This group of respondents all had a chance to participate in the self-report survey, interview, or both. These Filipino educators are also beneficiaries of the study.

## 2.4. Research instrument

The study used two (2) main instruments for the collection of data. Each was used for the quantitative and qualitative phase of the study.

### 2.4.1. Self-report Surveys

The self-report surveys were used to gather data to answer research questions that comprise the quantitative aspect of the research design. This was a researcher-made instrument that underwent validation and pilot testing. The survey has three parts as enumerated below:

- Part 1: Profile including age, sex, and number of teaching experience
- Part 2: This includes statements relating to the teaching competencies of the teachers. This part used a Likert scale to quantify the responses.
- Part 3: This part has a list of statements relating to the leadership and educational management practices of school administrators that was significant in determining the degree of supportive environment that the Filipino teachers experience in Indonesia.

The survey was administered face-to-face to address factors such as perceived anonymity and social desirability bias. However, to provide the respondents with convenience, the schedule was based on their availability.

### 2.4.2. Semi-structured Interviews

- Cohort 1: Qualitative Data from Filipino Participants

A structured plan or guide with a predetermined list of questions and topics intended for a qualitative research interview is called an interview schedule. It guarantees uniformity and enables investigators to methodically collect comprehensive data from subjects, supporting the investigation of study goals or topics. The interview questions were likewise validated by experts to ensure objectivity and alignment with the research questions. The interview was conducted in person depending on the availability of the respondents. With their consent, a recording of the proceedings was produced and transcribed.

- Cohort 2: Triangulation with School Administrators and Local/Indonesian Teachers

Similar to cohort 2, once the researcher is allowed to gather data from the identified respondents, he conducted semi-structured interviews where questions augmented the information provided by the Filipino respondents. This ensured that the responses verify, complement or converge with the quantitative data results.

## 2.5. Data Gathering and Procedure

### 2.5.1. Preliminary Steps- (Selection of Respondents and Obtaining Permit to Conduct the Study)

A deliberate sampling process was used to choose research respondents based on how relevant the sample is to the research question. Diverse viewpoints, informed consent, and ethical considerations are essential. By obtaining rich, context-specific data from a representative sample, the method seeks to improve the validity and generalizability of qualitative research findings. The researcher requested approval from the school administration.

### 2.5.2. Instrumentation and Validation

Instrumentation is the process of choosing and creating instruments for research data collection. These instruments' accuracy and dependability are guaranteed by validation. To evaluate the consistency and efficacy of the instruments and guarantee reliable and solid research results, methods such as expert review, and pilot testing were employed.

For expert review, the researcher invited three (3) validators with background in language studies, educational management, and research. All these validators also have at least ten (10) years in the education industry with experience in teacher education, language and stylistics, and leadership and management.

For the pilot testing, forty-seven (47) teachers answered the survey with background as teachers in other countries outside the Philippines. Although not the majority teach in Indonesia, no one from the pool of respondents for pilot testing is part of the actual participants of the study. The reliability was assessed using Bayesian Cronbach's alpha. Bayesian Cronbach's alpha was employed instead of the classical alpha because it provides more stable estimates with

small to moderate sample sizes, offers credible intervals that quantify uncertainty, and avoids restrictive assumptions inherent in traditional reliability measures.

Both scales demonstrated excellent internal consistency. As both alpha values exceed the widely accepted threshold of 0.80 for reliable research instruments, the results confirm that the survey scales used to assess expatriate Filipino educators' teaching competencies and experiences are highly dependable and psychometrically sound.

### *2.5.3. Data Gathering*

Upon approval to conduct the data gathering and validation of instruments, the researcher requested the consent of the respondents prior to the distribution of survey links and conduct of interview. The survey was administered face-to-face to address factors such as perceived anonymity and social desirability bias. However, to provide the respondents with convenience, the schedule was based on their availability. The interview was likewise conducted face-to-face or online depending on the availability of the respondents.

## **2.6. Data analysis**

### *2.6.1. Research Questions 1 to 2*

The data was analyzed through descriptive statistics. Descriptive statistics help researchers explore and understand the underlying patterns and trends within the data before proceeding to more complex analyses.

### *2.6.2. Research Question 3*

The data from the self-report surveys were treated through an inferential statistic called regression analysis. Regression analysis is a powerful statistical tool used to understand relationships between variables and make predictions. This study aims to determine the relationship between the level of teacher competence and the level of support from school. Its goal is to predict the amount of support from the school that would alter or improve teacher competence, especially with foreign teachers, specifically Filipino teachers.

### *2.6.3. Research Question 4*

The data from interview transcriptions were coded to identify relevant themes or patterns. After which, the data was summarized by condensing information to manageable bits of information. This step involves identifying key concepts, patterns, or themes emerging from individual cases or responses. For example, in the aspect of teaching competencies, 18 codes were identified, which were condensed, and eventually seven themes emerged.

Then, the researcher identified overarching patterns, or trends, that came out from the analysis. Special attention was given to unique cases or outliers. The findings were validated through comparing the results of the quantitative data. This constituted the convergence part of the data analysis. To provide an angle for triangulation, interview responses that contextualized the results of the quantitative data were integrated in the discussion. This aims to provide a space where data convergence and divergence may occur.

### *2.6.4. Research Question 5*

Data from both descriptive quantitative results and thematic qualitative results reached a point of convergence, which became the basis to address research question 5. This also provides for the output of the study.

## **2.7. Ethical considerations**

The researcher ensured that the following were observed for ethical conduct of data gathering:

## **2.8. Participant Participation**

Upon approval of the Letter of Informed Consent by the respondents, the researcher started with a short introductory statement about himself. He discussed the purposes and objectives of this study. Respondents were given the opportunity to ask questions about the project.

## **2.9. Voluntary Participation**

The researcher emphasized that participation in the study is voluntary, that respondents may opt to not answer questions they find too sensitive or are uncomfortable answering.

## 2.10. Confidentiality

The researcher informed the respondents that all data gathered from the process of data collection and the analysis will be kept confidential. Any information about them was recorded with a pseudonym instead of their name. Only the researcher knew their identity. It was not shared with or given to anyone else. Their identity remains undisclosed unless with their expressed permission.

## 2.11. Risks

All the questions in the survey and interview were for the sole purpose of the study and therefore, no private and unnecessary questions were asked during the conduct of the interview. Confidentiality and Privacy Concerns may be a possible risk. Emotional or Psychological Distress is also identified as potential risk as recalling negative experiences could trigger stress or discomfort. Participants may fear that sharing sensitive information could affect their employment or relationships within their school community. The researcher emphasized that participation is entirely voluntary and will not affect their employment or professional standing. He also ensured that participants understand they can withdraw at any time without consequences. Pseudonyms or codes were used and collecting identifiable information unless necessary were avoided.

## 2.12. Recruitment

There were no children, students, or minors involved in the study. Likewise, no other population was included in this study except those identified or those who met the selection criteria. However, the researcher ensured that no form of discrimination based on sex, gender, belief, color, race or nationality was observed during the participant selection.

- **Benefits.** The information to be provided by the participants was solely for the purpose of this study and was used for other purposes beyond.
- **Conflict of Interest.** The researcher ensured that there is no conflict of interest in the conduct of the study, which was reflected in the informed consent form.
- **Data Management.** As to data security measures, only the researcher had access to the raw data. Digital data was stored in a password-protected folder on a secure, encrypted device or institutional cloud storage (Google Drive or OneDrive). Interview recordings were likewise uploaded to the secured cloud storage. For data backup, there is one on a secure external drive and one on cloud storage. Data will be retained for five years after the completion of the thesis or as prescribed by institutional and ethical guidelines. This allows time for publication, verification, or follow-up research. After the prescribed period, digital data will be disposed of by securely deleting it using available data erasure software or applications. Physical data will be shredded to prevent recovery.

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## 3. Results and discussion

The results of the study informed the proposal of a support program for expatriate teachers from the school management. Primarily, it involved the assessment of the teaching competence of the participants ( $M = 3.75$ ;  $SD = 0.44$ ), with emphasis on strong competence in integrating educational technologies ( $M = 3.82$ ) and using technology to enhance engagement ( $M = 3.75$ ;  $SD = 0.44$ ). However, participation in professional development activities related to innovation was relatively lower ( $M = 3.10$ ). Saclanas et al. (2025) found that overseas Filipino teachers develop assertive communication, cultural competence, and reflective practices, all of which serve as personal job resources that enhance competence despite diverse job demands. While the high level of competence is present in the use of technology for enhanced instructional delivery, participation in programs to sustain the level of competence is notably low due to a lack of professional development activities. This means that teachers are performing at a high level largely through their own capacities, despite limitations in school-based developmental support.

To evaluate the congruence of these competencies, the leadership practices of the school managers were also examined. Among the practices presented interpreted through the JD-R model, setting clear performance expectations and standards ( $M = 3.40$ ;  $SD = 0.67$ ). The lowest-rated item, on the other hand, is involvement of the teachers in institutional goal-setting. Since leadership is a critical job source that enables teachers to adjust accordingly in a different educational landscape (Flores, 2023), they should be able to provide structure, clarity, and communication, which help reduce role ambiguity. However, the lower rate of participation and collaboration with the teachers in decision-making makes the teachers less empowered and unable to achieve their full potential and maximize their competencies. Studies also account for school leaders' engagement in improving behavior management, which would improve satisfaction (Herrera & Proff, 2023) among teachers helping to adjust to the new environment in a foreign land.

To further analyze the relationship of the competencies and leadership practices, a simple linear regression was also used. The results revealed that the leadership practices significantly affected teaching competence,  $F(1, 58) = 5.53$ ,  $p = .022$ , with  $R^2 = .087$ . Thus, the null hypothesis is rejected. This aligns with the ideas presented in the JD-R theory that job resources such as leadership contribute to positive work outcomes (Palimariu, 2025). However, it must also be noted that leadership is only one resource among other contributing factors, as explained by the 8.7% variance in teaching competence. This suggests that competencies related to instructional innovation may be influenced more strongly by other factors, such as access to resources, prior training, or individual teacher capability.

Following the mixed-methods design of the study. Experiences of the expatriate Filipino teachers in the context of this study were also gathered through FGDs to verify the quantitative data. Results revealed themes on professional fulfillment, creativity, adaptability, and classroom management. Filipino teachers in Indonesia are widely recognized for their creativity, adaptability, strong classroom management, and student-centered pedagogical practices, which align with the principles of the Merdeka Belajar curriculum emphasizing autonomy and critical thinking (Hunaepi & Suharta, 2024; Indrayadi & Alta, 2025). However, their journey is also marked by gaps in structured support for cultural integration, professional development, and participatory leadership consistent with the quantitative data. These limitations underscore the need for targeted professional development programs focusing on technology integration, innovative teaching methods, and continuous upskilling to meet the demands of 21st-century learning (Damanik & Widodo, 2024; Revina et al., 2023). Despite these challenges, Filipino teachers demonstrate resilience and a commitment to student success, often going beyond expectations to ensure learning outcomes. These experiences provide insights into offering contextualized programs and add depth to the quantitative results.

Using the Lysgaard's U-Curve Theory of Cultural Adjustment in analyzing both the quantitative and qualitative results, the researcher proposed the school management support program tagged as the "Fil-Indo Series." When viewed through the JD-R framework, the Fil-Indo Series serves as a resource-building intervention designed to reduce expatriate-specific job demands while strengthening institutional job resources across each stage of adjustment. The program seeks to provide structured support for onboarding, social integration, professional learning, and leadership engagement so that teachers are no longer required to depend solely on personal resilience to succeed.

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#### 4. Conclusions and recommendations

While expatriate Filipino teachers in this study possess strong intrinsic capabilities and adaptability, their continued growth is constrained by insufficient institutional mechanisms that systematically support innovation and reflective practice. Targeted and scheduled PD sessions, specifically on innovative teaching methods and individualized feedback strategies, should be made available to all Filipino teachers as a standard part of the school calendar, not on a voluntary or selective basis.

Findings also indicate that leadership support is most critical during transitional phases (e.g., entry and cultural adjustment), but its effectiveness depends on how well it is integrated with broader support systems that address cultural, professional, and social adaptation. Within the JD-R framework, this means that some resources are present, but they are not yet the kinds of relational and participatory resources needed to fully buffer the demands associated with expatriate teaching and cultural transition. Schools should therefore adopt inclusive leadership models such as teacher-led consultative committees. This should aim to strengthen participatory leadership structures, particularly in decision-making and feedback processes. Professional development support should be treated as a responsibility of the school management and its leadership and should not be left to the individual teacher's initiative. A clear, safe channel for raising concerns should be formalized before new programs are implemented. The limited explanatory power of leadership confirms the JD-R assertion that sustained performance depends on the interaction of multiple resources rather than a single factor. The regression finding should be used to justify a multifaceted support strategy. This should include leadership development as one strand, alongside structured cultural onboarding, accessible PD, and peer mentoring. These areas are reflected in the proposal in the Fil-Indo Series.

Narratives from the teachers suggest that current systems rely heavily on teacher adaptability rather than intentionally designed policies and programs. This highlights that these are structural rather than individual-level issues in supporting expatriate educators. The school should formalize, therefore, a cultural onboarding program for newly arrived Filipino teachers that includes the inclusion of basic Bahasa Indonesia language orientation, an introduction to Indonesian school culture and classroom norms, and a structured peer buddy assignment.

Enhancing leadership support and professional development can reduce strain and sustain performance, which is central to the JD-R framework and Lysgaard's U-Curve Theory of Cultural Adjustment. The school administration should

pilot the Fil-Indo Series beginning with the FINDO onboarding component for newly arriving Filipino teachers in the next academic year.

A separate study specifically measuring the relationship between Bahasa Indonesia proficiency and student learning outcomes is recommended to give schools and recruitment agencies empirically grounded guidance on language preparation requirements for incoming Filipino teachers.

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## Compliance with ethical standards

### *Disclosure of conflict of interest*

No conflict of interest to be disclosed.

### *Statement of informed consent*

Informed consent was obtained from all individual participants included in the study.”

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