



Cross-Border Education: The Experiences of Filipino Scholars Educated in South Korea

Inero Ancho^{a*} & Saehoon Park^b

^a College of Graduate Studies and Teacher Education Research, Philippine Normal University, Manila, 1000 Philippines

^b College of Education, Jeonbuk National University, Jeonju, 54896 South Korea

Article info

Article history:

Received: 27 March 2021

Revised: 20 April 2021

Accepted: 29 April 2021

Keywords:

Scholars abroad, Brain gain, Korea, Philippines, Study abroad

Abstract

One major case of brain drain happens when students from developing countries studying in the developed countries decide not to return home after their studies (Baruch, Budhwar, & Khatri, 2007). After achieving their undergraduate degrees, Filipino students may opt to stay in the Philippines for work, or venture abroad to further enhance their careers or attend graduate school. This research focuses on characterizing the context of Filipino graduates who have decided to go back to the Philippines. Despite the advantages of studying abroad, scholars who have returned to their home countries still struggle during re-entry (Alandejani, 2013). Seventy-four graduates have participated in the study. Participants are Filipinos who have completed their graduate degrees in South Korea and decided to return to the Philippines. With their South Korean education, returning Filipino scholars did not only see the academic, social, and professional advantages of the experience along with the difficulties and challenges. They also considered several personal gains and benefits compared to their locally educated counterparts. It is interesting to note that majority of Filipino graduates chose South Korea because of the offering of scholarship/financial support and are motivated by career advancement in the future. While the respondents see their study abroad experiences as positive, one-third of them believe that courses in South Korea were somewhat difficult compared to the Philippines. More than 50% of the graduate students returned homes because of their willingness to help the Philippines, as 80% of them have landed a job after 1-3 months after their return. Aside from financial literacy, findings reveal that graduates possessed ability to deal with problems and people in a more mature manner particularly in an intercultural setting and being able to adapt to change better.

Introduction

Filipino students are given international exposure with the help of public and privately-sponsored programs,

allowing them to make needs meet during their stay in universities abroad. The enhancement of the Philippine education system has produced capable students, who

* Corresponding Author
e-mail: ancho.iv@pnu.edu.ph

work in research laboratories or engage in study-work programs. Government institutions and private agencies overseas have provided numerous scholarship programs that are available for Filipino students, both need-based and merit-based awards. In the study by McPherson, Jennings-McGarity, Arnold, Littleton, & Lee (2020), they found that as scholars abroad, self-understanding is enhanced as 'global citizens and professionals.' Socio-political agenda brings forms to study abroad programs (Isabelli-García, Bown, Plews, & Dewey, 2018). Study abroad is a vehicle towards 'self-realization' and 'cultural experience' (Cebolla-Boado, Hu, & Soysal, 2018).

According to Baruch, Budhwar, & Khatri (2007), there are a variety of factors that impact the decision of a student whether to stay in the host country or go back to the home country. Cassarino (2004) states that the manner a migrant perceives his origin country and his "self-identification" create an impact on his return to his home country. The study abroad experience has been a vehicle to enhance 'relationships and engagement' which eventually create an impact on their learning (Davis & Coryell, 2020).

As Filipino scholars return home to the Philippines, they are at least expected to put into practice the knowledge they have imported, which is literally associated with using their skills to their host industry in the home country. A study by Strange & Gibson (2017) noted that study abroad programs serve as tool towards developing transformative learning of students, and per Maharaja (2018), the experience contributes to the development of intercultural aspects and personal improvement.

Smooth transition is varied, as Filipino repatriate scholars undergo difficulties, as they are welcomed with inappropriate environment, socially and in terms of their career tracks, which is expected to eventually facilitate the smooth and fruitful flow of the process of the theory into practice process. When they return from study abroad, students often face difficulties that what was expected as they adjust into their native culture (Mashburn, 2013). According to Karakas (2020), returned scholars carry with them a 'worldview' that sets them apart from those around them. Interaction plays a very important role in the lives of international students as it is the most important activity in the delivery of academic practice (Haris, Naway, Pulukadang, Takeshita, & Ancho, 2018).

Currently, as majority of Filipino scholars

complete their graduate degrees in South Korea and return to the Philippines, an unwritten fact is clear: as they are assumed to be qualified agents to work in the academe, the government or even in the private enterprises. Because of their background and know-how, these international students are being weighed as critical connection of knowledge and expertise back home.

In an economic discussion paper presented by Soon (2009), he concludes that with the return intention before coming to a host country, international students are most likely to return to their home country. But what happens to these Filipino repatriate scholars after they have returned to the Philippines? As they bring back dynamic attitude, mindset and skills, ready to be applied to work, how did the process of re-entry shape them in terms of the difficulties and inconveniences they have encountered while re-adjusting to their original environment?

Objectives

1. Describe the experience of the participants as graduate students in South Korea.
2. Inquire on their experiences after returning to the Philippines.

Conceptual framework

The present study also positions itself as a tool in aid of university programs for its international members. According to Johnstone & Edwards (2020), mobility of students is at the core of internationalization of higher education. As universities eagerly attract new international students through their recruitment both local and abroad, this research will serve as a constant reminder that the picture of having international students in the university doesn't stop in recruitment alone: it involves aspects encompassing student life, completing the academic degree, and their transition to the labor market; along with other support services geared toward international students. This is supported by a study conducted by Grewe & Bradley (2009) as they conclude that it is essential that students get the most out of their study abroad life. Similarly, studies on study abroad program design are essential with the great attention given to this academic endeavor (Whatley, Landon, Tarrant, & Rubin, 2020).

One major case of brain drain happens when students from developing countries studying in the developed countries decide not to return home after their studies (Baruch, Budhwar, & Khatri, 2007). After

achieving their undergraduate degrees, Filipino students may opt to stay in the Philippines for work, or venture abroad to further enhance their careers or attend graduate school. This research focuses on characterizing the context of Filipino graduates who have decided to go back to the Philippines. In spite of the advantages of studying abroad, scholars who have returned to their home countries still struggle during re-entry (Alandejani, 2013).

Research methodology

The present study utilizes quantitative and qualitative approaches to answer the established inquiries. Survey research has best captured one facet of this research as it gathered opinions and trends. Items included open ended questions, multiple choice questions, etc. To be able to reach the qualified participants, the proponents of the study conducted initial outsourcing among groups of Filipino students in various universities to seek help in establishing the database for the study. Once prospective participants are identified, the posting of the call for study participants are done through online Facebook groups and communities. As the participants responded, they were sent a link to the online survey tool which in turn could be anonymously completed.

The online survey instrument was written in English and could be accomplished in 20 minutes. It was composed of 29 items, 24 multiple choice questions and five qualitative inquiries (open ended questions). The multiple-choice questions involved a checklist of various items that the participants could tick to reflect their answers. The initial part of the instrument covered items referring to the demographic profile of the participants while the second part dealt with items that asked about their experiences as graduate students in Korea. The last part revolved around their motivation to return home and their initial life in the Philippines. The research instrument was validated by four experts in the field of international education and education research. The final form of the instrument incorporated the suggestions, inputs, and comments of the validators. These inputs were tabulated and integrated into the finalized online survey instrument.

Seventy-four graduates have participated in the study. The criteria for sampling the participants are the following: (1) attended MA/MS/PhD in South Korea, (2) must have officially received their academic graduate degrees from a South Korean university, (3) must have returned to the Philippines for at least 3 years after graduation, and (4) currently employed in the Philippines.

Participants are those who have completed their graduate degrees in South Korea and decided to return to the Philippines. The following table presents the demographic information of the participants:

Table 1 The participants' demographic information

Demographics		Percentage
Marital Status	Single	78.40%
	Married	21.60%
	Total	100%
Age	20 - 25 years old	20.55%
	26 - 30 years old	45.21%
	31 - 35 years old	19.18%
	36 - 40 years old	5.48%
	above 40 years old	9.58%
	Total	100.00%
Academic Level	Master's	81.10%
	Doctoral	14.80%
	Integrated Master's-PhD	4.10%
	Total	100.00%
Academic Program	Social Sciences	29.70%
	Engineering	28.40%
	Natural Sciences	18.90%
	Business	12.20%
	Others	10.80%
	Total	100.00%
Sources of Funding	University-based	70.30%
	Government-sponsored (KGSP, etc)	20.30%
	Private corporations (POSCO, etc)	4.10%
	Others (self-funds, academic scholarship, etc)	5.3%
	Total	100.00%

Results

This section presents the findings and discussion of the study in relation to identified problems.

Filipinos as Graduate Students in South Korea

Several factors were explored to provide a better understanding on the experiences of Filipino graduate students in South Korea. The participants of the study were asked about their initial motivation on deciding to go abroad to pursue further studies. Aside from given default answers, an option was also offered for students to identify other answers aside from the given ones. Four favors were identified by Nyaupane, Paris, & Teye (2010) which motivated students to go abroad and study. Of the aspects mentioned, the desire to travel to another country has been the most favored.

Table 2 The respondents' motivating factors to go abroad and study

Responses	Percentage
Career advancement in the future	78.40%
Prestige of study abroad	51.40%
Learning new language/skills	47.30%
Better facilities and equipment than in home country	45.90%
Better scholarship funding opportunities	29.70%
Getting away from the Philippines environment and lifestyle preference abroad	16.20%

From the list of available choices, “career advancement in the future,” with a 78.4% rating, was classified as the top reason why Filipino students decided to go abroad. Realizing the impact of an international diploma, the respondents had high hopes of developing communication skills, adaptability, and life skills to name a few. Career development has been a crucial aspect, as it is being treated as a strong motivation facet toward achieving an international degree.

The “prestige of study abroad” was ranked 2nd among the given choices, with a 51.4% rating. Given the economic, social and political impact of study abroad, Filipino students have decided to leave the comforts of their home country, with the belief that it would eventually highlight their reputation. Study abroad has been associated with the acquisition of significant “esteem” that overseas students feel.

Leaving the Philippines to study in another country also creates further opportunities, not just academic gains. “Learning new language/skills while attending graduate school” has been assessed with a 47.3% rating. This was followed by “better facilities and equipment than in home country”. Comparing the technological and improved facilities and equipment available in home country than those in foreign universities, the strong 45.9% rating of the respondents proved that academic facilities indeed matter when it comes to starting graduate studies pursuits abroad.

Aside from better scholarship funding opportunities such as government-sponsored grants (29.7%) getting away from the Philippine environment and lifestyle preference abroad (both with 16.2% rating) were also mentioned as significant aspects that encouraged the participants to go abroad and study.

Other than the replies cited above, the study participants have also identified additional answers regarding the topic. While some students preferred to study abroad for a “change of career field”, others have stated that they considered graduate school overseas provide them “more chances of meeting people from different cultures.” Having a “break from the routines of one’s job” and the desire “not to work right after completing their undergraduate degrees” also motivated Filipino students to seek higher academic training overseas.

Table 3 The respondents’ reasons for choosing South Korea for study abroad

Responses	Percentage
Offering of scholarship/financial support	77.00%
Better educational opportunities	28.40%
Korean degree would improve job opportunities in home country	20.30%
Proximity to the home country	20.30%
South Korea is a good country for my field of study	20.30%

When specifically asked why the respondents chose South Korea as a place to study for graduate programs, various relevant results were gathered reflecting the motives of Filipino graduate students. The highest response has been the “Offering of scholarship/financial support in South Korea” with a 77% valuation. This echoes how financial schemes are considered to be the number one concern of students interested in studying abroad. Qualified Filipino students have recognized that while achieving an international education crafts academic, personal and professional gains, funding for their studies abroad was also imperative.

Succeeding feedbacks included choosing South Korea because of “Better educational opportunities” and “Better funding opportunities” both with 28.4% mark. The following statements were scaled with a 20.3% rating: “Expectation that a degree in South Korea would improve job opportunities in home country”, “Proximity to the home country”, and “South Korea is a good country for my field of study”.

The effects of the Korean trend phenomenon have also influenced the respondents to pursue graduate schooling in South Korea. A respondent has also specified that the country is a “challenging and interesting place for study, while “being a fan of Korean dramas and variety shows” has persuaded one participant.

Table 4 The respondents’ assessment of their overall study experience in Korea

Responses	Percentage
Very positive	20.90%
Positive	50.70%
Somewhat positive	17.90%
Neutral	6.00%

On describing their overall South Korean study abroad experience, half of the participants considered it to be “positive” (50.70%). A “very positive” stay in South Korea has been the response of 20.90% of the study participants. While studying in South Korea was considered “somewhat positive” based on 17.90% of the respondents, a neutral response of 6.00% was gathered (neither positive nor negative).

Table 5 The respondents' assessment of the differences of learning environments

Responses	Percentage
the interaction in greater depth with topics at hand	26.90%
more first-hand learning opportunities	23.90%
"I was given a direct application of the subject"	16.40%
"I was in an immersion program, learning another language"	16.40%
no difference	3.00%

To further discuss the learning experience in South Korea, the respondents were asked the difference of South Korean academic learning environment compared to what they had back home in the Philippines. Apparently, "the interaction in greater depth with the topics at hand" showed the top response with 26.90% rating, followed by the availability of "more first-hand learning opportunities" (23.90%). The responses "I was given a direct application of the subject" and "I was in an immersion program, learning in another language" both garnered 16.40%, while only 3.00% felt there was "no difference" between the Philippine and South Korean academic environments.

Other particular distinction mentioned included South Korea's advantages over "funding, equipment and research support", along with the "availability of resources for studying, computer-internet, library, scientific journal access, etc."

After receiving their international graduate degrees from South Korea, and being able to return to the Philippines, 95.5% of the Filipino repatriate scholars were still interested to participate in study abroad again, whether in South Korea or another country.

Table 6 The respondents' assessment of the university's International Affairs Office

Responses	Percentage
Good	32.80%
Adequate	32.80%
Excellent	14.90%
Poor	11.90%
Unacceptable	6.00%

Each university's or college's internationalization efforts are fueled by the performance of the international affairs team as a service unit. Apparently, 32.80% of the respondents consider their South Korean university's international affairs team be "good", followed by 32.80% who considered them to be "adequate". Of all the study participants, only 14.90% rated them to be "excellent", 11.90% as "poor" and 6.00% as "unacceptable". From the responses, language is considered to be a major fallback for this assessment, with a respondent stating

that: "some of the offices in the university has no staff that can speak English well". In terms of language concerns, there is a need for the provision of opportunities and resources so international students will be motivated to learn the foreign language.

A participant shared a personal experience regarding the university international student affairs office:

"Our program required an internship to graduate. While Korean students were provided with the information they needed, we were left to fend for ourselves, not much help from the Office for International Students' Affairs, especially in providing English informational materials for us (considering the fact that our programs were all in English)."

While issues on language development for adaptation, poor English communication, and other school-related aspects mentioned, the respondents also identified positive notes regarding the role of the international affairs office in their foreign student life in the university, including initiatives on checking the scholar's progress, situation and welfare, activities and events for foreign students, combined positive efforts from the professors and students, etc. Buddy programs, cultural tours, and off-campus assistance (housing, immigration) were also stated as schemes in promoting the welfare of international students.

Table 7 Level of difficulty of courses comparing South Korea and the Philippines

Responses	Percentage
Courses in South Korea were somewhat difficult	34.30%
Somewhat easier	28.40%
Just about the same	19.40%
Much easier	11.90%
Much more difficult	6.00%

Another comparative inquiry was presented concerning the level of difficulty of courses relative to the respondents' academic experience in the Philippines. For this portion, 34.30% of the responses revealed that courses in South Korea were "somewhat difficult" compared to those classes the Filipino students had in the Philippines. Study participants who found the study abroad academic contents to be "somewhat easier" pegged at 28.40%, followed by 19.40% which stated that the level of difficulty in South Korea and the Philippines was just "about the same".

While there were 11.90% of the respondents who claimed that South Korean academic courses were "much easier" compared to the Philippines, only 6% stated that

compared to the Philippines, South Korean academic environment was “much more difficult”. Ward (2001) has recognized the impact being created by international students in innovating change both in “education content and process,” forging international attitudes and approaches which eventually demand for a more interactive classroom set-up.

Table 8 Respondents’ assessment on how welcome and comfortable they felt on campus

Responses	Percentage
Welcomed	37.30%
Somewhat friendly	31.30%
Neutral	20.90%
Somewhat uneasy	7.50%
Uneasy	3.00%

When asked about how “welcome and comfortable” they felt while on campus, diverse replies were gathered from the Filipino students. While 37.3% considered to have felt the “welcomed” treatment given towards them on campus, 31.3% believed that they had “somewhat friendly” treatment while being enrolled in a Korean university.

Only 20.90% experienced the “neutral” impression during their stay. There were 7.50% of the respondents who considered being “somewhat uneasy” on campus. “Uneasy” feeling was answered by 3.00% of the respondents.

As international students of Korean universities, it is also inevitable for Filipino students to establish interaction and contact with Korean students. The relationship between Filipino and Korean students is an important aspect that impacts the entire study abroad experience of an individual, whether in the classroom or about their personal lives. Bamford (2008) has already affirmed this by stating that learning facilitated with friends could be utilized as a medium and can prove to be a “useful support mechanism.” Ward (2001) in his research involving international students in New Zealand found that the foreigner participants “expect and desire greater contact with the locals,” citing that most studies conducted mainly focus on the lens of international students. The study also reveals that while local students create “relatively favorable perceptions of international students” but it is being contrasted by the local student being “largely uninterested” to start contact with their international counterparts.

With a broad range of opportunities and experiences that study abroad brings, the Filipino students

were asked about the most rewarding aspects of their Korean study abroad experience.

Top responses included (1) acquisition of new skills and knowledge, (2) personal and professional advancement, and (3) meeting different kinds of people. With the training and academic instruction provided to these Filipino students, it is obvious that gaining fresh and innovative ideas when it comes to capabilities and expertise peaks the Korea study abroad narrative.

Personal and professional advance was also mentioned as a gratifying factor of being in Korea to study. To be specific with personal gains, ‘being independent in a foreign country’ was also mentioned along with ‘succeeding despite difficulties faced’, one respondent actually commented that being in Korea made him ‘acquire the never-say-die’ character in spite its impossibilities’. Particular answers from the respondents were also gathered. Some of these responses included ‘being able to understand the plight of Filipinos in Korea.’ Living in a foreign country also exposed Filipino students to issues outside the walls of the academe. Most of them also get involved with the lives of overseas Filipino workers (OFW) in Korea.

After discussing the most rewarding features of study abroad in Korea, the participants of the study also identified the disappointing and challenging parts of their academic and life experiences in another country. Several replies were gathered with ‘language barrier’ as the top answer. Korea being a country with its own language and unique culture has offered Filipino students great challenge when it comes to cultural and language adjustments. While classes could be held in English, and with English-speaking individuals around them, Filipino students also need to face the fact that a perfectly new language was spoken in the environment where they temporarily belonged to. Next top response was ‘being away from family and loved ones’.

Coming from a country which highly values close family ties and relationships, it was indeed a great challenge to be separated from family members and loved ones. Despite the presence of newly-established friendship and companions, the distance that divided Filipino scholars from their family members was undoubtedly one of the most challenging factors of pursuing graduate school abroad.

‘Differences among cultures’ was listed as the third biggest challenge that students needed to face during their stay in Korea. This was followed by ‘financial difficulties’. As students relying on sponsorship

and scholarship programs, managing the finances in order to meet daily needs on top of academic responsibilities played a crucial role on the lives of Filipino students in Korea.

Table 9 Respondents' satisfaction rating on various aspects of their Korean university lives.

Responses	Very dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Neutral	Satisfied	Very satisfied
Availability of supervisor	5.08%	5.08%	16.95%	52.54%	20.34%
Quality of supervisor	5.08%	10.17%	16.95%	38.98%	28.81%
Frequency of communication with supervisor	5.08%	6.78%	20.34%	54.24%	13.56%
Course content	3.45%	5.17%	25.86%	51.72%	13.79%
Teaching (major classes, Korean language classes, etc)	1.69%	11.86%	22.03%	59.32%	5.08%
Accommodation/housing	1.72%	8.62%	13.79%	41.38%	34.48%
Financial support services	3.39%	18.64%	27.12%	32.20%	18.64%
Career services	5.08%	13.56%	44.07%	25.42%	11.86%
University/college events	3.39%	10.17%	30.51%	44.07%	11.86%

The table presents the satisfaction level of Filipino students regarding various aspects of their Korean university life. Using a 5-point scale, labeled as very dissatisfied, dissatisfied, neutral, satisfied and very satisfied, the respondents assess the level of fulfillment regarding academic and social qualities of their stay abroad.

Coming Back Home: From Korea to the Philippines

Another crucial subject matter explored in this research involved whether the entire study abroad experience in Korea had influenced any change in the scholars' overall perspectives. Majority of the respondents or 96.80% of them replied with affirmation, while only 3.20% answered with a "no". Employment is one primary factor that is of great concern to any returning scholars. With an 'upgraded' level of education, the period of time as Filipino scholars receive their degrees abroad and decide to return to their home country, they are expected to practice their craft, either in the industry or academe. An inquiry was also made whether their stay in Korea as international students had created an impact on their respective study and career decisions. Undeniably, 93.7% of the respondents strongly affirmed their answers, compared to only 6.30% who said "no."

When the participants were asked of the best influencing factors that contributed to their return to the Philippines, the "willingness to help the Philippines" garnered the highest portion with 59.30%, followed by "wanted to be with my family" with 40.97%. Because there were no opportunities in store for them in South

Table 10 Respondents' reasons for returning to the Philippines

Responses	Percentage
Willingness to help the Philippines	59.30%
Wanted to be with family	40.97%
No opportunities in South Korea	23.70%
Willingness to help families	23.70%
Reached goals	22.00%

Korea, 23.7% decided to return home. The willingness to help their families and who returned home because they have reached their goal totaled 23.70% and 22.00%, respectively. Other reasons for returning includes; being under contract or study leave, hesitations to work in a South Korean company, more opportunities foreseen in the Philippines, and following initial intention to return home after graduation.

Furthermore, one participant stated that since the initial goal is to "just study, acquire needed knowledge and skills," there is a need to go back home to apply what the student has learned in order to somewhat help the country. Others were "under contract", making them obliged to go back home after finishing their academic degrees.

Believing that there would be greater work and career opportunities in the Philippines, students decided to come back home, while others felt hesitant to work in a Korean company.

Table 10 Period to get a job in the Philippines

Responses	Percentage
Responses	Percentage
1-3 months	80.40%
4-6 months	15.70%
6 months - 1 year	3.90%

It took 1-3 months for 80.40% of respondents to land a job after returning back to the Philippines. While 15.7% of them had to wait for 4-6 months, 3.90% of them waited for 6 months to 1 year to have a job.

The following table presents the impact of the respondent's South Korean education to numerous aspects after returning to the Philippines:

For this portion of the study, the respondents were asked to rate the impact of their South Korean diploma concerning the given five variables which include: friends and family members, better professional opportunities at home, comfort feeling at home, better standard of living at home, and better quality of life in the Philippines. Apparently, friends and family members create a "stronger" impact (45.83%), while better career (professional)

Table 12 The impact of the Filipino scholar's South Korean education

Responses	Much weaker	Weaker	No change	Stronger	Much stronger
a) Friends and family members	2.08%	2.08%	22.92%	45.83%	27.08%
b) Better professional opportunities in the Philippines	0.00%	6.25%	14.58%	52.08%	27.08%
c) Feeling more comfortable in the Philippines	2.08%	16.67%	25.00%	31.25%	25.00%
d) Higher economic standard of living in the Philippines	0.00%	16.67%	25.00%	41.67%	16.67%
e) Better quality of life in the Philippines	0.00%	16.67%	16.67%	45.83%	20.83%

opportunities rate the highest, though also falls under the same “stronger” scale (52.08%).

The respondents considered that their South Korean diploma has made them experience the relaxed and eased feeling of life in the Philippines, (“stronger” at 31.25%), while it resulted to a superior economic way of living (“stronger” at 41.67%) and better quality of life, which was also rated to create a “stronger” impact at 45.83%.

The following table presents how the South Korean education has helped respondents on numerous aspects after returning to the Philippines:

Table 13 How helpful was the Filipino scholar's South Korea education?

Responses	No help at all	Slightly helpful	Neutral	Fairly helpful	Very helpful
a) High occupational income	2.08%	4.17%	18.75%	39.58%	35.42%
b) Greater opportunity to advance in profession	2.00%	4.17%	10.42%	37.50%	45.83%
c) Better work environment (flexible hours, relaxed setting, etc)	10.42%	4.17%	27.08%	27.08%	31.25%
d) Greater opportunity in my field of study	4.17%	4.17%	12.50%	41.67%	37.50%
e) More satisfying social and cultural life	0.00%	12.50%	22.92%	37.50%	27.08%
f) Social security	0.00%	6.25%	38%	37.50%	18.75%
g) Personal growth	0.00%	0.00%	4.17%	45.83%	50.00%

On a more personal perspective, the participants were also assessed on how their education in South Korea has helped them in social and professional aspects. Income wise, majority of the respondents have agreed that the experience has been “fairly helpful” and “very helpful” to them, with 39.58% and 35.42%, respectively. An international diploma was considered by the participants to be “very helpful” (45.83%) in providing greater opportunity to advance in profession. This is a sound conclusion on the motivation of Filipino students

who decided to go abroad in order to improve skills and knowledge and later on use them in enhancing the opportunities in their chosen career.

Enjoying a more satisfying and cultural life has been considered to be a “fairly helpful” (37.50%), result of a study abroad experience, while social security is an impact of “neutral” effect (38.00%). Half of the respondents affirm that a graduate degree in South Korea has been “very helpful” (50.00%) in achieving personal growth.

The following table presents the respondent's assessment on the impact of numerous aspects concerning their reintegration to the Philippine social environment after finishing their South Korean education.

Table 14 The impact of the Filipino scholar's South Korea education regarding social integration

	Not at all concerned	Slightly concerned	Somewhat concerned	Moderately Concerned	Extremely Concerned	Not applicable
a) Family members	20.83%	14.58%	8.33%	14.58%	35.42%	6.25%
b) Friends	19%	25.00%	10.42%	33.33%	10.42%	2.08%
c) Co-workers	22.92%	22.92%	16.67%	16.67%	12.50%	8.33%
d) Private companies/entities	33.33%	10.42%	12.50%	22.92%	10.42%	10.42%
e) Philippine government	25%	10.42%	2.08%	22.92%	27.08%	12.5%

Divided viewpoints were gathered on the family members' concern regarding the respondents' South Korean education. While 35.42% felt that their family members are extremely concerned, 20.83% believed that it “did not actually concern” them. Majority of the responses assessed that their friends were “moderately concerned” (33.33%). When it comes to people they work with, both 22.92% scored for both “not at all concerned” and “slightly concerned”, respectively.

When asked about private companies/entities' concern regarding their South Korean education, 33.33% expressed their belief that the private sector is “not concerned at all”, followed by 22.92% stating that these entities are “moderately concerned.”

While the effort of the Philippine government regarding this matter is interpreted to be “extremely concerned” according to the belief of 27.08% of participants, 25% could not totally feel the government's concern regarding the fact that they have returned from abroad bringing home an international diploma.

The respondents were also asked a question about the perception of the Philippines regarding returning scholars from South Korea. They were specifically asked

if they think the country is “open for changes (skills, ideas, and professional knowledge) introduced by returning Filipino scholars from abroad.”

Most respondents affirmed the country’s readiness and positive efforts towards receiving the returning Filipino graduates from abroad, highlighting the “high regard of foreign ideas, skills and knowledge,” noting the “relatively openness” of the Philippine market to these agents. Others have felt the “minimum support from the Philippine government,” evident with the way Filipino scholars are encouraged to “go home, share what they’ve learned and eventually give back to their home country.”

Some have seen affirmation on this matter with the growing presence of Korean entities in the construction industry in the Philippines highlighting the skills and professional knowledge offered by returning Filipino scholars. The Philippine academe, being “extremely receptive” also offers a welcoming affirmation as they are “more willing to send their faculty and staff abroad to gain more skills hoping that they will contribute more when they come back.” The country’s commitment to scientific research is also seen as a favorable step.

However, there are some noticeable challenges that the country faces, which hinder the way for returning Filipino scholars to maximize their potentials and enhance their capacities. There still exist instances that hamper successful integration of programs and policies regarding the return of Filipino scholars from abroad. Similarly, Heirweg, Carrette, Ascari, & Van Hove (2020) noted that the experience has also been challenging to students with disability as they participate in study abroad activities.

One common issue discussed is about the “venue/opportunity for the usage of the knowledge and technology acquired in South Korea”, especially the highly scientific and technical ones, along with the “lack of funding”. The existence of “quality jobs to absorb the level of education” of the returning scholars is also considered problematic. The “limited program for returning scholars” is also seen as a challenge, while the issue in terms of salary still remains. With the effort and programs presented by the government for the returning Filipino scholars, one respondent admitted that the “implementation takes time”.

The final part of the research explores the relative advantage perceived by returning Filipino scholars from South Korea compared to those Filipinos who

have completed their studies in the Philippines. The responses of study participants range from advantages when it comes to the experience of technologies, Korean language skills, enhancement of personal and social values.

Understanding and experiences related to advanced technology and technical skills are the highest replies gathered from returning Filipino scholars. They see “technical expertise” as their primary advantage over those Filipino students who have completed their studies in the Philippines. This is associated with possessing necessary skills when it comes to “use of equipment and actual applications of learned theories.” Programming skills, database management, software proficiency and other expertise were also mentioned. A respondent in the nutrition and dietetics field also mentioned:

“Hardcore nutrigenetics and nutrigenomics in my field are rarely practiced in Philippine academic institutions but I had the privilege to master the subject in Korea. This served as my edge over those who went to local graduate schools.”

Being able to participate in conventions, workshops, and conferences were also seen as opportunities and advantages. Filipino scholars were also exposed to research and publication. Their research-writing skills were also considered a plus; specifically, being able to publish works in international journals.

Having studied in South Korea where a totally different language was used in all aspects of life, the respondents also gave credit to their Korean language proficiency as an advantage. Aside from this, “being exposed to another culture” was considered beneficial.

Conclusions

With their South Korean education, returning Filipino scholars did not only see the academic, social and professional advantages of the experience along with the difficulties and challenges. They also considered several personal gains and benefits compared to their locally-educated counterparts. Being open-minded, independent, and the stability to work under pressure were also among the identified gains from the experience.

Aside from financial literacy, findings reveal that graduates possessed ability to deal with problems and people in a more mature manner particularly in an intercultural setting and being able to adapt to change better.

As Filipino scholars return to the Philippines, they

face another chapter in their academic lives as they re-integrate to the society they once belonged to. This comes with the appeal to provide opportunities to returning Filipino scholars to practice their crafts and expertise as an offering to the country. With sincere government support and commitment, the enhancement of the country's capability can be achieved, especially while working hand in hand with locals who have studied abroad.

A systematic pre-departure seminar should be instituted before Filipino students leave the Philippines to pursue graduate programs abroad. Joining with concerned agencies, a formal and organized approach towards life abroad could benefit future scholars with the needed skills and competencies towards a pleasant and successful stay abroad. Currently as research literature is being gathered since this relatively young trend is gradually gaining attention and popularity, it is also a timely approach worthy of investigation.

The government needs to seriously consider those who return to the Philippines after obtaining their degrees abroad. As future members of the Philippine academe and labor market, these individuals need to affirm their roles as they reintegrate to the society they once belonged to. Series of serious government efforts would be beneficial towards achieving a positive impact of the returnee's overseas diploma.

Future researchers under the same context could also explore other related facets of this phenomenon. Issues regarding financial and social gains could also be studied thoroughly, along with schemes on how to effectively revive brain gain efforts. Specific case studies could also help provide particular insights on the plight of those students who have chosen to go back home.

References

- Alandejani, J. (2013). *Coming Home After Studying Abroad: How Saudi Female Scholars-adapt, Re-adjust, and Transfer their Knowledge*. Retrieved September, 25, 2020, from <http://digitool.library.colostate.edu/webclient/DeliveryManager?pid=246231>
- Bamford, J. (2008). *Improving International Students' experience of studying in the UK*. Retrieved January, 20, 2021, from http://www.economicsnetwork.ac.uk/showcase/bamford_international
- Baruch, Y., Budhwar, P., & Khatri, N. (2007). Brain drain: Inclination to stay abroad after studies. *Journal World of Business*, 42(1), 99-112.
- Cassarino, J. P. (2004). Theorising return migration: The conceptual approach to return migrants revisited. *International Journal on Multicultural Societies (IJMS)*, 6(2), 253-279.
- Cebolla-Boado, H., Hu, Y., & Soysal, Y. N. (2018). Why study abroad? Sorting of Chinese students across British universities. *British Journal of Sociology of Education*, 39(3), 365-380.
- Davis, B., & Coryell, J. E. (2020). Relationships, Participation, and Characteristics of a Community of Practice in Short-Term Adult Study Abroad. *Adult Learning*, 31(1), 17-26.
- Grewe, J., & Bradley, K. (2009). *Creating an instrument to measure perceptions of preparedness to return home from study abroad, Study Abroad Perceptions-MWERA 2009*. Retrieved September, 20, 2020, from <http://www.uky.edu/~kdbrad2/Jessica.pdf>
- Haris, I., Naway, F., Pulukadang, W. T., Takeshita, H., & Ancho, I. V. (2018). School Supervision Practices in the Indonesian Education System; Perspectives and Challenges. *Journal of Social Studies Education Research*, 9(2), 366-387.
- Heirweg, S., Carette, L., Ascari, A., & Van Hove, G. (2020). Study abroad programmes for all? Barriers to participation in international mobility programmes perceived by students with disabilities. *International Journal of Disability, Development and Education*, 67(1), 73-91.
- Isabelli-García, C., Bown, J., Plews, J. L., & Dewey, D. P. (2018). Language learning and study abroad. *Language Teaching*, 51(4), 439-484.
- Johnstone, C., & Edwards, P. (2020). Accommodations, accessibility, and culture: Increasing access to study abroad for students with disabilities. *Journal of Studies in International Education*, 24(4), 424-439.
- Karakas, A. (2020). Disciplining transnationality? The impact of study abroad educational experiences on Turkish returnee scholars' lives, careers and identity. *Research in Comparative and International Education*, 15(3), 252-272.
- Maharaja, G. (2018). The Impact of Study Abroad on College Students' Intercultural Competence and Personal Development. *International Research and Review*, 7(2), 18-41.
- Mashburn, D. (2013). *Repatriation of Information Systems Student Sojourners from Developing Countries: The Role of Acculturation*. Retrieved September, 20, 2020, from <http://sais.aisnet.org/2013/Marshburn.pdf>
- McPherson, J., Jennings-McGarity, P., Arnold, B. H., Littleton, T., & Lee, M. (2020). Creating Global Scholars: Experiential Learning and Reflection Transform an International Conference Into Short-Term Study Abroad. *Journal of Social Work Education*, 1-14.
- Nyaupane, G. P., Paris, C. M., & Teye, V. (2010). Why do students study abroad? Exploring motivations beyond earning academic credits. *Tourism Analysis*, 15(2), 263-267.
- Soon, J. J. (2009). When do students intend to return? Determinants of students' return intentions using a multinomial logit model. Retrieved September, 25, 2014 from <http://jsi.sagepub.com/content/11/3-4/359.full.pdf>

- Strange, H., & Gibson, H. J. (2017). An investigation of experiential and transformative learning in study abroad programs. *Frontiers: The Interdisciplinary Journal of Study Abroad*, 29(1), 85-100.
- Ward, C. (2001). *The impact of international students on domestic students and host institutions*. Retrieve January, 21, 2020 from https://www.educationcounts.govt.nz/publications/international/the_impact_of_international_students_on_domestic_students_and_host_institutions 2015
- Whatley, M., Landon, A. C., Tarrant, M. A., & Rubin, D. (2020). *Program design and the development of students' global perspectives in faculty-led short-term study abroad*. January, 21, 2020 from <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/1028315320906156?journalCode=jsia>