

## MIGRATION EXPERIENCES OF FILIPINO TEACHERS IN NATIVE AMERICAN RESERVATION SCHOOLS



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### ABSTRACT

This study explores the experiences of Filipino teachers who relocated to the USA to teach in Native American Reservation Schools. It delves into their pre-migration lives, motivations for moving, their experiences in these schools, and the adaptation process, shedding light on both the positives and challenges that arose from their migration. Using descriptive phenomenological design, this study found that Filipino teachers migrated to a Native American Reservation School in the USA seeking personal growth, economic improvement, and cultural exchange, while leaving behind financial struggles and bureaucratic frustrations. Upon arrival, they experienced happiness and challenges, including language barriers, adapting to new teaching methods, and homesickness. They overcame these through language immersion and professional development. Migration offered benefits like improved finances and personal growth but also brought disadvantages such as family separation and limited social opportunities. In conclusion, the study illustrates the interplay of push and pull factors that motivated these teachers to migrate and highlights their resilience and adaptability in navigating these complex forces.

**Keywords:** migration experiences, Native American Reservation Schools, motivations, challenges

### INTRODUCTION

#### *Background of the Study*

Foreign migration is a powerful force shaping the careers of professionals in various fields, with education experiencing a growing trend of teachers seeking opportunities abroad for financial stability and career growth. This global migration trend reflects the universal desire for a better life and brighter future, leading professionals to pursue their aspirations in distant lands.

The United States stands out as a top destination for international professionals, offering the promise of the "American Dream." Filipino expatriates make up a significant portion, with approximately 9% of the estimated 2.2 million overseas workers, including a notable presence of teachers. From 2013 to 2017, the Philippine Overseas Employment Agency dispatched 7,725 Overseas Filipino Worker (OFW) educators to various countries, maintaining a consistent contribution of around 1,500 teachers to the international teaching community each year.

Despite advancements in the Native American education system, schools on reservations still confront significant challenges, with Native American students in the United States experiencing the highest dropout rates and lowest graduation rates among all racial and ethnic groups (Wolf et al., 2017). Their standardized test performance consistently lags behind the national average, and these schools struggle with low rates of academic achievement, primarily due to the pervasive factor of poverty deeply rooted within Native American communities. Financial disparities are evident, as Native American schools receive notably less funding per student compared to other public schools, despite the unique needs and complexities their students face (Wolf et al., 2017).

Native American education statistics are disconcerting, with a 17% dropout rate, significantly higher than the national average of 7% (Shotton et al., 2023). Their graduation rate is notably lower at 70%, compared to the national average of 84%. Furthermore, just 16% of fourth-grade Native American students demonstrate reading proficiency, in stark contrast to the national average of 35% (White et al., 2019). Despite these challenges, efforts to improve Native American education persist, with a focus on tribal sovereignty as a means to grant Native American groups autonomy over their educational systems, enabling the inclusion of cultural and linguistic practices in the learning experience.

Bilingual education has emerged as a powerful strategy for improving Native American education by recognizing the significance of Native American languages and promoting education in both indigenous languages and English. Research provides substantial evidence of the effectiveness of bilingual education in enhancing academic achievement and fostering cultural pride among Native American students. Additionally, a culturally relevant curriculum, incorporating Native American history, traditions, and heritage, offers another means of enriching Native American education by providing students with an educational experience that aligns with their cultural identities and bolsters their sense of belonging.

Filipino instructors have introduced a unique and dynamic presence into Native American education, offering a rich tapestry of experiences and facing distinct challenges (Gay, 2018). Their potential to serve as transformative agents is evident in the context of linguistic and cultural diversity, as they work to establish meaningful connections with Native American students (Jamil, 2022). These educators, equipped with a wealth of knowledge, experiences, and cultural sensitivity, make a valuable contribution to the classroom environment by promoting inclusivity and delivering instruction that resonates with the students' culture (Jamil, 2022).

The migration of Filipino educators to Native American reservations not only enriches the classroom but also has a transformative impact on local economies, addressing economic stagnation and limited employment opportunities in these communities. Their dedication lays the foundation for future generations to prosper and overcome historical underachievement (Billingsley et al., 2019). While Filipino teachers currently constitute 2.6% of the teaching workforce in Native American schools, their representation lags behind the national average of 3.4%, suggesting untapped potential for further contributions to Native American education as the Filipino population in the United States continues to grow (Furnivall, 2021).

Filipino teachers in Native American schools face significant challenges due to cultural, linguistic, and customary differences, such as the complexity of the clan-based class structure and hierarchical relationships between students and teachers, which can hinder meaningful connections. Understanding the customs, languages, and nuances of Native American students, especially in schools with diverse linguistic backgrounds like Navajo, can be daunting for Filipino instructors. For these teachers, achieving true linguistic mastery often requires immersion in the local culture.

Hence, the present study is borne from a pressing need—the need to unearth the migration experiences of international educators and provide them with the requisite support. As the complexities of educational systems evolve and the demographics of student populations diversify, the experiences of Filipino teachers in Native American reservation schools warrant exploration. By understanding their narratives, challenges, and triumphs, this study endeavors to contribute to a more comprehensive framework for fostering inclusive and effective education.

### *Objectives of the Study*

This study delves into the lived experiences of Filipino teachers who migrated to the United States of America (USA) with the purpose of teaching in Native American Reservation Schools. It comprehensively examines their pre-migration lives, their motivations in moving to the USA, and their multifaceted experiences, encompassing both the joys and challenges encountered within the Native American Reservation Schools. Additionally, it explores the process of adapting to their new environment and uncovers the numerous advantages and disadvantages that emerged as a result of their migration.

### *Significance of the Study*

This study has substantial implications for Filipino teachers aspiring to work in the United States, offering valuable insights for adapting to a new work environment and foreign country. It can benefit various stakeholders, including the Philippine Government, the Department of Education, the Association of Filipino Teachers in the United States, school administrators, Filipino teachers, international teachers, the community, and students, by providing a deeper understanding of the challenges faced by Filipino educators and fostering more effective cultural exchange programs and teaching strategies. Additionally, it serves as a resource for other researchers, inspiring them to explore similar topics and tailor programs to the specific needs of teachers in

different regions or populations, ultimately contributing to improved educational experiences.

### *Scope and Delimitation*

This research provides an in-depth exploration of the lived experiences of Filipino educators working in Native American Reservation Schools, covering their pre-migration, tenure, and post-migration phases. It specifically focuses on those teaching in the White Mountain Reservation of Eastern Arizona, one of the largest and culturally rich tribal lands in the United States. The study relies on candid focus group discussions to gather data and offers a comprehensive understanding of these educators' experiences within Native American communities. Conducted over seven months from March to October 2023, the research aims to capture the nuances, challenges, and personal growth that occur throughout Filipino teachers' journeys in teaching within Native American Reservation Schools.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### *Pre-migration lives of migrant teachers*

The lives of Filipino teacher migrants before embarking on their journey to work abroad are influenced by a combination of personal and professional factors. Imoite (2021) highlights their commitment to the teaching profession, a desire for personal growth, and a strong sense of familial responsibility. However, economic difficulties, primarily low pay, have pushed many Filipino teachers to explore job opportunities overseas, resulting in a significant brain drain in the Philippines' education sector, as emphasized by Mendoza (2022).

Frustrations with bureaucratic complexities and challenges in the domestic education system have further motivated Filipino teachers to migrate, seeking better opportunities and working conditions in countries with streamlined and merit-based educational structures, as noted by Chua (2021) and Mendoza (2022). This trend underscores the need for systemic reforms in the Philippines' educational governance. The decision to migrate is often driven by a desire to escape personal and professional stagnation, as highlighted by Malipot (2022), as teachers seek better prospects for career advancement and an improved quality of life.

The challenges of low pay and overwork are prominent factors in the lives of Filipino teachers before migration. Novio (2019), Mendoza (2022), and Saslo (2022) all point to the financial hardships faced by educators due to inadequate compensation, driving many to seek employment opportunities abroad. Overwork, stemming from additional responsibilities beyond teaching, further contributes to the high levels of learning poverty in the country, motivating teachers to search for better work-life balance and career prospects abroad.

### *Motivations of teachers in moving overseas*

The decision of teachers to migrate is a complex and multifaceted process driven by various personal, professional, and economic factors. Imoite (2021) underscores the quest for personal and professional growth as a primary motivation for Filipino teachers choosing to migrate to the United States. This decision often arises from the pursuit of enhanced career opportunities, higher income potential, access to advanced educational resources, and exposure to cultural diversity, all contributing to personal development and career advancement.

Economic considerations, as noted by Chua (2021), also play a pivotal role in motivating migration. The desire for better financial prospects, higher salaries, and improved living standards serves as a compelling factor behind their decision to leave the Philippines for teaching positions in the US, where the potential for higher earnings can significantly benefit their families' economic well-being and future prospects. Additionally, the desire for cultural exchange, as emphasized by Modesto (2020), is a significant influence on the migration choices of Filipino teachers, allowing them to gain valuable professional experience while immersing themselves in diverse cultures, broadening their horizons, and fostering a greater understanding of global perspectives, ultimately enriching the educational experiences of both teachers and the communities they serve. Lastly, the pursuit of personal and professional challenges, as highlighted by Arcillo (2023), reflects a strong desire for self-improvement and career growth, motivating teachers to seek opportunities abroad and achieve greater heights in their lives and careers.

#### *Lived experiences of teachers overseas*

The experiences of teacher migrants are marked by diverse sources of joy and fulfillment. Cultural exchange, as highlighted by Modesto (2020), offers Filipino teachers who move to countries like the USA a unique opportunity for personal growth and happiness through immersion in diverse cultural environments. In addition, teacher-migrants often find immense satisfaction in forming close-knit communities and supportive environments, enhancing their sense of belonging and camaraderie within their schools and local surroundings. Meaningful relationships with students, as revealed by Chua (2021) and UNESCO (2021), also serve as a profound source of happiness, allowing teachers to share their cultural heritage and enrich their teaching and personal lives. Embracing cultural diversity and unique teaching opportunities in diverse environments, as noted by Davis (2013), further contribute to their job satisfaction and overall sense of fulfillment.

However, migrating to a new place is not without its challenges for these educators. One significant hurdle is the language barrier, as noted by Meniado (2019). Filipino teachers often struggle to achieve native-level proficiency in the local language of their host countries, hindering effective communication and integration into their new communities. Additionally, adapting to different teaching strategies and pedagogy in diverse settings, such as Native American Reservation Schools, presents a complex challenge. Lowrey (2020) also highlights the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic, which has forced reservation schools and teachers to adopt new online, distance-learning programs. Homesickness, exacerbated by travel restrictions during the pandemic, as mentioned by English (2016) and Zingg (2020), is another emotional

challenge. Finally, managing the behavior of Native American students has proven to be a significant challenge for some Filipino teachers, as reported by Heubeck (2022). Differences in cultural norms, language barriers, and unfamiliarity with the American education system require these educators to adapt and find effective strategies for maintaining discipline and creating a conducive learning environment in diverse classrooms.

## **METHODOLOGY**

### *Research Design*

The study employed descriptive phenomenology, which is a qualitative research approach that seeks to understand and describe the lived experiences of individuals within a particular phenomenon or context. In this case, the phenomenon being explored is the migration experiences of Filipino teachers working in Native American reservation schools. Descriptive phenomenology involves in-depth exploration and analysis of the subjective experiences and perspectives of the participants. The aim is to uncover the essence of these experiences and gain a comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon under study.

### *Locale of the Study*

The school district is situated in White Mountain Reservation in Eastern Arizona, one of the largest tribal lands in the United States. The school district has three (3) elementary schools, one (1) middle school, and one (1) high school, respectively. It has a total of 2,157 students from Pre-K to 12th grade. The student body comprises 98.5% American Indian or Alaska Native. Additionally, 51% of students are female, and 49% are male. The district has 86.6% certified teachers and 85.6% with more than three (3) years of teaching experience. Roughly 43% of teachers across the district are Filipinos.

### *Participants of the Study*

The study involved ten teachers chosen based on specific criteria for inclusion and exclusion. These teachers actively participated in a series of focus group discussions. To be included, participants needed to meet the following criteria: holding teaching certification in line with Arizona teaching standards, having a minimum of one year of teaching experience within a reservation school district, possessing at least three years of teaching experience in the Philippines, being J1 Visa holders participating in the Teacher Exchange Program, and residing in the United States for a maximum of five years without permanent residency or U.S. citizenship. These criteria were crucial to ensure that the participants had the necessary qualifications, experiences, and backgrounds to contribute meaningfully to the focus group discussions, focusing on the context of Filipino teachers within the United States' educational system.

### *Research Instruments*



The study used interview guide questions as the primary data collection tool, designed to encourage comprehensive and open discussions with participants. These open-ended questions aimed to elicit rich insights and experiences. Probing and follow-up questions were also used for deeper exploration. The questions were carefully crafted based on the research problems and underwent a rigorous validation process with field experts to ensure their quality and suitability for the research.

### *Research Procedure*

The research study followed a systematic and ethical process. It began with a formal request to the district superintendent, who granted permission to conduct the research. Prior to data collection, personalized letters of invitation and informed consent forms were sent to potential participants to ensure their understanding of the study's significance and independence from the school district, emphasizing privacy and confidentiality. Data collection involved focused group discussions, and participants were well-informed about the study's objectives and benefits. Technical equipment was used for accurate documentation, and discussions were conducted during participants' off-contract hours to minimize disruption to their regular school duties and commitments.

### *Data Analysis*

Qualitative data analysis techniques, such as open coding, axial coding, and thematic analysis, were used to analyze the textual data collected in the study. Open coding helped identify and deconstruct concepts and categories in participants' responses, while axial coding extracted central themes that connected and differentiated these concepts. Thematic analysis, following Braun and Clarke's (2006) steps, allowed the researcher to gain meaningful insights from participants' unprocessed verbatim responses about their experiences with the spiral progression approach. Throughout the analysis process, self-reflexivity was maintained to ensure objectivity and impartiality, and two independent auditors were engaged to validate the derived themes.

## **RESULTS**

### **Life of the participants before moving to the United States**

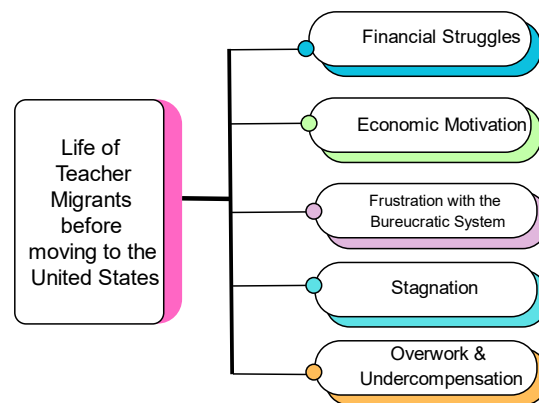


Figure 3. Life of teacher migrants before moving to the United States

Figure 3 shows that teacher migrants from the Philippines embark on their journey to the United States due to diverse lives marked by dedication to their teaching profession, personal growth, and strong family commitments. They often face financial struggles arising from low salaries, high living costs, and the need to support their families, leading to a struggle to make ends meet. Seeking additional income for their families is a significant motivator for migration, driven by the desire to provide a better future for their children. One participant lamented, *"Life in the Philippines was tough. Even with both my husband and me working as teachers, it was a daily challenge to provide for our family."*— ME 1."

Frustrations with the bureaucratic system in the Philippine Department of Education, where promotions seem influenced by connections rather than merit, further motivate them. A participant voiced this concern, saying, *"It's disheartening. You could teach for years, but your career barely advances unless you have connections."* - RE 1" Many teachers feel stuck in their careers, despite years of dedicated teaching, and perceive themselves as overworked and undercompensated due to demanding workloads that don't match their efforts' financial rewards. These complex factors compel them to migrate to the United States in pursuit of a brighter future. one participant aptly articulated this sentiment by saying, *"I wanted to give my children a better future. Teaching in the Philippines couldn't fulfill our family's needs."*

### **Reasons of teacher migrants in moving to the United States**



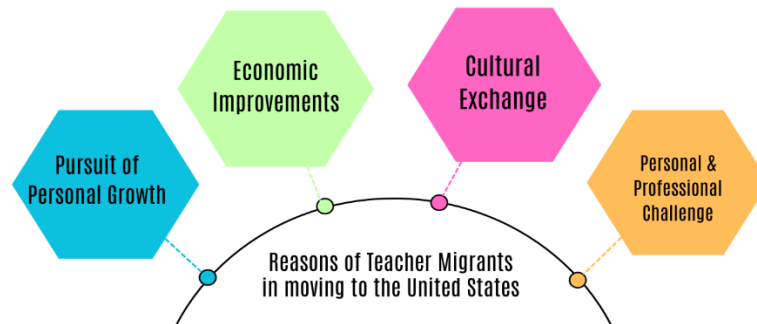
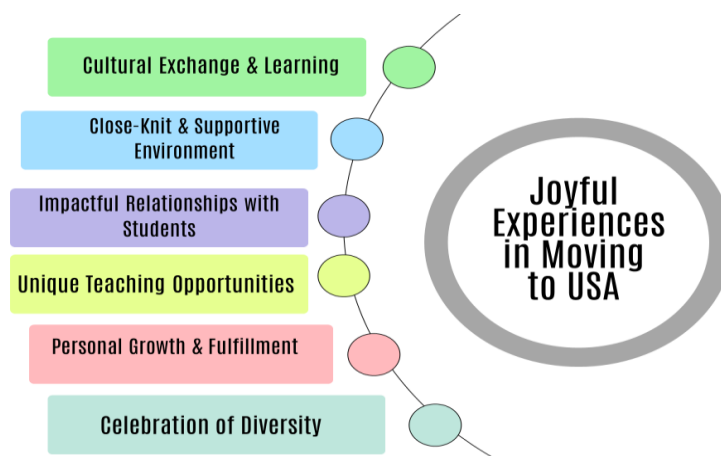


Figure 4. Reasons of teacher migrants in moving to the United States

Figure 4 presents that Filipino teachers migrate to the United States for a variety of reasons. These include a desire for personal and professional growth, economic improvements for themselves and their families, a yearning for cultural exchange and a global perspective, and the opportunity for personal and professional development. One participant effectively conveyed this sentiment, stating, *"I felt like my economic and professional growth in the Philippines had reached a ceiling. I wanted new challenges, more opportunities, and a chance to evolve in my profession"* – BE 4. These motivations highlight the complexity of their decision to migrate and underscore their aspirations for growth, financial stability, cultural immersion, and personal and professional advancement. The sentiment expressed by one interviewee, *"I believed that by teaching in the United States, I could become a better person and a more accomplished professional. The challenge excited me, and I wanted to see how far I could go"* - BE 1" encapsulated this motivation.

### Joyful Experiences of teacher migrants in the Native American Reservation School



### Figure 5. Joyful Experiences of teacher migrants in the Native American Reservation School

Filipino teacher migrants in Native American Reservation Schools in the USA experienced several positive aspects of their migration (Figure 5). They found joy in cultural exchange, built strong community connections, and developed meaningful relationships with Native American students. One participant aptly captured the essence of this sentiment, stating, *"Teaching in a Native American Reservation School allowed me to learn about a culture that I knew very little about. It's been a humbling and enriching experience to build connection with my students and immersing in their culture."* – ME 1. They also appreciated the unique teaching opportunities that allowed them to be creative and tailored their programs to the community's needs. This experience led to personal growth and fulfillment, increasing their confidence and adaptability. A teacher aptly captured the essence of this experience by saying, *"This teaching experience is unlike any other. I can design lessons that are culturally relevant, and it's incredibly fulfilling."* – RE 1.

Furthermore, they celebrated the diversity within the Native American communities they served, embracing the rich tapestry of cultures, languages, and traditions they encountered. Overall, their migration had a positive impact on their teaching and personal lives. One participant eloquently summed up this sentiment by saying, *"I've grown so much as an educator and as a person since coming here. It's a joyful journey of self-discovery"* – ME 2.

### **Challenging Experiences of teacher migrants in the Native American Reservation School**

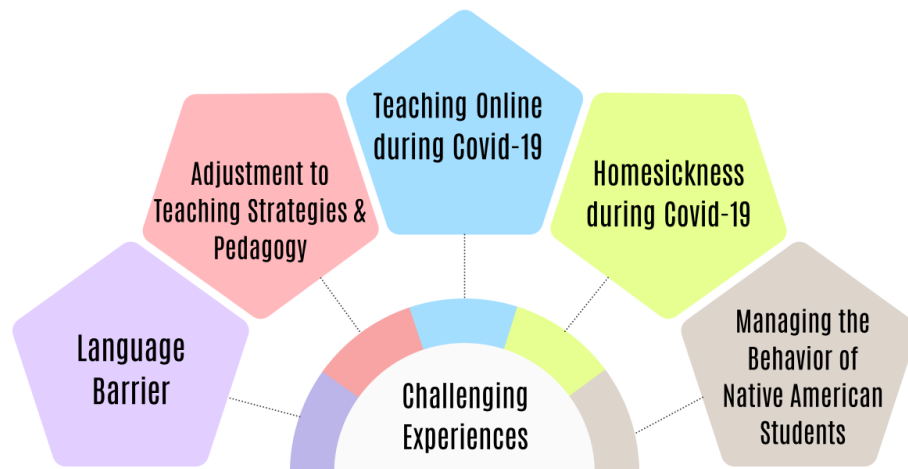


Figure 6. Challenging Experiences of teacher migrants in the Native American Reservation School

Figure 6 shows that Filipino teacher migrants in Native American Reservation Schools in the USA faced several significant challenges. These included language barriers due to differences in native languages, adapting to different teaching methods, and the transition to online teaching during the COVID-19 pandemic. One teacher aptly described the magnitude of this challenge, stating, *"The language barrier was more significant than I anticipated. It made it difficult to convey complex ideas and build strong connections with the students."* – ME 1. Another participant disclosed: *"Adapting to the teaching strategies here was a steep learning curve. It took time to align my approach with the US curriculum, and this transition was challenging."* – BE 2.

Homesickness and emotional hardships added to their difficulties. These challenges highlight the complexity of their experiences in this culturally diverse and often remote teaching environment. One participant aptly described the emotional impact, saying, *"The lockdown made me incredibly homesick. I was locked up here, thinking about my family back in the Philippines who had been affected by the virus. It was emotionally draining."* – ME 3.

### **Adjustments of the teacher migrants to the challenges they experienced in the Native American Reservation School**

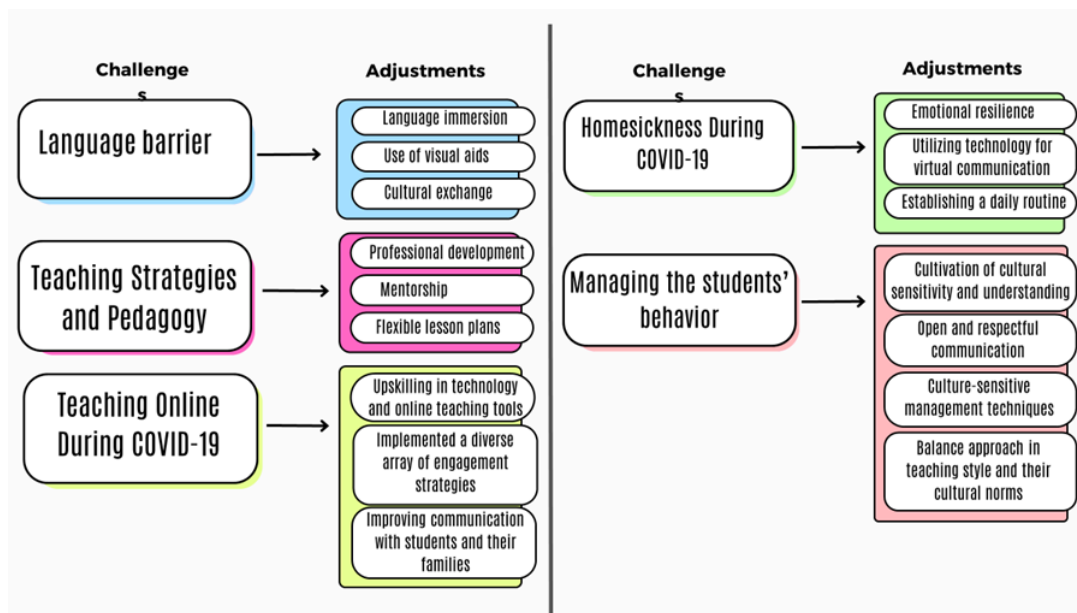


Figure 7. Adjustments of the teacher migrants to the challenges they experienced in the Native American Reservation School

Filipino teacher migrants in Native American Reservation Schools showed remarkable resilience, adaptability, and dedication in facing unique challenges. Figure 7 highlights their efforts to overcome linguistic barriers, adapt teaching methods, deal with COVID-19 challenges, and manage homesickness. Their commitment to quality education was evident through their adaptation, which included language immersion, visual aids, cultural exchange, professional development, and flexible lesson plans. As one participant described, *"I dedicated time to immerse myself in the local language. It was a learning experience for me, and it helped me better understand and connect with my students."* – ME 2. Also, another participant shared their commitment to professional development, stating, *"I attended workshops and seminars to understand the US education system better. It was an investment in my growth as an educator."* – ME 1.

They also upskilled for online teaching during the pandemic, emphasizing communication to bridge physical separation. Addressing cultural differences, they displayed cultural sensitivity and adapted classroom management to create a positive learning environment. A teacher explained their approach to flexible lesson plans, stating, *"I had to modify my lesson plans to suit the US curriculum. It was a learning process, and I realized the importance of adapting my teaching methods to the students' needs."* – ME 3. Moreover, one participant highlighted the significance of communication, saying, *"Staying in touch with students and their families was essential. It helped us understand their needs and provide support, especially during the pandemic."* – BE 4.

### Advantages of the teacher's migration

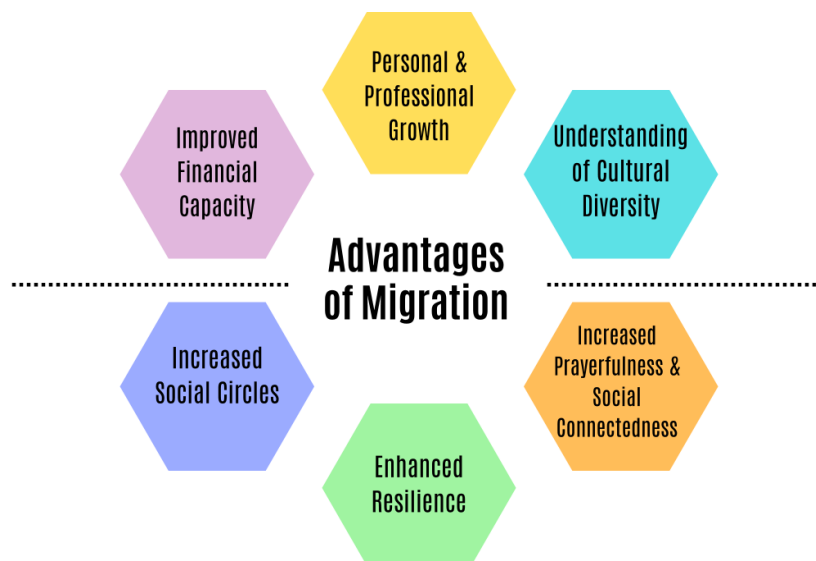


Figure 8. Advantages of the teacher's migration

Filipino teacher migrants in Native American Reservation Schools have experienced several significant advantages during their time in the USA (Figure 8). These include improved financial stability, personal and professional growth, a broader understanding of cultural diversity, and expanded social circles. One teacher aptly captured the essence of this advantage by stating, *"The financial improvement is evident. I can now buy the things my family needs, and it's a relief to feel adequately compensated for my hard work."* – ME 2. Another participant also added: *"I've grown so much as an educator and as a person since coming here. It's a joyful journey of self-discovery."* – RE 1. These experiences have enhanced their resilience and spirituality, resulting in a positive impact on their lives, both professionally and personally, while enriching cultural diversity and social connections.

### Disadvantages of the teacher's migration

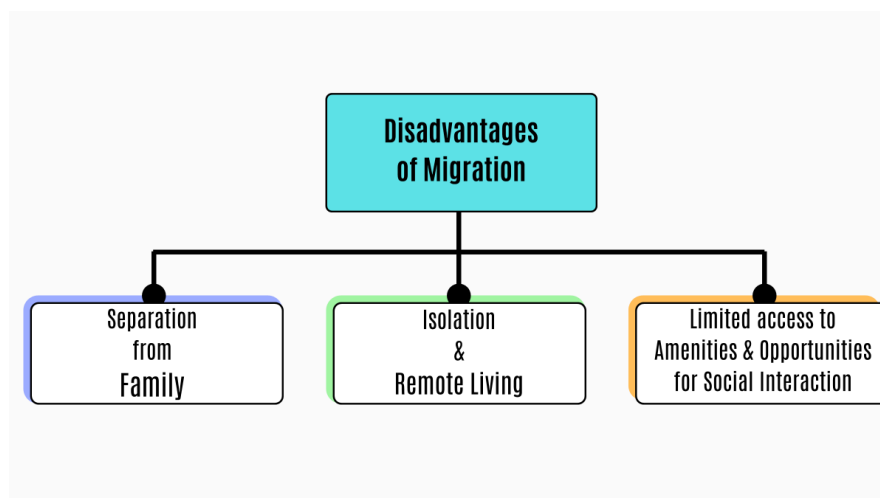


Figure 9. Disadvantages of the teacher's migration  
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Figure 9 illustrates that Filipino teacher migrants in Native American Reservation Schools face significant emotional challenges, primarily stemming from family separation as they leave their loved ones in the Philippines to pursue their professional goals. This separation leads to constant homesickness, making it harder for them to fully engage in their work. Comprehensive support systems are needed to mitigate these adverse effects. One participant encapsulated the emotional weight of family separation by sharing their personal experience, saying, *"Leaving my family in the Philippines was one of the hardest decisions I had to make. I miss my children every day, and it's tough being so far away from them"* - RE 1.

Additionally, they often feel isolated in remote living circumstances, transitioning from urban areas to remote regions, which exacerbates their sense of loneliness. The absence of urban amenities, limited access to services, and unreliable internet further compounds their challenges, emphasizing the need for resilience and adaptability to address the unique educational needs of these communities. One participant succinctly described this sense of isolation, stating, *"The isolation was challenging. We had limited access to resources, which made our work and personal lives more difficult"* - BE 2. Another participant remarked: *"Being in such a remote area, it's not easy to find amenities or opportunities for social interaction. You feel like you're cut off from the rest of the world. But I needed to be strong because I needed to support my family"* - ME 3

## DISCUSSION

The decision to migrate to the United States for Filipino teachers is driven by a complex interplay of personal and professional experiences. Their pre-migration lives are characterized by significant financial hardships, often exacerbated by low salaries in the Philippines, leading to a pursuit of improved financial prospects abroad (Imoite, 2021). Frustrations with the bureaucratic complexities and challenges within the domestic educational system also prompt educators to seek opportunities in countries with more streamlined structures for professional growth and career advancement (Mendoza, 2022). Personal and professional stagnation is a common concern due to limited career growth opportunities, inadequate compensation, and challenging working conditions in the Philippine education system, leading teachers to migrate in search of better prospects for career advancement, higher income, and an improved quality of life (Malipot, 2022). The low salaries and overwork experienced by teachers in the Philippines further contribute to the decision to seek employment opportunities abroad (Novio, 2019; Saslo, 2022).

The migration of Filipino teachers to Native American Reservation Schools in the USA is motivated by a multifaceted set of factors, including personal, professional, and economic motivations. They seek personal growth, better professional opportunities, higher earning potential, and access to advanced educational resources (Imoite, 2021). Economic reasons play a significant role, with Filipino teachers migrating for better financial prospects and higher salaries that support their economic well-being and their families' future (Chua, 2021). They also desire cultural exchange, viewing migration as an opportunity to immerse themselves in different cultures, broaden their horizons, and gain global perspectives (Modesto, 2020). On a professional level, migration offers



avenues for significant career growth and the acquisition of new teaching strategies and expertise in the field of education (UNESCO, 2021).

The experiences of teacher migrants in Native American Reservation Schools encompass a rich and multifaceted journey, marked by cultural exchange, close-knit communities, meaningful student relationships, unique teaching opportunities, and the celebration of diversity. They find fulfillment through a diverse cultural environment, tight-knit communities, meaningful connections with students, and exposure to new teaching practices (Modesto, 2020; Arcillo, 2023; Chua, 2021; Davis, 2013; UNESCO, 2021).

Challenges faced by Filipino teacher migrants in Native American Reservation Schools include language barriers, difficulties in adapting to teaching strategies and pedagogy, the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on teaching, homesickness, and the challenge of managing the behavior of Native American students (Meniado, 2019; Magallanes et al., 2022; Lowrey, 2020; English, 2016; Zingg, 2020; Heubeck, 2022). The adjustments they made represent a compelling narrative of resilience, adaptability, and dedication. They adapt to linguistic barriers, pedagogical adjustments, and the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic, relying on visual aids, cultural immersion, professional development, and open dialogues with students and their families (Krasnof, 2016; Reed, 2017; Schwartz, 2023; González et al., 2023; Richardson & McLeod, 2011; Macapagong et al., 2023).

The migration of Filipino teachers to Native American Reservation Schools offers financial stability and enhanced financial prospects (Hartrey, 2020), professional growth and career advancement opportunities (Ospina & Medina, 2020), the chance to forge new friendships (Ospina & Medina, 2020), and a supportive work environment (Arcillo, 2023). The adaptability and respect shown by Filipino educators when collaborating with colleagues from diverse backgrounds further emphasize their ability to foster positive working relationships (Reyes et al., 2020). On the other hand, the disadvantages of their migration include family separation (Deguma, 2022), loneliness due to isolation and challenging living conditions (Whisnant, 2022; Cázares-Kelly, 2019), and the unique challenges of teaching in these communities (Whisnant, 2022; Cázares-Kelly, 2019).

## CONCLUSION

From the perspective of the Push and Pull theory of migration, the findings highlight the complex interplay of factors that motivated these Filipino teachers to migrate from the Philippines to the Native American Reservation School in the United States. Economic aspirations and the desire for personal growth acted as "pull" factors, enticing them to seek opportunities abroad. However, the "push" factors, including financial struggles, frustration with bureaucracy, and limited professional prospects in their home country, played a significant role in propelling them toward this transformative journey. Their experiences in the United States, marked by resilience, commitment to cultural sensitivity, and personal and professional growth, illustrate how the push and pull factors intersected to shape their migration experience, ultimately resulting in a

narrative of transformation and adaptability in the face of adversity. This narrative underscores the dynamic nature of migration decisions and the potential for positive outcomes when individuals navigate these complex forces with determination and openness.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

In view of the foregoing findings and conclusions, the following are hereby recommended:

1. There is a need to conduct a longitudinal study to examine the long-term effects of migration to the United States on the participants, focusing on their financial stability, personal and professional growth, and social integration over several years.
2. An examination on the mental health and well-being of teacher migrants may be conducted, with a focus on their strategies for coping with homesickness, isolation, and the emotional impact of family separation, providing insights into developing support systems for migrant educators.
3. The findings of the study may be presented to the relevant authorities of the district as these can provide critical insights for future international teachers hired, allowing them to better prepare for the unique challenges and cultural differences they may encounter in their teaching roles.
4. The school district may promote cultural exchange programs at the practitioner level to foster understanding and collaboration between Filipino teachers and Native American communities. Mentorship initiatives can offer support to Filipino teachers helping them adapt to the educational environment.
5. There is a need to strengthen connections between schools and community leaders to bridge differences and create an inclusive learning environment.
6. A similar study is encouraged to be conducted investigating the effectiveness of specific pedagogical strategies used by teacher migrants to adapt to the Native American Reservation School environment, particularly addressing the challenges of language barriers, teaching in diverse classrooms, and remote teaching during crises like the COVID-19 pandemic. Another study is encouraged focusing on the comparative analysis on the experiences and challenges faced by teacher migrants in Native American Reservation Schools with those in other educational contexts to identify unique factors influencing their migration experiences and adaptation strategies.

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