

Determination from the Unforeseen: Undergraduate Overseas Filipino Workers in the Quest of their Ambitions in Qatar

Randy C. Nilles MAIE, Paul Angelo R. Acabado, RayverRuan M. Tingchuy, Andrea Nikole E. Adriano, Eliana Jahleel P. Ignacio, Shayra Ayah S. Laja, Hafsa P. Musibba, Mary Hannah D. Reyes, Luisa Hubert B. Torayno

Abstract—The Philippines is one of the significant exporters of human resources. Due to a lack of opportunities and resources, a substantial number of students fail to finish their studies. This study utilizes qualitative phenomenological research which involves collecting and analyzing non-numerical data to understand lived experiences of Undergraduate Overseas Filipino Workers who worked in the State of Qatar. Through a twenty-five-question interview, the respondents were asked the central question “What are the motivations and setbacks of the undergraduate Overseas Filipino Workers?” The data acquired from the interview underwent analysis through an inductive approach in the theme exhaustion. Based on the verbal musings of the participants and the clustering of their responses, four themes were created. These major themes are *Ensuring Finances* which includes the subthemes: *enduring difficulties and establishing stability*. Another major theme is *Appreciating Relationships* which contains the subthemes: *acknowledging support and fulfilling priorities*. As setbacks were also experienced by the participants, *Surpassing Setbacks* is one of the major themes while its subthemes are *adjusting strategies and facing discrimination*. The last major theme is *Achieving Ambitions* which includes *promising objectives and paving opportunities*. Undergraduate OFWs hope to achieve stable finances, fulfill relational obligations, and surpass setbacks.

Index Terms—Overseas Filipino Workers, Undergraduate, State of Qatar

Randy C. Nilles, MAIE, Research Capstone Project/ Research Development Accreditation and Publication Office, Philippine School Doha, Doha, Qatar

Paul Angelo R. Acabado, Research Capstone Project/ Research Development Accreditation and Publication Office, Philippine School Doha, Doha, Qatar

RayverRuan M. Tingchuy, Research Capstone Project/ Research Development Accreditation and Publication Office, Philippine School Doha, Doha, Qatar

Andrea Nikole E. Adriano, Research Capstone Project/ Research Development Accreditation and Publication Office, Philippine School Doha, Doha, Qatar

Eliana Jahleel P. Ignacio, Research Capstone Project/ Research Development Accreditation and Publication Office, Philippine School Doha, Doha, Qatar

Shayra Ayah S. Laja, Research Capstone Project/ Research Development Accreditation and Publication Office, Philippine School Doha, Doha, Qatar

Hafsa P. Musibba, Research Capstone Project/ Research Development Accreditation and Publication Office, Philippine School Doha, Doha, Qatar

Mary Hannah D. Reyes, Research Capstone Project/ Research Development Accreditation and Publication Office, Philippine School Doha, Doha, Qatar

Luisa Hubert B. Torayno, Research Capstone Project/ Research Development Accreditation and Publication Office, Philippine School Doha, Doha, Qatar

I. INTRODUCTION

The adage “Education is the key to success” holds true to this very day. For an individual to overcome the obstacles of the future, it is essential for them to go to school. Bhardwaj (2016) emphasized the importance of education, stating that it provides a person with an understanding of the world and helps individuals transform it into something better. As one’s foundation to creating bigger things, education is the most critical investment one can make.

Moreover, education is one of the fundamental human rights that people possess by virtue of their humanity. As mentioned in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights 1948, education is a right that everyone has (United Nations, 2011). At least in the early and fundamental stages, education must be free.

While it is true that education is basic liberty, it has remained a privilege to the rich alone. Teodoro (2020) emphasized the Philippines class division, one of the most significant and prevalent issues in the country’s education. A difference in socio-economic capabilities offers unequal and different opportunities. While upper-class students partake in private and more expensive education, lower-class students struggle with accessing classrooms and teachers. To some, public schools are inaccessible and their families have tight budgets.

Despite education being a right, the Philippines is facing harsh realities in its educational sector. The Philippines is a middle-income country located in Southeast Asia. Out of the 2.8 million children out of school, only 78% have completed basic education (United Nations International Children’s Emergency Fund, 2019). Due to the lack of learning opportunities, investments and appropriate teaching methods, Filipino children fall behind in terms of education. In addition to that, the Philippines does not invest in education as much as its neighboring countries. As mentioned by Teodoro (2020), the United Nations has a standard of 6% when investing gross domestic product in education. However, the country only invests 3.4%, lower than the set standard.

A degree is a life-long companion that accompanies an individual in their journey and career path, however, there are exceptions. According to the UNESCO’s Institute of Statistics, only 18.81 of the population ages 25 and over

completed Bachelor's or equivalent. These undergraduate OFWs have chosen to not finish their studies and instead, work outside the Philippines. These significant decisions are motivated by ambitions dear to them. For most, they wish for their children, siblings, or relatives to finish their studies and graduate. Others wish to fulfill financial security for themselves and their family in the Philippines. Nonetheless, they have sacrificed to work at a distance away from their families, all to give them a greater future. According to Racasa and Vargas (2021), OFWs are called heroes because they contribute to the country's economic prosperity, whilst compromising their relationships with their family and friends. They sacrificed to accomplish the goals they wanted for their families and themselves, such as having their own small business and seeing their loved ones graduate.

Furthermore, since undergraduate OFWs have limited employment possibilities in the Philippines, they have chosen to seek employment in another country. Due to Filipino workers migrating, they made adjustments to familiarize themselves in the new environment by accepting different cultures, learning certain phrases in different languages, following new rules, and interacting with various personalities. OFW's persevere to be financially stable and to work on the plans their families once dreamed of.

This study was conducted to understand the way these Overseas Filipino Workers have undergone their life as an undergraduate. Additionally, this paper aims to discover the common motivations and setbacks of the undergraduate OFWs on going abroad instead of staying in their home country. One of its objectives is also to explore the challenges and difficulties that the OFWs face while working abroad. Lastly, this research paper wants to look into the advantages and disadvantages experienced by undergraduate OFWs while working abroad. These questions are what this research aims to study.

Data gathering was the main instrument used when the researcher conducted the study. Through semi-structured interviews where the questions consist of the central and developmental questions, the researchers gathered the necessary data from the participants. Once the data is gathered, it will be analyzed and clustered into the main and sub-themes found in the simulacrum.

II. METHODS

Gathering the necessary data was accomplished through conducting a semi-structured interview. The interview questions consist of central and developmental questions to gather the data from the participants. The gathered information was used and analyzed to formulate the main and sub-themes that are found in the simulacrum.

A. Research Design

Phenomenology is a type of qualitative research that

functions to describe the phenomenon to further elucidate its meaning or definition (Giorgi, 2009). Moreover, as mentioned by Neubauer, Witkop, and Varpio (2019), phenomenology focuses on the study of an individual's lived experiences within the world utilizing qualitative research design wherein it is defined as the collection, gathering, and studying non-numerical data to understand experiences, concepts, or opinions (Bhandari, 2020). Using qualitative research can be useful for understanding how a person perceives and interprets social reality, according to Denzin and Lincoln (1994, cited in McLeod, 2019).

In writing this paper, IMRAD was followed and inductive reasoning for thematization was applied. Doyle (2020) mentioned that the method of inductive reasoning is configuring general conclusions based on existing knowledge from past experiences, as well as using observations with familiar information which are known to be true. Inductive reasoning in research is the movement from particular observations to comprehensive generalizations, succeeding in the development of a theory (Streefkerk, 2019). Furthermore, the clustering of formed themes and sub-themes are also done with the use of interview questions.

B. Research Locus and Sample

This study was conducted at the Philippine School Doha (PSD) located in Mesaimmer, Doha, Qatar. The participants for this research were chosen following the criteria set: (1) Filipino expatriate; (2) has not finished college; (3) has worked or is currently working in Qatar; (4) with three or more years work experience. The generated criteria were carefully observed such that their genuine views and perspective would encapsulate their ambition as undergraduate workers in Qatar.



Fig. 1 - Map of Qatar (Google Maps)



Fig. 2 - Map of Philippine School Doha (Google Maps)

C. Data Collection and Ethical Consideration

The data collection process started with the construction of the interview guide which was first validated by

selected teachers in the Senior High School Department. After the validation, participants who met the criteria were sent consent letters to confirm that they are willing to voluntarily answer questions and help the researchers discover new findings of the lived experiences of undergraduate Overseas Filipino Workers. As soon as the researchers got the consent from the participants to continue the interview, both the participant and researchers set a schedule that was available to them. Researchers interviewed participants virtually using Zoom, a cloud-based video conferencing app that allows virtual video and audio conferences (Antonelli, 2020)

As the interview proper starts, the researcher oriented the participant on the study and the purpose of the interview. The researcher asked questions which the participant answered relating to their lived experiences. All of the participants voluntarily accepted the invitation to be interviewed. The researcher asked permission to record the meeting for transcribing purposes which the participant granted. Interviews were accomplished and completed smoothly.

Once the interview was done and the answers were compiled, the researchers transcribed the participants' answers. The participants' identity was completely confidential after the interview. The researchers made use of emic to etic transcription to have a more comprehensive and formal answer from the participants. The researchers have followed ethical research protocols throughout the study.

D. Data Analysis

The data analysis process was as follows: With the use of each participant's answers, emic to etic transcription was created. The cool analysis is the raw attempt of analyzing the data from the interviewees. This leads to the making of the dendrogram where the arrangement of important statements takes place. Thereafter, the simulacrum, also known as the content framework, will be formed with the use of the constructed and gathered data. In addition, the simulacrum further specifies the concept that explains the phenomenon proposed, including the plotting of themes

III. FINDINGS

This phenomenological study describes the experience of Undergraduate Overseas Filipino workers pursuing their ambitions in Qatar. Through the responses given by the respondents, four themes were derived, answering the central question: "What are the motivations and setbacks of the undergraduate Overseas Filipino Workers?" as well as the specific question "How do undergraduate Overseas Filipino Workers deal with life's challenges abroad?". The four themes that proved to be fundamental in their experience as undergraduate OFWs are Ensuring Finances, Surpassing Setbacks, Appreciating Relationships, and Achieving Ambitions.



Fig. 3 - Simulacrum

Fig. 3 presents the Simulacrum focused on four major themes: ensuring finances, appreciating relationships, surpassing setbacks, and achieving ambitions. For Ensuring Finances, green indicates a color that is commonly associated with money. Pink was used for Appreciating Relationships because it represents the feeling of gratitude and appreciation. Blue also means calmness to relate the theme of acceptance or to surpass even though difficulties were encountered in the theme of Surpassing Setbacks. Lastly, the color yellow was chosen for Achieving Ambition because it radiates a spiritual and inspiring mood. The Philippine map with an airplane in the middle indicates that the Filipino respondents work overseas, and the fading academic cap represents that they are undergraduate workers. The theme colors of the whole simulacrum are white and maroon since these indicate that the participants work in Qatar, hence the use of the Qatari flag colors. These colors also represent that the participants believe that Qatar is a country that enables them to work towards their ambition.

A. Ensuring Finances

Nowadays, money is essential to one's life, and it plays a vital role as to why people choose to go abroad. To be financially stable is one of the Overseas Filipino Workers' goals. The collective verbalizations of the Undergraduate Overseas Filipino Workers showcase the difficulties that they faced before going abroad. To endure and face the difficulties, most respondents stated that their life in the Philippines is hard due to financial difficulties. One confirmatory statement states, "Because of the scarcity of money, I prioritized working rather than finishing my studies." (P1)

This statement is further supported by two other responses that explain why the respondents' experienced struggles in the Philippines due to financial difficulties.

"I didn't know how to handle it because I'm an undergraduate and I was a working student back then. Life was also very hard in the Philippines until now. I had no choice but to go with the flow and make myself live."(P4)

"I was encouraged to go abroad due to the hard life we experienced and because of financial issues."(P5)

To ensure finances, most respondents stated that they would want their own business in the future:

"I hope that I'm in the Philippines already with my wife and children and our own business." (P2)

"As what I've said, I plan to have a business or a sari-sari store so that we also have a source of income."(P4)

Pondering on the respondents' statements, they want to establish their own business while being financially stable with their loved ones. Based on their revelations, they want to ensure stability and have a better future for the sake of their families.

B. Surpassing Setbacks

Working overseas requires an individual to adapt, socialize, and familiarize themselves with their surroundings. Working away from your family is a big stepping stone as it opens vast opportunities. However, working in an unfamiliar and new place unwraps a set of setbacks one must break through.

The participants claimed that understanding the culture and regulations was the driving force for them to adjust to a new setting. Acclimatization to a new environment and a new culture was significant in their journey to achieve their goals. One confirmatory statement states. *"Having a culture shock especially in a Muslim country. Filipino cultures are different from other Asian cultures. I adjusted by treating them how I want to be treated." (P1)*

This statement is also supported by two other responses that explain how the Overseas Filipino Workers adjusted to the new setting.

"For me, I did everything to be qualified to work here. I abided by the laws." (P8)

"The first thing I experienced was their culture. During the first time I got here, I didn't know that it was like this in a Muslim country." (P2)

Reflecting on the statements of the respondents, they experienced a culture shock as the environment here in Qatar is completely different in their home country. The respondents were able to cope with the new environment by abiding by the laws and respecting the host country's culture and practices.

The participants claimed that there were occurrences where they felt discriminated against. Oftentimes, they were being treated differently compared to other nationalities. These undergraduates also felt inferior to others as they were treated similarly to animals. These experiences were analyzed and described the subtheme of facing discrimination under the main theme of surpassing setbacks. A statement that from the participants claimed that *"Discrimination on the basis of race such as being a different package to other nationalities, unlike appearance, comparing to an animal, or considering a female Overseas Filipino Worker as a domestic helper."(P8)*

This statement is also confirmed by a response which describes how the participants were treated differently *"When we were cleaning the delivery room, there was this incident where an Arab called me like I am a dog." (P3)*

Analyzing the respondents' revelations, superiority and inferiority were evident struggles leading them to experience unjust situations such as discrimination.

C. Appreciating Relationships

Sacrificing their studies only to work overseas compromised their relationships with their families and close friends. Those relationships are strong vehicles for success, particularly for undergraduates who live in challenging situations. The undergraduate overseas Filipino workers acknowledge support from those relationships and pursue their priorities to fulfill their own goals.

All families and friends were happy and supportive of the respondents' decision about working overseas rather than finishing their studies. That is because they found opportunities overseas and by working they will earn more for their family and personal needs than when they were studying. The encouraging family and friends lifted the undergraduate OFWs' every aspiration. One respondent stated, *"My family was okay with it, they supported me with my decision. I changed the mindset of people that whenever you fail, that's when you learn. I didn't have any problem with my parents deciding things. As for my friends, they're all very supportive." (P4)*

This statement is supported by two other responses that explained how they support their children in going overseas. *"My family and friends were delighted because I found an opportunity overseas." (P3)*

"My mom's initial reaction was that if you're willing, then go ahead. They were supportive and they were there for my child." (P6)

Some undergraduate OFWs acquired a decent job with the aid of agencies, while the others achieved with their

capabilities and skills while trusting God, and also obtained their positions through their close friends as claimed by these respondents *"My first job was in an oil and gas company where I worked for eight years. The legal manager was a friend of mine so I was hired and they saw my capabilities at work. I attended training that can help me in my profession since I am an undergraduate with no secretarial course."* (P1)

The statement is then reinforced by another respondent who mentioned, *"I was recommended by my cousin. He told me to apply for an agency because there is a job opportunity in Qatar and I grabbed the chance."* (P5)

Considering the respondents' statements, their family members and friends were full of support when they decided to work overseas as it gives them a greater and better opportunity.

Through the hardship that the undergraduate OFWs experienced, they wanted to have an improved life. Working overseas helped them to move forward for the life goals they desired to reach. One of the reasons they wanted to go abroad was to support their family needs and acquire a livelihood. The respondents also stated that they wanted to achieve good financial stability and put their families out of poverty and hardship. One person acknowledged the statement *"My family and financial status greatly influenced my decision to go abroad."* (P3)

The statement is supported by other responses that describe their priorities in life, *"My father influenced me into going abroad. My father told me to go abroad so I can help them since life in Manila is really hard. At least here abroad, I was able to help them again though they didn't really lack financially."* (P5)

"I just put up with it. I always think that I have something to give to my family at the end of the month. I managed to adjust in Qatar by following the rules to show respect and to avoid complications." (P3)

The undergraduate OFWs thought of their families and former experiences as an inspiration or motivation to pursue their ambition in the future they desire. As time went by, those ambitions boosted them to adjust to the new environment.

The statement is supported by two other responses. *"It became familiar because of my previous experience wherein I used to come here for three to four months' visit. I was able to adjust because it has become my second home."* (P1)

"Since I'm in a different country and I work for the sake of my family, I have no choice but to adjust with the surroundings and get along well with the people I am with." (P8)

Contemplating on the respondents' answers, the

undergraduate OFWs' loved ones have become the strength and reason for the respondents to continue working abroad and aiming for the achievements they have planned to attain.

D. Achieving Ambitions

The respondents have a goal in mind which focuses more on their families. They consider going overseas as their responsibility being either a sibling or a parent. They must work to fulfill the goals and accomplish the ambitions they and their families aim to reach.

Before undergraduate Filipinos step out of their country, they resolve themselves with a goal. These objectives serve as their motivations to persevere and sacrifice. Most of the time, their obligations to their families and relatives push them to move and work in a different country. A statement from one of the respondents confirms this *"My obligations are helping my cousins finish their studies to be able to give financially to my parents since we all know how expensive things are in the Philippines."* (P5)

Performing their best at their job is also one of their objectives. A domestic helper expressed her obligation in her job. *"You need to perform all of your jobs properly. First of all, take care of the children properly because that is really what matters. Secondly, you need to be serious in your work. You also need to be honest to your employer."* (P6).

This was echoed by another respondent, stating *"I obeyed all the rules of my job in order for me to work well and to not cause any harm."* (P8)

Understanding the importance of a diversified income flow, these undergraduate OFWs also wish to establish different kinds of businesses. A confirmatory statement states, *"I already asked my sister to let me know what kind of business will be more achievable in the Philippines but because of the pandemic, we cannot finalize anything yet. I could start a small business by selling goods and foods like rice since Filipinos need them. I wish to be able to buy a farm."* (P1)

This statement is supported by two other responses that embody similar sentiments of becoming entrepreneurs. *"I want to start a business and maybe it will go big."* (P7)

"I will be saving money until I have enough to let my son graduate and have our own business." (P8)

Lastly, these OFWs set aside a portion of their monthly income to save for the future, as stated by these respondents:

"I plan to save money. If the money is enough or more than enough, we will make a decision to go for good." (P2)

"I am starting to save up to achieve my goals" (P3)

Reviewing the undergraduate OFWs' responses, it is

apparent that a business has been an unanimous objective for the respondents.

The undergraduate OFW's felt hope, knowing that they can earn money even if they are working far away from home. Most respondents aim to have businesses that can suffice their financial obligations, and help them attain better necessities that can make their lives much easier. It is evident in one of the respondents' reply, *"My ambition is to have a restaurant in the future and be able to help my family. If it's in God's will, I would also like to share the word of God here so that it's balanced and my life is not all about work."* (P5)

The statement is affirmed by the following respondents, *"Of course I want to succeed in having my own house by saving a lot of money since I have my own family and for that, I need to have a settled job."* (P7)

"I want to have my own house, own car, and own business in my home country." (P2)

Other than having businesses and necessities, most of the respondents wish to provide better education and a better life for their family members. Having undergone hardship in their childhood and adolescence, the respondents wish that their children or relatives no longer have to experience what they have. In fact, a majority of these OFWs put aside their personal goals for the education of their children. One respondent detailed their experience, stating *"Being 60 years old, not much of the personal and education but I will try when I'm in the Philippines already I will have more time to check with Dep Ed because they said that being an undergraduate with all the working experiences and certificates can be converted or I need to take some units or to be converted to having a degree. Financially, it's more of my daughter. I will make sure that whatever she earns will be a preparation for her future."* (P1)

This is supported by the following remarks, *"I want to save up money here so that I can also make my siblings finish their studies. I also want to help my parents and help in building our house."* (P5)

"All I want is for my son to finish his studies without being hard-headed. That's where my attention is now." (P8)

Aside from accomplishing the objectives they set for their families, the undergraduate OFW's aim to reach their ambitions. Examples of which are to have better positions at their work, as stated by these respondents:

"I want to learn a cooking course since it is inclined with the kind of business I want to put up. Besides that, I want a better future for me and my family. I also want to have enough savings for me and my family." (P3)

"I hope that I can get a good position someday." (P7)

Pondering on the respondents' revelations, not only do the undergraduate OFWs aim to have their own businesses, but also for their family members to have a proper education and a better lifestyle.

IV. FINDINGS

Determining the views of the Undergraduate Overseas Filipino Workers in Qatar that continuously strive and work hard, this phenomenological study breaks the norms and clearly shows that undergraduate OFW's can achieve their ambitions despite the hurdles faced. According to Racasa and Vargas (2021), OFWs are called heroes because they contribute to the country's economic prosperity, whilst compromising their relationships with their family and friends. Their intriguing stories took part in discovering the four vital factors in the quest for their ambitions. Ensuring Finances; emphasizes the importance of financial stability in enduring difficulties, Appreciating Relationships; showcases the importance of their loved ones, Surpassing Setbacks; shows the struggles they faced, Achieving Ambitions; pertains to their future goals. These conducive factors were derived from the lived experiences of the respondents, showcasing their finances, struggles, ambitions, and relationships.

Additionally, these vital factors can either break or push them to their limits in achieving their goals. Certainly, people experience different struggles in life. However, the obstacles that they face can help them become a better version of themselves and aim for success. Understanding that their sacrifice is for a purpose close to them, they continue to overcome setbacks and achieve their ambitions.

A. Ensuring Finances

Financial stability is one of the reasons why Overseas Filipino Workers move abroad. To become financially stable is an achievement for a family. It is when the breadwinners receive a fixed income to cover the expenses of affordable and accessible goods and services; simultaneously, gaining more experience in the field of work. According to the gathered data, the respondents have different plans for their future. Establishing stability in the future is necessary and living a stable life without worrying about finances is a life goal for everyone. Having a business is a common goal for all the respondents. Money is necessary, especially in establishing a business. Most people say that money cannot buy happiness. However, it plays a vital role in order to live a stable life in the future. To earn money and live a financially stable life, the respondents decided to have their businesses in the future once they are back in the Philippines.

The definition of business is the act of making money or living by buying, producing, and selling different goods and services. Businesses can create opportunities, jobs, and incomes for personal ventures and development

(Davis, 2021). Starting a business is an effective way to ensure future finances since the people who decided to establish the business are the business owners themselves. Operating your own business comes with challenges. However, for many people, the rewards received outweigh the difficulties faced. According to Guidant Financial's Small Business Trends Alliance (2020), 76% of those who decided to run their own business are happy and satisfied with their decision. In running a business, taking a risk is necessary. A long-term successful business can automatically mean a financially stable life for the business owner

B. *Surpassing Setbacks*

Setbacks or hindrances are inevitable. Surpassing setbacks pertain to the obstacles unveiled along the way in the working environment of the overseas workers. Working abroad and being in a country where one is an outsider involves complications that one cannot control. A new country means a different setback, and as a newcomer to a foreign country, one needs to adapt and adjust to its culture, environment, and most especially its people. However, overcoming setbacks can make one stronger and prepare a person for future battles that are more complicated.

Overseas workers are required to fit in with the new setting and be able to strategize their life in a different part of the world. The common problems of OFWs include homesickness, cultural acculturation, and communication difficulties at work. Some of these are due to the diversity in languages and nationalities. Another issue is negligence. An example is domestic helpers, who are abused physically and verbally by their employers. Due to this issue, the government measures the unfair treatment or simple harmony at work, initiated by the healthy relationship between employers and employees.

Coming from a country where Catholicism is the main religion, adapting a new system of culture and traditions from a Muslim country will require time and a strong will to change. It is a very important factor in success or failure in a new environment that people should have a good attitude. Those who overcome this step are usually successful in their aim. Adapting to a new country is considered a small challenge to not give up important goals earlier than expected (San, 2015). It is expected for a foreigner to be treated differently compared to the natives and locals, but as a way for them to match the manner on how they want to be treated, they treat them the way they want to be. As overseas workers adapt themselves to the new environment, there will still be occurrences where they will be looked at differently with regard to their race. There were incidents wherein they felt that they were disfavored yet it was not considered as a hindrance for the overseas workers to continue with what they wanted to do and achieve in their lives. A country like Qatar where 89.5% of its population are foreigners of different races (Snoj, 2019) makes

differences preeminent. The participants displayed the feeling of discrimination and how they were being treated differently unlike other nationalities. Facing discrimination is one of the hardest deterrence that an overseas worker can experience. According to Amnesty (2020), migrant domestic workers, mostly women, continued to face severe forms of abuse without access to a remedy despite the Domestic Workers Law introduced in 2017.

C. *Appreciating Relationships*

Feeling connected is one of the many benefits of a relationship, whether it may be with family or friends. During tough times, relationships provide the comfort of having people by one's side and enable a greater capacity to manage stress. The most challenging difficulty in being an Overseas Filipino Worker (OFW) is to be away from home, which becomes unbearable as time goes on. OFWs desire to make the lives of our families better, yet they cannot be by their side throughout significant milestones. According to Panuncio and Bae (2012), whenever overseas Filipino workers encountered hardships in their lives, they could not prevent themselves from feeling homesick and wanting to fly back to the Philippines.

A common reason why Filipinos go abroad is to achieve good financial stability for those dear to them. Working overseas can get laborious. Though meeting new people and adjusting to the new environment can decrease the feeling of homesickness, it is not easy to forget home. Being away from their loved ones has helped the OFWs appreciate their families and friends more. Because even from afar, they can still sense the feeling of love and support given to them through voice calls, video calls, and messages sent through the internet. A 2004 special survey on remittance AWSANs sponsored by the Asian Development Bank theorized and surveyed a hypothesis on remittance behavior. Many overseas Filipino workers maintain familial and social links hence, these obligations to support the family they left behind become the largest sources of remittance.

Price and Taub (2008) mentioned that talking with their child who has a rough time in their studies has a salutary effect of helping them achieve their ambitions. Communication can help families to better understand the best ways to support their child who did not finish college with a degree. Sooner or later, Kirk and Dorfman (1983) added that social support from families minimizes the anxiety or depression that can result from conflicts faced by the undergraduates. In addition, according to Oberg (1960), Filipinos experience intense culture shock upon arrival, showing symptoms of anxiety, helplessness, frustration, depressions, and homesickness that significantly affects movement and job performance or negatively affects job compensation. That is why family social support aids them to adjust into a new setting for positive psychological outcomes such as reducing the vulnerability to stress and that support is a need for every undergraduate overseas Filipino worker.

D. Achieving Ambitions

Familial values are one of the central driving forces of all the respondents. Whether it may be for their spouses, children, relatives, or parents, these undergraduate OFWs have a sense of duty and obligations to their loved ones. Hence, their ambitions and goals are closely intertwined with their love for their family. They choose to pursue a career abroad in hopes of opportunities to improve not only their standard of living but also the security of their loved ones. According to the Philippine Statistics Authority, the total number of OFWs has reached 2.2 million with 56.0% being female, and 44.0% being male. Yeung and Bacani's CNN article (2020) affirms that a majority of these workers were women, hoping to provide a better future for their children and family. In fact, Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas testifies the collective effort of OFWs as personal and cash remittances in 2019 set a new record at \$33.5 billion and \$30.1 billion respectively.

Not only is being an OFW a sacrifice, but it is also a privilege that allows a person to pursue a goal they would like to pursue. OFWs go abroad to help their families have better lifestyles. One of the advantages of having enough finances is that it allows the Overseas Filipino Workers to achieve their goals. They prioritize their siblings or children to receive the proper education. They also plan to have businesses to have a productive way of earning income in their own country. Having a business is another common theme for the ambitions of the respondents. Enterprises can help their families achieve a better way of living and a stable income. As stated by Fernandez et al. (2020), Overseas Filipinos will look for opportunities to start their own businesses. Although a business can be complex to handle, with their determination and patience, it is possible. According to an article written by The Filipino Times (2018), a former Overseas Filipino Worker named Princess San Diego created a successful business by selling caramel custards known as Leche Flan. San Diego explained that to have a business, one must take risks and have confidence. She also stated that people who give up easily never succeed.

Indeed, these ambitions are closely interlocked with a wish for a better future not only for them but also for the families they have left behind. Hurdles faced should not stop a person from achieving more. This trait of selflessness manifests itself in different ways such as their finances, children's education, housing, and businesses.

V. CONCLUSION

The realities that emerge from the lived experiences of Undergraduate Overseas Filipino workers in Qatar demonstrate that it is one's objectives and loved ones that truly motivate one to achieve financial security and overcome challenges in any shape or form.

This phenomenological study aims to understand the lived experiences of the Undergraduate overseas Filipino Workers in Qatar and determine how the respondents managed to reach their ambitions despite being undergraduates. Factors showcasing their finances, relationships, struggles, and ambitions were derived based on their lived experiences. These vital factors are the motivating forces in achieving their goals. Ensuring finances shows how the respondents will achieve financial stability in the future. Familial support and validation are some reasons which gave the respondents the courage to work abroad. Surpassing setbacks and struggles faced can make one stronger. The discrimination and mistreatment by their superiors did not hinder the respondents from pursuing their purpose. Furthermore, despite being an undergraduate, this situation did not stop the respondents from dreaming big and establishing concrete plans to achieve their ambitions. As far as one can tell, even the most unexpected and unfortunate ones can be successful only if they are determined enough to reach their goals.

This study's results provide an insightful view of the experiences of the respondents which benefit multiple parties. Developmental programs can utilize these results in addressing the struggles of these overseas Filipino workers whether it may be financial, emotional, or social. Additionally, the families, relatives, and loved ones can have a firmer grasp on the sacrifices and experiences of these undergraduate OFWs. Lastly, other undergraduates who are contemplating whether they should go abroad or those who have already begun their journey will have a clearer idea of what struggles to expect and how to overcome them.

This research study has created a basis on which future studies can further develop. The researchers recommend that future studies go beyond the limitations of this study and increase the pool of respondents. Instead of the limited number of respondents and the narrow local, upcoming studies may branch out to other countries where undergraduate overseas Filipino workers have chosen as their place of work.

Ultimately, this preliminary study serves as an eye-opener that even against the odds or despite being an undergraduate, one can still aim high and create action to pursue their goal. No matter the circumstances, one can still achieve subjective success, with or without a degree.

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Paul Angelo R. Acabado was born on the 21st of November in Doha, Qatar. He is a student-athlete who plays for Qatar Sports Club in the professional league in Qatar. He is also a member of the basketball varsity team of Philippine School Doha. He is a consistent member of the top ten in his class which makes

him an awardee, specifically a bronze awardee and he runs for honors every year. During his grade ten convocation, he received a bronze medal, he became a Cadet Officer of the year, and earned the athlete of the year award for basketball. During their batch's promenade he acquired a special award for the Male Athlete of the Year. He is a member of The Link as a sports writer and he was part of the C.A.T. He played with the Junior Falcons team who

represented Qatar in Oman as they fought and won during their second U16 inter-GCC tournament. He almost made a sweep during his high school intramurals as his teams won the championship three times out of four times, and during his last year in Junior High School, he was part of the mythical five and won the Most Valuable Player Award. During his elementary years, he was always part of the pilot section, from grade two to grade seven.



RayverRuan M. Tingchuy was born on the fifth of September 2004 in Batangas City, Philippines. He was an accelerated student and received many academic distinctions during his younger years. He joined the PSD Chorale in his fourth year in junior high school wherein he got to participate in the first Philippine Choir concert in Qatar called "Why We Sing". He was a CAT Officer in his fourth year in junior high school. He was a silver awardee when he joined the "Clash of the Wizards" S.Y. 2018-2019. He was a part of a group who placed champions in Volleyball Intramurals for 2 years from 2018 to 2019. He lives by this quote from the late, great Kobe Bryant "If you do not believe in yourself, no one will believe in you."



Andrea Nikole E. Adriano was born on the thirteenth of June 2004 in Marikina City, Philippines. She was an accelerated student and a part of academic distinction during her younger years. When she was in 6th grade, she garnered a service award in student scouting, first runner up in Scrabble, academic olympiad-best actress, and musical theater champions along with her classmates. During her 7th grade, she received the "Best in Research" award and was a consistent top student. 8th Grade was when she decided to take the courage to join one of the most-awaited events in her school, the Battle of the Bands. She and her bandmates were awarded the People's Choice 2018. During her 10th grade, she was able to win the 3rd runner up in Scrabble. Furthermore, she and her bandmates were awarded the Battle of the Bands Champions 2020, Battle of the Bands Best Photo 2020, and Battle of the Bands Best Music Video 2020. She also spearheaded the composition of their batch graduation song used during their Convocation which was then awarded as the "Convocation Song Competition Best in Performance". She was also a part of the PSD Chorale club. She is currently a grade 12 STEM student, The Link sports writer, and a badminton trainee. She manifests a quote by Vincent Van Gogh, "If you hear a voice within you say, 'You cannot paint,' then by all means paint, and that voice will be silent."



Eliana Jahleel P. Ignacio was born on the twenty-fourth of March 2004 in Manila City, Philippines. She has been part of the pilot section since her 5th grade. When she was in grade 4, she was the champion in Academic Olympiad's English essay writing, the first runner-up during their Extemporaneous speaking, and is constantly part of their section's top 5. She's also consecutively part of PSD's Drum and Lyre Corps for 6 years and is also part of PSD's Senior Math club for 2 years. She also got the title of "BinibiningSipnayan" and "BinibiningKatalinuhan" in their math-related pageant held in the school year 2019-2020, graduated high school as a bronze medalist, and their research paper became the best descriptive research paper. She is currently a grade 12 STEM student, The Link literary writer, and has won 2nd place in their Filipino Essay Writing Contest. She was also a bronze and silver Laureola awardee last school year. "Trust in the Lord with all thine heart" which is from Proverbs 3:5 has been her favorite life verse, she believes that everything happens for a reason and that we should just trust God because he knows what's best for us.



Shayra Ayah S. Laja was born on April 12th of 2004 in Doha, Qatar. She is an accomplished honor student, consistently in the top rankings of the entire batch. In her 11th year, she ranked 1st overall and was a silver Laureola awardee for both semesters. She also placed 2nd as the Second Honor in Grade 10. In her Junior High School years, she has consistently been a silver awardee.

Her extra-curricular activities and awards are also far from lacking. She is not only a consistent member of the Link, the school journalism organization, but she is also part of the editorial board. In the SY 2019-2020, she was the Sports Editor and in the SY 2021-2022, she was the Associate Editor. She is also an embellished debater, participating in the national tournaments of Qatar Debate since Grade 9. Additionally, she has also participated in multiple Model United Nations (MUN) and even achieved Honorable Mention in the international Spring Georgetown MUN. Her group's research on *The Use of Lemon (Citrus Limon) And Avocado (Persea Americana) Peelings as Superabsorbent Polymers* won Best in Experimental Research in Grade 10. A quote she internalizes is from YuzuruHanyu, the two-time Olympic gold medallist in figure skating, "Effort will lie, but it will never be in vain".

years, she joined the Pathfinder club and became an outstanding team leader. Moreover, she is also the second majorette of the inter-school drum and bugle competition. Likewise, she was an athlete in badminton during her middle school till grade 8. She also became the president in the Supreme Student Government (SSG). Apparently, during her grade 9, she was transferred to her study in the state of Qatar since her parents are working as Overseas Filipino Workers (OFW). She believes in the quote of "forward ever, backward never", which means even life is full of challenges that may be faced, do not give up and try hard with perseverance to reach your goal for success.



Hafsa P. Musibba was born on the 15th February 2003 in Doha, Qatar. She received outstanding test scores for the English Center for Educational Measurement Achievement Tests for three years. Her extracurricular activities included being a member of the Philippine School Doha dance club from second grade to seventh grade; it allowed her to perform in different events like the Qatar national day

celebration on the 18th December of 2013 and 2014. Her other extracurricular activities include being part of the Mathematics club from 2016 to 2017, the Dunong Academic Guild from 2017 to 2019, the Girl Scouts of the Philippines from 2010 to 2016, and being a Qatar Scout from 2016 to 2018. Her academic achievements include being a consistent honor student, with her being a silver awardee for two years and a bronze awardee for the next five consecutive years. Participation in inter school competitions included a Quiz Bee held by the Indian Women's Association and the Philippine Institute of Civil Engineers (PICE). She was a second lieutenant of Philippine School Doha's C.A.T organization in tenth grade and a video and graphics editor for LINK, the school's publication body, in eleventh grade. She believes in the saying by Abraham Lincoln, "In the end, it's not the years in your life that count. It's life in your years."



Mary Hannah Caryl D. Reyes was born on September 20th of 2003 in Malolos City, Bulacan, Philippines. She was a bronze awardee for two consecutive years and achieved an award of excellence in Computer Programming in her Junior High School Convocation Ceremony. She and her research team were awarded 2nd place for best research booth design for their Science Investigatory Project *The*

Feasibility of Generating Mechanical Energy to Electrical Energy from A Bicycle Generator in the Research Congress S.Y. of 2019 - 2020. She ranked 1st in her class 10-Archimedes, for the 2nd and 4th quarters. She also became a bronze Laureola awardee in her 11th grade. She also exhibits her passion for music and arts by playing the piano or guitar and drawing digitally during her spare time and she believes in the saying of Theodore Roosevelt "far and away the best prize that life offers is the chance to work hard at work worth doing."



Luisa Hubert B. Torayno was born on the 8th of January 2004 in Cagayan De Oro City, Philippines. She was an awardee during her elementary years and was actively involved in extracurricular activities. Through elementary