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MELANY OLEA MOYA

INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION IN INTERNATIONAL MARRIAGES: A CASE STUDY OF FILIPINO MIGRANT WIVES MARRIED TO JAPANESE HUSBANDS

Thesis Adviser:

MELINDA DELA PEÑA BANDALARIA, Ph.D.
Faculty of Information and Communication Studies

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Acceptance Page:

This paper, prepared by **Melany O. Moya** with the title: **"Intercultural Communication in International Marriages: A Case Study of Filipino Migrant Wives Married to Japanese Husbands,"** is hereby accepted by the Faculty of Information and Communication Studies, U.P. Open University, in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree, Master of Development Communication.

MELINDA DP. BANDALARIA, Ph.D. **20 August 2024**
Chair, Thesis Committee (Date)

ALEXANDER G. FLOR, Ph.D. **20 August 2024**
Member, Thesis Committee (Date)

BENJAMINA PAULA G. FLOR, Ph.D. **20 August 2024**
Member, Thesis Committee (Date)

DIEGO S. MARANAN, Ph.D.
Dean
Faculty of Information and Communication Studies

20 August 2024
(Date)

Biographical Sketch

Melany O. Moya is the daughter of a retired Navy officer from Cavite and a former elementary school teacher from Batangas. Born and raised in Laguna, she is the third of eight children in a tight-knit and loving family. *Bubut*, as she is fondly called by her family and close friends, is an artist, environmentalist, and benefactor of various non-profit organizations (NPOs). As a true and proud Canossian, Letranite, and UP *Iskolar ng Bayan*, she firmly believes that one should serve God, the country, and the people.

As an education advocate and a lifelong learner, Melany has pursued academic and professional courses at UPLB, EdX, and UPOU. Her decision to undertake graduate studies in Development Communication was driven by her desire to contribute to the improvement of the lives of Filipina migrants in Japan, empowering them to reach their full potential.

Prior to establishing her professional life in Japan, Melany served her country through diverse industries. Her early career included working as a research writer for several months and subsequently as a banker for two years. She later served as Chairperson at the University of Perpetual Help-Rizal and spent several years as a university professor at De La Salle University-Dasmariñas under the Accounting and Management Department. She has also held the Department Manager post at SM Department Store in Dasmariñas, Cavite and has gained hands-on business training in Papua New Guinea and in several countries across Southeast Asia. She subsequently earned a Specialist in Humanities International Services and has since been a Language Instructor in Japan for nearly 20 years.

With her many pursuits, *Bubut* also dreams of becoming a full-time researcher. She hopes to return to the Philippines and spend her retirement years serving God and His people. She envisions living on a farm in a *nipa* hut, surrounded by fruit-bearing trees and a vegetable garden. She looks forward to doing traditional tree grafting again and to growing bonsai trees.

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Dedication

To the countless, voiceless Filipino women around the world,

they all deserve to be heard;

Let us all keep standing up for our rights!

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ABSTRACT

This qualitative descriptive case study examined the communication dynamics between two Filipino migrant women and their Japanese-born husbands. It focused on their experiences as wives residing and working in Central Japan, particularly their struggles with communication and cultural adaptation processes in a predominantly patriarchal Japanese culture.

This study answered the main research questions: (1) *How do Filipino migrant wives communicate with their Japanese husbands, using verbal and nonverbal forms of communication, and how are these manifested during this communication process?;* (2) *In what ways do cultural and linguistic disparities shape the* communication *dynamics between Filipino migrant wives and their Japanese husbands, and what impact do these differences have on their marital relationships?;* and (3) *How do Filipino migrant wives address and adapt to the challenges within their international marriages, and how does this adaptation process impact their mental health?*

The study utilized a combination of research methods, namely, in-depth interviews and first-hand observations, and examined the participants' narratives in Filipino and *Taglish* (a blend of Tagalog and English), which were translated into English for thematic analysis.

It also highlighted how traditional gender roles and stereotypes had shaped women's experiences, which often led them to conform to societal (Japanese) expectations, opt to remain silent, and their mental well-being being affected. Cultural and language differences added to the complexity of the international marriage communication process, which required Filipino wives to be sensitive, especially to non-verbal cues and Japanese styles of communication. However, despite language

barriers, with the aid of technology, these communication challenges did not hinder the increase in international marriages in Japan. The experiences of two Filipina participants also highlighted the need for cultural sensitivity and competence in terms of intercultural communication, particularly in Japanese society, where non-verbal communication and traditional gender roles are important.

The findings suggested directions for future research, specifically, more in-depth qualitative and quantitative research or mixed methods involving more couples in international marriages. To further substantiate the findings of this initial study, it encouraged those researchers (whose interest is in exploring the lived experiences of Filipino women migrants) to undertake a study with a larger sample size of Filipina migrants as study participants, specifically in Central Japan (which has the largest population of Filipinos in Japan). It will also be of much interest to explore whether Filipino women's socio-economic status (particularly those Filipinas with advanced academic degrees) will have a significant effect on marital relationships with Japanese husbands, especially in negotiating and managing finances. To render a more balanced perspective, future studies along the lines of international marriages may also tackle the experiences of Japanese husbands, particularly those first-born sons, to compare their experiences with their Filipina wives. Hence, a more encompassing study will highlight how communication has an impact on these marriages.

Chapter I

INTRODUCTION

Background of the Study

International marriages involving migrant women have become increasingly common because of migration. Migration caused an uptick in international marriages, also known as “mixed marriages” or “transnational intermarriages,” particularly with migrant women (Fan & Li, 2002; Moreno-Fontes Chammartin, 2008; Palriwala & Uberoi, 2008; Gaetano, 2015). Since it involves partners of differing countries and cultures, they are also referred to as “cross-national,” “cross-cultural,” or “bi-national marriages” (Kim et al., 2022). Complex dynamics may be present at such unions, even more so for wives with social positions that greatly differ from their respective host countries.

Marital unions between Japanese citizens and spouses from different countries are referred to as “*Kokusai Kekkon*,” or “international marriage” (Takeshita, 2016). More generally, marriage is shared by two individuals with mutual attraction and similar interests, values, and socioeconomic goals (Matsumoto & Juang, 2004, as cited in Kartikasari, 2017; Lan, 2019). Worldwide social connections and international travel are becoming increasingly common, thanks to the rapid technological advancements and globalization. This paved the way for a wider range of narratives centered on migrant women and their experiences with international marriages. These led to myriads of narratives about migrant women’s experiences, especially in international marriages.

The concept of the “feminization of migration” is also introduced to explain the significant exportation and exploitation of female labor, primarily from Asia, which has

become a major source of “female labor” globally. According to the Center for Migrant Advocacy (n.d.), the “feminization of migration” refers to the growing number of migrants female moving abroad in pursuit of employment. The Philippine Overseas Employment Agency (POEA) has documented various roles that migrant Asian women undertake, including domestic service, entertainment, factory work, and healthcare professions. In search of better opportunities or due to economic reasons, this has led to massive migration among women and consistent growth in international marriages (Sakurai, 2002; Mu & Yeung, 2019).

International marriages have their share of pros and cons (Mu and Yeung, 2019). Among common reasons behind individuals’ entry into international marriages are the desire for improved economic conditions and social position (Huang et al., 2008). However, migrant women usually face social, cultural, and legal limitations, causing them to navigate a spectrum of challenges (Constable, 2009; Mu & Yeung, 2019; Quah, 2020). Stereotypes of *Japayukis* or entertainers among women in Asia working in Japan many times resulted in discrimination and negative perception, which greatly affects their well-being and social status.

In 2020, around 280,000 Filipinos were residing in Japan, a slight decrease from 282,200 in 2019 due to new immigration policies (Statista, 2022). The Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA) has also reported in 2021 that there was a 10.6% rate of international marriage between Filipinas and Japanese husbands. Aichi Prefecture, which has the highest number of Filipinos in Japan, shows a significant proportion of Japanese husbands married to Filipinas. Yoshino et al. (2021) showed that among 342 Filipina migrant participants in their studies, 232 were married, and 49% (113) of Filipinas were married to Japanese. These Filipinas face numerous problems, such as

discrimination and stereotypes which affect their “mental health and well-being” (Sakurai, 2002; Yoshino et al., 2021).

Migration and its effects involve crucial aspects of communication and culture, as migrants must adapt to the conditions of the receiving nation. According to Kartikasari (2017), one must learn the culture and language of the host country to survive and live better. Moreover, in understanding cultural differences, effective communication is significant in international marriages. The complexity of language and communication barriers can also contribute to marital difficulties and divorce rates (Sakurai, 2002; Ministry of Health, Labor, and Welfare, 2009).

As cited by Sakurai (2002), one of the issues in international marriage was the “communication gap due to language problem or choice” (Samante, 1997). In addition, one of the reasons for divorce cases in Japan among international marriages was the barrier in communication and language (Minister’s Secretariat, Statistics and Information Department, Ministry of Health, Labor, and Welfare, 2009).

This research, therefore, was driven by both personal and academic pursuits to uncover the situation of Filipino migrant women married to natural-born Japanese men. On a personal level, as a Filipina herself, the researcher has been concerned with the plight of fellow migrant Filipinas who might be experiencing some “unspoken struggles” about their marriage with Japanese-born men in Central Japan. While working as a professional teacher and enjoying privileges, the researcher could not bear to hear about discrimination and racial issues suffered by other Filipinas working in Japan, even more so when they were married to an abusive foreigner.

As a Filipina who has been a professional teacher in Japan for nearly twenty (20) years, the researcher was aware of the damaged reputation of Filipinas working in Japan, the infamous *'Japayukis'* (women going to Japan to work as entertainers). Moreover, the researcher has known several friends and heard about fellow Filipinas who have opted to marry Japanese nationals while working in Japan. It has become of much interest to the researcher to investigate their conditions closely (both as a migrant wife and as a woman), specifically how Filipina wives manage to cope with a culture that is still considered 'patriarchal,' especially in asserting themselves and communicating with their Japanese husbands in a language they hardly understand.

This research is of utmost importance as it illuminates the experiences of these women. Moreover, it has been of greater significance to identify the struggles being experienced by migrant Filipino wives in communicating their thoughts and their assertions, as they slowly adapt to the Japanese culture–where society is largely patriarchal and language is complex–something that differs significantly from the Filipino culture.

The Japanese language is complex due to its high context communication, where non-verbal communication is essential (Nishimura et al., 2008; Lan, 2019). It merited further interest to understand how these Filipinas can preserve their cultural identity, as the researcher has also often been posed with the same challenge. Similarly, this academic pursuit aimed to contribute to the researcher's further understanding of Japanese culture and communication, especially in uncovering the dynamics in intimate relationships and marriages, including how these dynamics affect the quality of marital relationships between a Filipina wife and her Japanese husband.

The researcher has only known and heard stories about what she believed to be multifaceted issues involving international marriages. In addition, the researcher

has only found limited studies (Sakurai, 2002; Yoshino et al., 2021; Ahn et al., 2018) devoted to how this type of international marriage affects the state of mental health or health-related issues of women immigrants. There needed to conduct further research studies on the international marriages especially between Filipinas and Japanese citizens, particularly those highly educated Filipinas since they have distinct perspectives and expectations regarding international marriage and their Japanese spouses. With this, the researcher embarked on a case study aimed both at achieving a personal goal and at addressing a research gap in existing literature on international marriages between Filipino migrant women and Japanese husbands, with a particular emphasis on educated Filipina.

Statement of the Problem

Barriers in communication and language were cited as the foremost causes of divorce among international marriages in Japan. Previous studies have shown that Asian migrant women, particularly married ones, were confronted with several obstacles given their status as women and migrants in Japan. Problems related to communication significantly contributed to these obstacles due to the Japanese language, which is truly complex in nature, and the patriarchal practices that continue to persist in Japan, as shown in its culture and interpersonal relationships.

General Statement:

This qualitative study described and explored how selected Filipino migrant women, as wives, communicate with their Japanese husbands to break the cultural and linguistic divide.

General Research Question:

How do Filipino migrant women as wives communicate with their Japanese husbands?

Sub-questions:

1. Using both verbal and non-verbal forms of communication, how do these Filipino migrant wives communicate with their Japanese husbands, and what exactly happens during this communication process?
2. With the cultural and linguistic disparities in an international marital relationship, what will be the impact, and how will it influence their communication dynamic?
3. How do Filipino migrant wives address and adapt to the challenges within their international marriages, and how does this adaptation process impact their mental health?
4. What other unique insights and emerging themes, distinct from the primary narratives of Filipino migrant women as wives in the study, were identified?

Objectives of the Study

1. To analyze the dynamics of verbal and non-verbal communication between Filipino migrant wives and their Japanese husbands;
2. To identify the cultural and language factors that affect Filipino migrant wives' communication with their Japanese husbands;
3. To narrate the significant challenges, adjustment processes, and benefits of being in an international marriage, specifically with a Japanese husband, and its impact on the mental well-being of Filipina migrant wives;
4. To ascertain the complexities of intermarriage within the context of Filipina migrant wives and Japanese husbands and how this impact on the well-being of Filipina migrant wives; and
5. To determine and examine additional emerging themes from the personal narratives of Filipino migrant women in international marriages.

Significance of the Study

This study provides an understanding on the living conditions of some Filipino migrant wives in Japan, specifically their marital relationships with their Japanese husbands, through qualitative presentation and documentation of their plight in Japan.

It aims to benefit Filipino migrant women who may be engaged in a similar relationship or those contemplating entering such a relationship in the future through the documentation of the participants' lived experiences as a case study.

The study may serve both as an inspiration and a caution for other Filipinas who might enter similar relationships in the future. Learning from their narratives, they will be made aware of the challenges upon entering such unions, such as human rights and mental health issues.

Foreign countries may use this study's results to understand Filipino communities' plight in foreign nations and foster greater compassion for them.

This research will also allow policymakers, particularly in foreign countries, to reassess their current immigration policies and address any oppressive or discriminatory practices against Filipina migrant women.

Future academic researchers can also use it as a reference for their academic requirements. It will also help them develop a greater sense of empathy for the challenges faced by their fellow Filipinos who work as migrants and take on the role of advocates for migrant workers and human rights, focusing on women workers' rights.

Non-government and/or women's organizations in Japan can use it as a reference to provide them more ideas about the plight of migrant women married to Japanese men as part of their advocacies. It is also important that they understand what immigration policies need to be analyzed and that they seek a revision of the policies, if needed, to protect Filipina migrant women in particular.

More importantly, due to a gap in the existing literature, this study addresses the communication and culturally-related problems and assertion of rights among Filipino migrant women, both as women/wives and as Asian migrants, within a predominantly patriarchal society or country.

Scope and Limitations of Study

This research examined only the international marriage between two selected Filipino migrant wives in Japan married to natural-born Japanese men, on the multiple problems they have encountered, such as communication and cultural related problems or any unspoken struggles given their status as migrant women, and as wives or have continually faced their coping behaviors and some benefits of being married to Japanese men.

The findings of this research study cannot be generalized due to the constraints in the sample size and the selection of participants. Given the sensitivity of the case, along with limitations in time and resources, it was recommended to engage a minimal number of participants in the research proposal, typically one or two, particularly when data saturation has been achieved, to prevent redundancy. The study focused solely on the experiences of these Filipino migrant wives in the context of international marriage. Moreover, the researcher added additional theoretical frameworks to address all the research questions.

Chapter II

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Introduction

International or interracial marriages have increased through time and have become part of the migrant women's stories abroad due to migration.

2.1. International Marriages: Boon or Bane?

The Philippines, a leading source of global migrants, has seen significant numbers of its citizens migrate, with remittances serving a vital function in the national economy (UN Women, 2016; Wibowo, 2017). Filipinos who settled in other countries as migrants economically contributed a lot and even changed their roles within their families.

'Marriage migration' has been described as a means for women to escape poverty and gain economic independence (Ishii, 2016). However, due to cultural and linguistic disparities in international marriages, this union became stressful between Filipino women and Japanese husbands (Nabeshima, 2005; Tien, 2013).

In 2006, Japan recorded 44,701 intermarriages, representing 6.1% of all marriages (Takeshita, 2016). Many Filipino migrants, particularly those entering Japan on entertainment visas, have ended up marrying Japanese men, and this has shown a significant trend in international marriage (Wibowo, 2017).

The relationship between women's migration and international marriage has been thoroughly investigated in the literature, especially, focusing on how married women migrants adapt to and integrate into new cultures (Constable, 2004). In quest

for better economic opportunities, women often migrate and this search can significantly impact them. Satake and Da-anoy (2006) and Kim et al. (2022) have shown that female migrants from less developed countries who work particularly in the service sector and in the entertainment industry, face more challenges in integration, which can affect their ability to assert their rights. Despite the potential benefits, these international marriages often introduce significant stress due to language barriers, cultural differences, religious views, and immigration regulations (Nabeshima, 2005; Tien, 2013).

Further research also showed that cultural differences have greatly affected the relationship of couples in an international marriage. This study investigated intercultural marriages involving Japanese husbands and wives from former Soviet Union countries. A study conducted by Kim (2014) between 2006 and 2014 examined marital relationships between Japanese men and their Russian-speaking wives who have undergone a series of adaptation, negotiation, and expectations from one another.

In the study conducted by Yeung and Mu (2019), it was found out that depending on the race, socio-demographic and political settings, most Asian wives need to blend and adjust to a new culture. The study revealed that international marriages could also be impacted by their extended families, religion, deciding on a place of residence, cultural differences, and communication. In Japan, for instance, it is customary for the eldest son to live with and care for his elderly parents, placing additional expectations on his wife as daughter-in-law (Yeung & Mu, 2019).

Statistical data supports these observations: in 2006, Japan recorded 44,701 intermarriages, representing 6.1 percent of total marriages (Takeshita, 2016). In 2004,

a record number of 137,820 foreigners entered Japan on entertainment visas; of these, 60 percent (82,741) were Filipinos, most of whom entered Japan as entertainment workers, either as singers or dancers. However, most of these Filipina entertainers ended up marrying Japanese men.

2.2. The Plight of Filipino Migrant Women: The 'Gendered' Impacts of Migration

Several studies examined how poverty and cultural and physical adjustment impacted migrant women's life experiences and processes of adaptation (Tien, 2013; Kim et al., 2021). In some cases, their resiliency and ability to adapt to a host country depend on their education level. In the case of Filipina migrants in Norway, they could easily adapt and overcome racial barriers compared to Filipinas in Japan since they are highly educated (Straiton et al., 2017; Noda, 2022).

Asian women, especially in Japan, are frequently portrayed in a derogatory manner, either as entertainers or as individuals involved in the sex industry, which affects their social standing and reputation (Suzuki & Takahata, 2007; Piper & Yamanaka, 2005).

Japan values patriarchy, where women are relegated only to do the housework and limit their decision-making and participation in business and politics (Kin, 2022; Napikoski & Lewis, 2020). In recent years even though there has been some progress in the decision-making process and autonomy among Japanese women, traditional gender roles still persist in Japan, where men as husbands serve as the breadwinners of the family and Japanese wives as homemakers (Steel, 2019; Noda, 2022).

The traditional gender roles or patriarchy and racial discrimination that persist in Japan, aside from stereotypes, greatly impacted the mental health of these migrant women, particularly Asian. (Sakurai, 2002; Straiton, Ledesma, & Donnelly, 2017). The suicide rate in Japan is also high and this makes the situation more difficult, putting migrant women more at risk (Kim, 2021; Gilmour et al., 2019).

The negative stereotypes of Asian migrant women were due to Japanese media portrayal where they depicted Filipinas as entertainers or "*Japayukis*" which also affected the diverse roles of Filipinas (Suzuki & Takahata, 2007; Liu, 2003; Monroy, 2001).

The experiences of Filipino migrant wives in Japan are shaped by a combination of gender, race, and socio-economic factors. As minorities, they face a unique set of challenges that include discrimination based on ethnicity, gender, and nationality contributed to mental health issues that need a great understanding of their experiences for them to have an improved quality of life (Da-anoy-Satake, 2000; Sakurai, 2002; UN Women, 2011).

2.3. Culture: The Basic Standpoint of Differences

Bystydzienski (2011) defined culture as the totality of a society's customs, norms, and beliefs. These include gendered social expectations (Tien, 2013). With the inherent cultural disparities, international marriages greatly benefit from open-mindedness and developing a deeper understanding of foreign cultures (Albu, 2015). However, relationships with in-laws, conventional gender roles, religion, marital

intimacy are some of cultural disparities that might affect such unions according to Romano (2008) and Tien (2013).

A. Intercultural Communication

According to Flor (2007), as culture and communication are intricately interwoven, it is impossible to examine communication without mentioning culture. It is believed that intercultural communication focuses not on using language alone. Intercultural communication is typically defined as where different people from different cultures communicate with one another. People should understand how culture categorizes differences in one's style of communication, identity, and perception (Kartikasari, 2017; Albu, 2015). Furthermore, the study and practice of communication that transcends cultural contexts is called Intercultural communication (Encyclopedia, 4, 115-116). It is an approach that centers on the acknowledgment of cultural differences.

Nevertheless, it has made remarkable progress since its inception and directly pertains to the phenomenon of interpersonal communication occurring between individuals with diverse cultural backgrounds. (Bennett, 2013). Culture categorizes differences in one’s style of communication, sense of self or identity, and perception or way of understanding things (Kartikasari, 2017; Albu, 2015).

Language use is not the only focus of Intercultural communication since it also builds on one’s personality and behavior, including how someone thinks and communicates. An individual with unique personality traits runs counter to the culture of stereotypes, where individuals’ prejudgment other persons who have a different

culture from them. Therefore, “intercultural” is undoubtedly complex (Croucher et al., 2015, p. 71-87).

Communication practices may also be distinctive depending on one’s culture (Kartikasari & Haryanti, 2017). Moreover, communication cannot be separated from one’s country of origin, and it is possible to create some assumptions due to stereotypes in one country. Thus, it is necessary to be objective to communicate effectively. However, it is difficult for individuals to be objective. Communication challenges, especially in one’s understanding and experiences, are among the common differences. After all, innate in everyone is a set of unique personality traits; therefore, deeming stereotypes, while popular, as wholly inaccurate. Stereotypes, as preconceived judgements of people from other cultures, are further exacerbated by mass media. It, in turn, has an effect on culture and communication (Liu, 2003). Societies have further used such generalizations to maintain the status quo.

B. Gender Roles

Both men and women, from childhood, are socialized on their sex-based identities, including behaviors and attitudes expected of their sex. Such roles are determined by assigned sex at birth. For women, it includes childbirth. Gender roles differ but are initially based on sex role differentiation. These are roles or societal norms, behaviors, and attitudes expected mainly from men and women. However, gender roles take on a much more difficult meaning as these are primarily influenced or dictated by what is desirable, acceptable, or appropriate for men and women based on their actual or perceived sex. Tien (2013) argued that gender roles for men and

women are expected to be distinct in each culture. Some cultures have solid convictions and desires about what gender roles to carry out. These gender roles are very distinct in Japan, a patriarchal society.

Japanese society retains many practices that motivate women to become homemakers, hence promoting Japan's conventional family structure with pre-designated gender roles (Levonian, 2013). For example, the husband is the breadwinner and wife is the one who manages the house and is the caregiver. There appears to be scant attention devoted to discussing women's leadership. Few to none are businesswomen, women politicians, or women entrepreneurs in Japan. This has led to the observation of the subtlety of the marginalization of Japanese women, second only to issues of discrimination based on sex and prejudice against women that are slowly being criticized.

In the study Gender Roles and Expectations for Marriage, the gender roles of husbands and wives have slowly changed and benefitted couples through an egalitarian marriage. This study of couples revealed that almost 51 percent of those interviewed believed that shared parenting and household management gave rise to happy and satisfied couples and their families. Hence, gender disparity in marriage would have slowly decreased (Ogletree, 2015).

C. State of Marital Relationship

The importance of psychological and emotional well-being was mentioned in the studies conducted by Paillard-Borg and Hallberg (2018). There are even limited literature exists on the mental health challenges faced by Filipino migrant women

married to Japanese men. Mental and emotional stresses were caused by several factors, especially among Filipino migrant women, such as exhaustion from too much work and others related to trauma caused by migration (i.e., discrimination issues). A similar observation about Asian migrant brides cited from medical findings corroborated that mixed marriages among Asian women and Japanese men have resulted in mental breakdowns among Filipino wives in the Yamagata Prefecture (Sakurai, 2002). These emotional stresses were primarily caused by the communication gap in the birth and extended families of Japanese husbands. Mental health issues among these women caused timidity, lack of confidence, becoming submissive and inability to assert their rights, and becoming more dependent on their husband due to language barriers. Out of fear of being stigmatized, mental health issues became a taboo discussion, especially among migrants (Straiton et al., 2017).

Several significant kinds of literature have thoroughly discussed the correlations among mental health, depression, and the quality of couples' marital relationships. Health, including a partner's state of mental health, affects intimate partner relationships (Kiecolt-Glaser & Wilson, 2017). Couples must maintain well-regulated emotions to foster health and happiness within their relationship. (Reed, Barnard, & Butler, 2015). Couples who have had satisfying marital relationships were also found to have more vital mindsets, be more emotionally stable, and, therefore, be happier.

Romano (2008) highlights that international couples often encounter an unforeseen aspect of their relationship, namely the varying expectations of gender intimacy that may evolve. Moreover, he stated that there are the emergence of sexual problems and physiological function and health concerns. Emotional reservation is of

value to Japanese culture (Miehle et al., 2016). One way this manifest is the minimization of public displays of affection like hugging, holding hands and kissing among couples. Filipina wives then perceive Japanese men as conservative, reserved, or cold, which may lead to feelings of marriage dissatisfaction.

D. The Collectivist Culture of Japan

One of the factors that might affect marital dynamic in Japan is the influence of traditional values, especially on the eldest son called the "*chonan*" If a woman is married to the first-born son, she is more likely to live with her in-laws and take care of them in their old age as part of the responsibilities of the first-born son in Japan. This collectivist culture in Japan affects marital satisfaction due to the necessary support from extended family (Romano, 2008; Tien, 2013) therefore international marriages are more complex wherein interaction of couples with different communication styles and marital adjustments are more challenging ((Taniguchi & Kaufman, 2014; Negy and Snyder, 2000).

E. Language/Factors of Communication

One important aspect of social interactions is non-verbal communication rather than verbal means (Ongkiko & Flor, 1998). It plays a particularly relevant role in countries like Germany and Japan, which are more reserved. Non-verbal cues are critical in understanding behavior in such cultures (Miehle et al., 2016; Elliott et al., 2016).

Moreover, in Germany and Japan, according to Lewis (2010) they tend to maintain group harmony, and they are more reserved due to avoidance of “losing face” or losing their reputation, which might lead to embarrassment. To manage their emotions and actions, Japanese people and Germans tend not to be expressive.

In its common use of high-context communication, Japanese culture often employs gestures, spatial cues, and even silence to convey information (Qingxue, 2003; Miehle et al., 2016). A considerable amount of information is shared non-verbally, and more generally, the communication of Japanese people is typically characterized as indirect and implicit. This communication style is favored by people in Japan who prefer subtlety and indirectness in their interactions. Moreover, Japan is known for its collectivist culture, where citizens often make decisions and take action with their families or other groups in mind (Miehle et al., 2016). Often, their own needs take a back seat for the sake of those of the family and loved ones.

2.4. Filipino Migrant Women’s Mental Health Concerns

Studies conducted by Korsvik & Rustad (2018) stressors impacted more men than women though response to these stressors are dissimilar between gender.

Stress in Marriage Dynamics and Among Minorities in Japan

Married couples often face specific stresses that can influence the quality of their relationships. Research suggests that married individuals who cohabit typically experience greater happiness and better mental well-being than single individuals. However, much of this research predominantly focuses on intraracial couples, leaving

a gap in understanding the emotional health impacts of interracial or international relationships (Wong & Penner, 2018; Simon & Barrett, 2010; Wood et al., 2009).

These groups of minorities often experience discrimination and marginalization, leading to heightened stress and increased risk of mental health issues according to UN Women (2011).

The Narratives of Filipino Migrant Wives/Women in Japan

Filipinas in Japan, as minorities in a predominantly patriarchal society, showed greater resiliency even when confronting prejudicial treatment like stereotyping. People who encounter such challenges are more susceptible to mental health issues, and, potentially increasing their risk of suicide (Gilmour et al., 2019). Studies have highlighted those Filipino migrant women who married Japanese men experience significant mental health concerns due to various stressors, including cultural and communication barriers (Paillard-Borg & Hallberg, 2018; Sakurai, 2002).

The Impact of Discrimination and Stress on People

Aside from cultural and communication barriers, discrimination, and working for long hours with low pay, Filipinas encountered such stress-related issues that might lead to a lack of self-confidence, less freedom, the feeling of isolation, and more emotional and psychological distress. Moreover, communication barriers with in-laws further exacerbated mental health struggles (Sakurai, 2002).

To sum up, the mental health issues faced by Filipino migrant wives in Japan are multifaceted and influenced by gender, cultural, and racial factors. Addressing mental health concerns is a heavy task, due to the stigma attached to it, therefore,

according to Straiton et al. (2017) it led to lack of documentation and it needs greater understanding, and taking the right actions to lessen the stigma will help boost awareness that it is real and not just one's imagination.

2.5. Acculturation versus Assimilation

The process of people or groups undergoing changes to better fit into a new cultural environment, all while maintaining some aspects of their original cultural identity, is called acculturation (Kura et al., 2019; Greenland & Brown, 2005). It spotlights how different cultures may develop and overlap through time. In an international marriage, this can lead to modifications in both cultures of the couple. Through acculturation, one can adapt to new customs, values, traditions, and social behaviors of a host country without abandoning their original identity.

John W. Berry's acculturation model demonstrates how people can reconcile cultural differences while maintaining their cultural heritage. It includes integration, separation, assimilation, and marginalization. Integration occurs when an individual blends aspects of both cultures; separation is when they retain their original culture; assimilation is a wholesale adoption of the host culture; and marginalization is when an individual neither integrates into the new culture nor maintains their original cultural identity (Abdinassir, 2024).

However, as Joseph Fichter describes it, assimilation is a social process in which people or groups adopt the cultural norms of another group of individuals who share common beliefs and work together. Cultural identity is often lost during this cultural adaptation (Abdinassir, 2024). This theory of Assimilation is often applied to

minority groups within a larger society, where the expectation is for the minority to conform to the dominant cultural norms.

Brewton Berry (1997) suggests that assimilation encompasses visible aspects of culture—such as language, clothing, and food—and intangible elements, including values, attitudes, and beliefs (Abdinassir, 2024). Arnold Rose, as cited by Abdinassir (2024), describes assimilation as a process where individuals or groups fully adopt another group's culture, often to the extent of losing all connection to their original cultural traits and loyalties.

That said, while assimilation sees individuals adopting new cultural norms, it may lead to the loss of one's original culture (Abdinassir, 2024). Jackson (2019) further explains that assimilation can mean immigrants giving up their cultural identities to embrace the norms and beliefs of the emerging culture.

These concepts are important for couples in international marriage to adjust culturally. For instance, a Japanese husband accustomed to collectivist values might integrate aspects of their Filipino wife's less collectivist culture compared to them to find common ground in their marriage.

2.6. Feminist Communication Theory

As a largely "patriarchal society" (Kin, 2022, pp. 6-7), Japan grants privileges and assigns positions of power to men. This includes leading the family, social groups, workplace, and government. Researchers found that traditional Japanese men continue to see women as most suited for domestic roles, or that they should not speak up during meetings (Kin, 2022). Generally, men have been observed as treating

women as inferior, believing that their social roles should only revolve around the home and hearth, and whose opinions do not matter in decision-making.

Marriage is historically characterized as a social construct with roots in heteronormative and cultural norms. With romantic or sexual affection at its center, it fosters procreation and the continuation of family lineage. According to several studies, financial stability and independence are increasingly important factors in a marriage. Individuals facing economic challenges are significantly less likely to be married than those with three times their income level; meanwhile, women with greater financial resources and independence get to explore different life paths (Geist, 2017). It is also a gendered social institution where issues of gender equality and power relations are at play. This means it is crucial to employ feminist analysis to adequately address gender inequality and gender-based discrimination, female objectification, as well as oppression. Patriarchal societies like Japan are particularly relevant areas of study, as it is where social interactions are considerably influenced by gender stereotypes and other intersecting issues. Gender, for instance, affects communication, cutting across other identity constructs like race and sexuality. This is known as the Feminist Theory in Communication.

The Feminist Communication Theory was developed from feminist perspectives of the 1970s, with a focus on women's rights and gender relations in various aspects of society (Byerly, 2018). Researchers over the years developed diverse perspectives on the theory. However, it remains that it is a helpful framework in explaining women's common ways of communication. Gender generally helps determine an individual's behavior, interactions, and influence on others; it is in this way that women are deemed key players in improving conditions of gender equality.

Feminist Communication Theory, as explained by Rakow and Wackwitz (2004), builds on theories of gender, communication, and social change. Difference, voice, and representation are three concepts at its center. One's capacity to communicate, be listened to, and be considered within social and political spheres is what comprises voice. Analyzing women's voices requires examining both the intentional and unintentional silences women experience.

This theoretical framework explains how gender is constructed through language, communication, and representation; in other words, it helps women understand how language, communication, and portrayal all shape gender. For this theory to hold, it must be intersectional, considering other related factors like where an individual is from, their race, ethnicity, ability, sexual orientation, and social class (Byerly, 2018).

Dale Spender, Julia Penelope Wolf, Cheris Kramarae (formerly Kramer), Robin Lakoff, Hélène Cixous, Luce Irigaray, and other scholars initiated the exploration of gender's influences on communication styles and practices. They found that language is male-dominated since it is man-made. Women tend to use uncertain language and ask more questions than men, who are conversely more assertive and who interrupt more frequently during conversations.

Marsha Houston and Kramarae built on this by proposing that an individual's communication styles are influenced not only by their sex or gender, but also by their ethnic, cultural, and economic background (Littlejohn & Foss, 2009).

Language is often the area in which gendered social transformation may begin, particularly in speech acts that introduce issues of gender into wider public discourse (Byerly, 2018). Language, then, is a vital part of women's liberation. Women's social

roles, as well as the extent of their political participation, are significantly shaped by the communication styles they have been conditioned to have. Among the most potent are their intentional and unintentional experiences of silence. The 'muted group theory' is a crucial concept that suggests that men, due to their perceived power, have more control over language than women (Ardener & Ardener, 1975).

Moreover, as cited by Byerly (2018) the other primary points presented include the assertion that language has been constructed by those in power, predominantly men, resulting in challenges for marginalized groups and suppresses women's voice. For privileged groups, it is always easier for them to communicate since they created the language and tends to cater this to their needs thus creating women's marginalization.

The portrayal of voice and expression

Filipino wives often face suppression in their households' decision-making processes, often due to cultural differences and hegemonic gender roles. This may be explained by the Muted Group Theory (Ardener & Ardener, 1975), which reveals that people in social positions of power are also able to dominate and control language and communication. As a result, less privileged groups, like Asian migrant women, are driven deeper into marginalization. This happens because language is created by and for the dominant group, resulting in marginalized individuals having to translate their thoughts into a language that may not fully represent their experiences or needs. This creates barriers to effective self-expression.

The Muted Group Theory is essential in understanding the challenges faced by Filipino wives. Because of cultural norms and dominant Japanese language structures, both of which are shaped by patriarchal norms, these women's voices tend to be silenced or distorted.

Language, however, may also perform a contrasting function: self-assertion and visibility. Throughout history, women have strategically leveraged language to gain power and challenge their own marginalization (Kramarae, 1981; Mills, 1999).

The Intersectionality of Culture and Style of Communication

Feminist Communication Theory asserts that gender must be considered along with other identity factors. Filipina wives experience dual marginalization as women in a patriarchal society and as immigrants in a foreign culture. This impacts their communication style and ability to assert their needs.

Bhoomi (n.d) cites Butler (1990), who asserts that gender, contrary to the belief of its inherence, is constructed and deliberately maintained. This is possible through social practices, such as language. Similarly, the theory affirms that language and communication practices are shaped by gender norms, while simultaneously helping construct these same norms. Butler also analyzes how language is a tool that both constructs and challenges gender norms. Filipina migrant wives may struggle to adapt to or resist gendered communication expectations within Japanese families while balancing Filipino cultural practices.

Filipina wives, who are often financially dependent on their Japanese husbands, find themselves with limited decision-making capacities. It leads them to

undergo negotiation processes to procure varying degrees of power. This is because economic empowerment is among the factors that enhance an individual's predisposition to be listened to and subsequently considered in family decisions (Geist, 2017). Filipina wives are often limited by their financial dependence on their Japanese husbands, resulting in a negotiation of power.

The Feminist Communication Theory helps examine how Filipina wives navigate and potentially transform gender expectations in their relationships with their Japanese husbands. It shows how they challenge and reshape traditional gender norms.

The Muted Group Theory, meanwhile, explains the communication barriers faced by Filipina wives. Their capacity for self-expression is typically made more complicated by the constant silencing they experience from the dominant language structures.

The above theories provide a comprehensive framework to more deeply understand Filipina wives' communication challenges and opportunities. It demonstrates how cultural and economic factors affect communication between genders and highlights these women's ability to question and take control of traditional roles.

2.7. Marriage as an Institution: A Feminist Viewpoint

Scholars in feminist and women's studies have rigorously examined marriage as an institution that has traditionally perpetuated gender inequality. The two main

perspectives often highlighted are Government-Controlled Marriage, and Gender Roles and Marriage as a Sign of Control.

Domestic tasks are more commonly expected of women, regardless of their employment status. Being family breadwinners, meanwhile, is expected of men. Such entrenched social roles lead women to have higher financial dependence on their spouses. As a result, they may develop feelings of restriction that have detrimental effects on their mental health.

In many patriarchal cultures, including Japan, marriage serves to secure male lineage and restrain women to only domestic and reproductive roles. Marriage usually defines womanhood; meanwhile, men and the extended family become the decision-makers in the marriage.

2.8. Symbolic Interactionism (SI) as an Interpersonal Communication Theory

This theory helps a person understand how people build relationships through communication. People try to understand each other by making shared meanings when people talk to each other. (Littlejohn & Foss, 2009, p.617). According to Redmond (2015), the symbolic interactionism movement explores the impact of social interactions on an individual's self-identity, the significance of language and symbols in society, and the origins of the human mind. Symbolic interactionism (SI) focuses on how people behave according to the meanings they attach to things. Civilizations exist because people can communicate with one another through symbols. Learning symbols enables people to create a sense of self and a mind (people think through symbols). It examines issues in our day-to-day lives, such as how interactions with

people shape our sense of self, the significance of language and symbols in society, and the origins of the mind.

Chapter III

METHODOLOGY

Qualitative research focuses on non-statistical approaches to investigating and interpreting social phenomena. It relies on an inductive methodology, and through data analysis, themes and categories were identified and gathered from methods like interviews, observations, videotapes, and case studies. Typically, samples are small and purposively chosen (Matira, 2016, p. 19). In this instance, two Filipina participants were selected.

The focus of this research was on the qualitative method, allowing for a thorough investigation of sensitive issues concerning the lived experiences of Filipina migrant women in Japan who are married to Japanese men with greater depth.

A qualitative descriptive case study was selected as the methodology for this research. For data collection method, in-depth interviews were conducted through Zoom and face to face sessions. Participant observation was carried out and audio materials from the sessions were reviewed.

Research Design

This case study approach, supported by various data collection methods, generated qualitative results based on the general and specific objectives of the study. This study highlighted each participant's unique experiences being married to their Japanese husbands and, particularly, the communicational (both spoken and unspoken) dynamics between Filipina wives and Japanese husbands.

The case study aimed to address the question on the communication patterns, both the spoken and unspoken exchanges between Filipina wives and their Japanese husbands. This also included identifying the struggles in communication, the cultural barriers, and other challenges that these wives encountered, particularly those who have difficulty in expressing themselves, and whose mental health have been affected.

It also wanted to explore the coping strategies of these wives in understanding the verbal and nonverbal cues from their Japanese spouses. Lastly, it wanted to surface other emergent themes from the narratives of the Filipina participants.

The Filipino migrant's wives narratives were analyzed thematically to identify the emergent themes. This is further elaborated in the data analysis section.

Locale of the Study

This research study was conducted in Central Japan. Initially, the in-depth interviews were planned to take place in private rooms at a chapel or church, or at the participants' homes. These arrangements, however, were adjusted to accommodate the participants' preferences for the time and venue. One participant opted for a face-to-face interview at the researcher's house because of its closer proximity to the participant's workplace. Due to a house errand on the part of the participant, the interview was rescheduled from the afternoon to 7:15 until 9:40 PM, while the other interview was online via Zoom from 8:30 PM to 11:00 PM. Follow-up interviews, clarifications, and verification were also conducted through Facebook Messenger, Viber, and Zoom.

Selection of Research Participants

The participant selection criteria considered nationality and residency, marital status, and occupational diversity. Two Filipino migrant wives married to Japanese men were purposively selected after satisfying the following criteria:

1. Filipinas must be born and raised in the Philippines, while their Japanese husbands must be born and raised in Japan, with a native language different from that of their wives;
2. Must be married for at least ten (10) years;
3. Must be currently living and working full-time in Japan; and
4. Must represent diverse occupational backgrounds.

The purpose of selecting participants with these criteria was to explore and analyze the underlying themes of their experiences and conduct a thematic analysis to meet the study's objectives**.**

Sampling Procedures

The researcher employed the purposive sampling method in selecting the participants who satisfied the previously mentioned criteria. To ensure privacy and identity protection, the researcher assigned pseudonyms for all the participants.

This qualitative research utilized a list of questions as an instrument for the interview. Data collection involved a combination of online interviews, one-on-one in-depth interviews, observations, documents, and audio recordings. Each interview was scheduled at a mutually agreed-upon time and place with the selected Filipino migrant women.

The research study guaranteed to maintain the confidentiality of the interviews and privacy of the participants' data throughout the process. The researcher reached out to a group of Filipina participants who were married to Japanese spouses and who met the criteria for the study.

The initial contact with the research participants was through Facebook Messenger, LINE (Japanese social networking site), and Viber. All questions raised by the participants were answered by the researcher, and all details about the research study were discussed to the participants. Subsequently, the researcher and participants agreed upon the date, time, and location of the interviews.

The participants' consent was also obtained in recording the interviews to capture all relevant information and, if necessary, to arrange subsequent interviews.

Overview of the Procedure

Once the research proposal was approved, the researcher started arranging the schedule of interviews with the selected participants. A copy of the approved questionnaire was sent in advance to the participants along with the written information and a consent form for their review and approval.

After the orientation, interviews, and transcription, the researcher examined the transcription to identify the responses that would address the study's objectives. Thematic analysis for this case study research was employed after the completion of the interview phase and transcription. Subsequently, the analysis focused on the themes that emerged from the interviews. For clarifications and purpose of validations, follow-up interviews were also conducted.

The Data Gathering Procedure

A. Contacting the research participants

The researcher followed the standard procedures in conducting the research study, specifically: (1) writing a formal letter of consent to the selected participants, with the attached general questions and a proposed interview schedule; and (2) obtaining their preference on the choice of venue or location for the interview, where both participants felt comfortable discussing with the researcher. The initial plan of notifying the parish priests for the use of some of the rooms in the vicinity of the cathedral or chapel for the face-to-face interviews was canceled to accommodate the preferred time and venue of the participants.

For documentation and transparency, two initial participants opted out of participating at the last moment. One of the original research participants declined to participate due to COVID-19 infections in her entire family, while the other one was not permitted by her Japanese husband to participate.

The researcher interviewed two other willing participants who considered the invitation for this research. A list of questions was prepared and asked through face-to-face, in-depth interviews with one of the two married Filipino migrant wives in Japan.

The other one preferred to be interviewed via Zoom. The general questions included the following:

1. The profile of the selected participants;
2. Reasons for migration, circumstances on adjustment period;
3. Basic information about their marriage/relationship;

4. Advantages and disadvantages of being in an international marriage with a Japanese spouse; and
5. Strategies to cope with the marital challenges and the unspoken struggles faced or are being faced in their married lives.

B. Interview Process

For ethical considerations and to maintain the confidentiality of interviews, each participant was instructed to select a pseudonym for this study. Before the interviews, they were asked to sign a document of informed consent following a detailed explanation by the researcher.

While it was conducted in person, the interview was recorded simultaneously via a recorder and Zoom at the researcher's home. Participants' permission was secured for recording the interview. The researcher also took note of behavioral observations during the interview.

The researcher's residence was chosen as the location for the interview as requested by the first participant. This decision was made to accommodate the participant's convenience after her work during nights, and in consideration of her workplace's proximity to the researcher's residence.

Additionally, the first participant wanted to ensure the safety of her infant granddaughter from the COVID-19 virus, who lives with her, by refraining from having visitors over to their home.

On the other hand, the second participant opted for a Zoom interview as per her availability request, which was scheduled from 8:30 PM to 11:00 PM. During the

interview, the participant's husband happened to be on a business trip. The participant received the consent form via Gmail for signing and sent back the accomplished form to the researcher through the same platform. Before the interview, the researcher once more reviewed and explained the details of the study.

An initial questionnaire was devised to gain insights into various aspects of the marital lives of Filipino migrant women, mainly focusing on communication/cultural-related matters. The researcher constructed the questions from her understanding on how to answer the research questions and objectives. She also utilized the four domains of “Gender Analysis Framework” (GAF) developed by Johns Hopkins University Affiliate in 2020, along with some pertinent questions that were adapted, adjusted, and modified from the previous studies by Tien (2013) and Renalds (2011). These studies also became helpful in the construction of some questions to answer the research questions and objectives. In general, the study was analyzed based on the Feminist Theory on Communication and on Symbolic Interactionism as an Interpersonal Communication as a theoretical framework and assessed whether the results met the purpose of the study. Other theoretical perspectives were also incorporated to evaluate whether the findings aligned with the objectives of the research study.

Participants demographic data, migration stories, romantic stories were collected during their first part of the interview. In the last part of the interview, participants were interviewed about their experiences as wives of Japanese men and as migrant workers. Throughout the interview, the exchange maintained a conversational tone, which helped put both parties at ease.

Multiple sources of information were used to gather data. After conducting interviews with each participant, the researcher transcribed over several months all in-depth interviews from the audio recordings, conducted follow-up questions and calls, and analyzed the data thematically.

Chapter IV

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter describes and examines the experiences of Filipina migrant wives in international marriages using a qualitative case study approach. Data were collected through audio-recorded in-depth interviews, face-to-face and online via Zoom. Field notes and journals also supported the documentation of participant observation to further note and capture their facial expressions and nonverbal cues. Several platforms like Facebook Messenger and Viber were also utilized. Follow-up interviews were subsequently conducted to clarify specific findings from the first interview.

To enrich the data analysis and results, the researcher also investigated their social media accounts, particularly in Facebook. The researcher examined how participants establish connections with their spouses through their Facebook accounts. This was also conducted to verify some of the participants' narratives.

Through the process of horizontalization, the researcher carefully reviewed each word repeatedly to identify and underline or highlight statements of significance corresponding to each research question to advance the data analysis. All sentences that were irrelevant to the research questions and any repetitive content were then removed.

The researcher categorized the important statements, focusing on the most common and crucial information relevant to the research questions. Initial codes were then generated for every potential theme discussed in each participant's interview. The codes pertained to the concept or perception described in the data.

Repeated rounds of analysis generated additional codes, namely: (1) ways to communicate; (2) cultural and language differences; (3) significant challenges encountered; (4) the benefits of international marriage; and (5) adapting to another culture.

General Description of the Participants

Two Filipino migrant wives of Japanese spouses were interviewed in this research study. Both participants were born and raised in the Philippines, while their husbands were born and raised in Japan. These couples have different native languages and have been in a marital relationship for over a decade. They all currently live and work in different sectors in Japan.

These two Filipina participants met the criteria for inclusion in the research study. Since the Japanese husbands were not participants in the study, their permission was not sought for the interview of their wives. This was also done to confirm whether patriarchy exists in the couples. Therefore, any description and analysis of the Japanese husbands was solely based on the participants' statements and, in many cases, on their perceptions.

Direct citations and quotations from the participants and transcripts were used to support the researcher's interpretations whenever possible. The researcher began the data analysis process after the initial interview with the participants. Follow-up interviews were also conducted in this case study for further data collection and verification during this process. The participant and the researcher communicated face-to-face and through various channels such as emails, Facebook messenger,

Viber, facetime, calls, and Zoom to discuss the schedules of interviews and clarify interpretations of interview results, among other purposes.

Initially, the researcher planned to interview other Filipinas. However, the first participant's entire family was infected with COVID-19. The Filipina was communicative at first, but after a month of recovery and following up on her schedule, she stopped responding to calls and texts. The researcher attempted several more times to contact this participant for a follow-up, but all the messages left by the researcher went unnoticed, and the calls went unanswered. Meanwhile, the second participant withdrew from the study. Initially, this prospective participant rescheduled the interview a total of seven times. However, on the scheduled interview day, she sent a chat message informing the researcher that her husband did not permit her to participate in the study. The researcher expressed her gratitude to her nonetheless and proceeded to find another willing participant.

The researcher then identified another two (2) willing participants. The researcher was surprised to find out that the first participant had been married twice to Japanese men. The researcher assumed that the participant's current husband was her first and sole husband, while the other participant was married for the first time.

The researcher did not need an interpreter during the interviews as these two Filipinas spoke fluent English and Filipino and were conversant in Japanese language. Without providing their husbands any specifics, the two Filipinas told them they would be attending an interview. The researcher informed both participants that pseudonyms would be used to safeguard their anonymity.

The initial questionnaire was developed and constructed based on the researcher's viewpoint and personal beliefs on how to answer the research questions,

with the help of the four (4) domains of the “Gender Analysis Framework” or GAF, such as "Access to Assets," "Beliefs and Perceptions," "Practices and Participation," and "Institutions, Laws, and Policies," by Johns Hopkins University Affiliate (2020), and based on the previous studies by Tien (2013) and Renalds (2011).

However, only few relevant questions from these studies were considered, following modifications and customization to be able to address effectively the research inquiries. Moreover, the researcher opted to utilize the Gender Analysis Framework (GAF) because of the patriarchal nature of the society under investigation and for more accessible analysis, particularly about gender roles. Based on the responses of the participants the researcher also asked for follow-up questions.

Data Analysis

The researcher used thematic analysis, and several stages were followed in analyzing the data (Chisale, 2017). The researcher transcribed the recorded interviews for analysis. They were meticulously listened to multiple times during the extensive transcription process. This process was rigorous and time-intensive.

The first stage was data collection, where comprehensive documentation of all interview notes, transcripts, and demographic information was done. Observations of non-verbal signals, such as facial expressions and body movements that showed how participants felt, were recorded as notes in a research journal since they were not included in the audio recordings. The journal was also helpful in analyzing the data. After re-reading the transcription several times to familiarize the researcher, the identification of concepts and themes followed during the coding process. Through

this, the researcher gained a deeper understanding of the participants' experiences. The researcher later identified recurring themes and patterns.

The fourth stage involved developing new codes to further elaborate on themes as the analysis progressed from data collection to report writing. In this case study, additional data was gathered through smartphone calls to verify findings and refine questions and perspectives. The final step was the presentation or interpretation of the report (Chisale, 2017). The accuracy of the researcher's interpretation was verified by discussing the analysis with the participant and researcher communicated via calls, Viber, and Facetime to coordinate schedules and discuss interpretations.

The goal of the data analysis in this research was to examine whether the existing theoretical framework could be applied to international marriage, particularly in a communication related problems in a patriarchal country. To achieve this goal, the primary approach was to compare data against this theory through data analysis. The researcher examined whether this theory helped determine the unspoken struggles of Filipino migrant women married to Japanese men. *What explanations does this theory or perspective provide on communication issues in international marriage, and are there new insights not covered by this existing theory?*

As Japanese spouses were excluded in this case study, the researcher depended only on the accounts given by the research participants about them and counted on the direct quotations from the research participants to validate their interpretations.

Summary of Emerging Themes and Patterns

Reason for Migration and Beliefs and Perception about Marriage:

First Participant: The Life and Migration Story of Mrs. A

Mrs. A is originally from Mindanao, Philippines. Her mother was a former teacher, and his father was a lumberjack. She is the youngest of eight (8) siblings. At first, she never considered working abroad or marrying a foreigner. During her first year as a midwifery student, she also worked part time as a caddie at one of the golf courses (the researcher intentionally did not disclose the golf course's true name) in her town. There she met Japanese businessmen who own night clubs in Japan. One Japanese businessman named "Papa M" (now deceased and not his real name) invited her to work as a dancer and entertainer at his club. Without telling her parents, she skipped afternoon classes and went to a Japanese training agency to acquire the "Blue Book" (one of the requirements for going to Japan).

“Nag-aaral ako noon so, yung half day ko di na ako nag-aaral. Nag-aral na ko sa Japanese training agency kasi kailangan ko ng blue card. Kailangang makakuha ako ng blue card kasi yun ang kailangan para magsayaw as a dancer or entertainer.” *(At that time, I was studying, so I did not continue my studies during my half day. I enrolled in a Japanese training agency because I needed to obtain a blue card. Acquiring a blue card was essential for me to work as a dancer or entertainer.)*

“Two weeks lang napalayas na nila ako. Nagpaalam ako sa min kasi nagaaral ako noon pero di nila alam na hindi pang school yung mga ginagawa ko.”

(It has only been two weeks since I was placed in a job. I informed my family about my job placement in Japan. They thought I was studying at the time, but my family was unaware that my activities were no longer related to school.)

After receiving the "Blue Book" and submitting all the requirements within two weeks, the entertainer visa was processed, she was able to leave the Philippines despite the alteration of her age from seventeen (17) to eighteen (18) (the legal age to work). According to her, she was lucky that she found it easier than other people her age who took years to get to Japan. The day before her local flight to Manila, she told her parents that she will be working in Japan. However, her father objected to her plan of going to Japan as he wanted her to finish studies being the youngest child in her family and much loved by many. In his desperation, her angry father picked up a gun, shot the chair and table in front of her. That night she stayed in her bedroom out of fear, and then later ran away and fled from Mindanao to Manila early in the morning the following day. Mrs. A then told her employer/agent in Manila that she had to fly to Japan immediately because her father threatened to harm her. Her family even tracked her when she was already in Japan.

“Ako yung bunso kaya gusto nila makatapos ako ng pag-aaral ng midwifery, so nakita nila yung bag ko na iba na ang laman tapos nagpaalam na ako na magja-Japan na ako. Lumayas ako, dumaan ako sa bintana. Nung nagpaalam ako sa sobrang galit binaril nya yung upuan or lamesa kaya nagkaron ng butas yung lamesa sa harapan ko. Natakot ako nung binaril yun ng ama ko. Kaya nagkulong ako sa kwarto at lumayas ako mga 3am. Tinawagan ko yung ano namin na Japanese na punta na ako sa Manila.”

(Since I am the youngest, they want me to finish my midwifery studies. They noticed my bag contained different things in it, and I told them I was going to Japan. When I said goodbye, my father got so angry that he shot at the chair or table, making a hole in it right in front of me. I was scared when he fired the gun. So, I locked myself in my room and left around 3 AM. I called our Japanese friend to let them know I was heading to Manila.) I left through the window.

At that time, she already had two older sisters in Japan, but they lived in other prefectures such as Kyushu and Niigata and they had been working in Japan for three months prior to her arrival. Her sisters confronted her about her decision to work in Japan because according to them, life in Japan was difficult for them. Her sisters were even forced to engage in prostitution in the night club. However, Mrs. A was able to rescue her sisters from prostitution in their club.

“Hindi ako nahabol ng tatay ko sa Pilipinas. Hinabol na lang ako ng mga ate ko dito sa Japan. Sabi nila, “Bakit ka nag-Japan” Hirap na hirap sila kasi pinapasayaw sila dun ng club owner nila na mag topless nung unang two to three months nila.”
(My father did not catch up with me in the Philippines. Instead, my two older sisters chased after me here in Japan. They said, "Why did you go to Japan?" They were having a hard time because their club *owner was forcing them to dance topless during their first two to three months there.)*

The researcher has observed how proud Mrs. A was of saving her two sisters from where they worked. She also requested the owner of the club where she worked to hire her sisters in Central Japan. In return, they promised the club owner that they would attract more customers, especially Mrs. A. She migrated to Japan primarily for economic reasons.

"…Yun nga pinakiusapan ko yung big boss na kunin yung dalawang ate at sabi ko I'll try my best na maging number one ako kung kukunin niya yung dalawang ate ko kasi nga pinapasayaw sila at ng kung anu-ano pa."

(I requested the big boss to consider hiring my two sisters, and I told him that I will do my best to be number one if he hires them because they are being asked to dance and do other things.)

In her club, they worked without being forced against their will, like going topless dancing or dating a client; they were never forced against their will, unlike the clubs where her two older sisters had previously worked.

"Entertainer and dancer ako. Cultural dancer at pag cultural kasi nagsasayaw kami ng me bamboos, ng Hawaiian, iba-iba. Sa hotel minsan me performance din kami. Tuwang-tuwa mga Hapon kasi mga grupo sila para silang mga turista. Mga domestic turista lang sila. Minsan may mga bus, tatlong bus, may mga sakit, mga abnormal, tapos magsasayaw kami ng Philippine culture. Bibigay sila tip kaya ganon ang nangyari sa akin. Work ko noon gigising ng 7am to 10am sa hotel ako magwork magserved ng coffee at magsasayaw ng Philippine cultural dance. Additional job to, extra job ko. Tapos nun free na kami noon at pag 5pm na preparation na for the night club. Ipaparlor kami ng mama-san namin, Japanese nagme-make up sa amin, yung hair kami na. Strict yung mama-san namin since ang bata ko pa noon. Bawal makipag date sa customer, nasa sa iyo if gusto mo talaga lumabas kasama ang customer."

(I worked as an entertainer and dancer, specializing in cultural performances that included traditional dances featuring bamboo and Hawaiian influences, among others. Occasionally, we performed at hotels to showcase Philippine cultural dance, where

we delighted the Japanese in group tours by bus. I received tips and earned a lot. Some of them have special needs… "this was an additional job for me. After our morning duties, we had free time until 5 PM, when we began preparations for the nightclub performances. Our mama-san, a Japanese woman, would apply our makeup while we styled our hair ourselves. She was quite strict, especially considering my young age, and prohibited dating customers, leaving it up to us to decide if we wanted to go out with them.)

Mrs. A was well liked by the club owner as the club's top performer. Many customers want her for her friendly service. There, she met her first Japanese husband. And 37 years later, her life has changed.

Overview and Analysis of Mrs. A's Narrative: Belief and Perceptions

A Filipina from Mindanao, Philippines, Mrs. A first pursued midwifery. When she met some Japanese businessmen, she became drawn to work as a cultural dancer and entertainer in Japan to improve their economic status. In fear of her father's hostile reaction to this shift, she fled from home and left her family and studies in secret. In Japan, she, and her sisters, despite the initial struggles and the unfortunate circumstances, showed remarkable resilience. Mrs. A succeeded in rescuing them and worked in a more supportive environment. Over time, she became a successful entertainer, eventually married a Japanese man, subsequently divorced then remarried another Japanese man and lived in Japan for 37 years.

Her performances showcased Filipino culture to a Japanese audience, exemplifying cultural value exchange. This also led to her acceptance and success in

Japan. When analyzed through a feminist lens, Mrs. A's story evinced the influence of power dynamics and gender roles on her social interactions. She displayed empowerment and resilience in a patriarchal society through the deliberate efforts she made to avoid exploitation. This was also where Symbolic Interactionism came in: the "blue card" used for entry in Japan symbolized greener pastures and opportunities for economic mobility and improved quality of life.

While performing Philippine cultural dance, she was able to experience cultural exchange and express herself in a way that gave her a sense of self and helped her shape her role in Japan.

Mrs. A was able to integrate herself in Japanese society by marrying a Japanese citizen. Due to the nature of her job, she was able to easily adjust and adapt in Japanese society. Blending both cultures as a Filipina cultural dancer in Japan showed a complex adaptation process.

B. Initial Encounters and Short Anecdotes of Mrs. A's Love with her first Japanese husband

In the mid- or late 1980s, at the age of 17, Mrs. A came to Japan to work as a dancer, and entertainer. Six (6) months after her contract expired, she returned to the Philippines where she met her first love, and eventually became her boyfriend who was a Filipino. Following the act of intimacy with her boyfriend, she decided to end the relationship. She then realized that she wanted to marry a Japanese man instead because she believed that this decision would make her life in Japan easier and more comfortable. She had also come to like the Japanese culture after only six (6) months

of working there. When her contract was renewed, Mrs. A returned to Japan to work for the nightclub again.

“Nag e-enjoy lang ako. Nagpa-devirginize ako sa Pinoy. Hindi ako nag e-enjoy sa Pinoy. Parang nilaro ko lang sya. Parang ang hirap naman nito. Tapos hayun naano na ako dito ke ex-Japanese husband ko, sya first love ko. Gusto ko kultura ng Hapon, madisiplina sila. Haponesa style na ko. Saka parang ang hirap sa Pilipinas. Ang hirap ng buhay sa Pilipinas at that time yung mga tao hirap na hirap sila tapos ako two weeks lang, nasa Japan na ako agad, paganyan ganyan lang ako. Samantalang yung ibang Pilipina hirap na hirap sila makapunta dito. Sabi nila sa akin, “Uy bakit ka ba nakakabalik kagad, kami hindi? “

(I was just having fun. I lost my virginity to a Filipino. I am not having fun with a Filipino. Life seems difficult. And I met my ex-Japanese husband, who was my first love. I admire the Japanese culture; they are disciplined. I was already like a Japanese woman, embracing their culture. It seems difficult in the Philippines. Life in the Philippines was very difficult at that time; people were struggling a lot, and then here I am, in Japan, after just two weeks, just like that. While other Filipinos are having a hard time coming here. They told me, "Hey, why are you able to come back so quickly, while we can't?)

“Nung una, hindi ko talaga dream mag-Japan or pumunta sa ibang bansa. Dahil lang talaga sa naano lang ako sa pag-gugolf, yun lang ang nagbigay sa akin ng idea nung tinanong ako nung Japanese nung nag-caddie ako.”

(I never really dreamed of going to Japan or any other country. It was just that I got into golf, and that gave me the idea when a Japanese businessman asked me while I was working part-time as a caddie.)

“Mahirap nung una. Medyo na-homesick ako noong time na pumasok na ako sa Hapon. First time na hindi ako sanay na hinawakan yung s*** ko tapos wala lang sa kanila. Alam mo yung parang nalamog. Ang sakit naman nun. Binabatukan ka na ang sakit pala mambatok. Natural lang pala sa kanila yun, kultura pala nila yung ganun. Tapos, ang ibig sabihin kapag binabatukan ka ay natutuwa or nagagandahan sa iyo. Ayun, umiyak ako sa toilet. Sabi ko, uuwi na ako sa Pilipinas. Ayaw ko dito. Bakit ganito sila, ang bastos. So, yun yung ano ko kaya nahomesick ako nung una. Wala pa talaga akong karanasan noon.”

(I felt so homesick in Japan. It was my first time being touched inappropriately; it was physically painful. Customers *will also hit your head, and it is just natural for them; it is part of their culture. Later, I realized it was their way of showing affection or admiration for you. I went to the restroom and just cried, telling myself I wanted to return to the Philippines, but why were they so rude? My inexperience led me to miss the Philippines so much and feel homesick.)*

“Nag-adjust na lang ako; naging open-minded ako. Ayaw kong isipin. Ayaw kong mag-isip ng kung ano kasi trabaho yung pinunta ko. Saka nasaksak kasi yung kapatid ko noon kaya kailangang magpadala ako ng *“lapad”* (pera ng Hapon).

(I adapted my mindset and embraced a more open perspective. I preferred not to dwell on certain thoughts, as my primary focus was on my work. Additionally, I was compelled to send Japanese Yen as financial assistance/remittance due to my sibling's unfortunate stabbing incident at that time.)

She then met a nineteen-year-old Japanese university student at the club, who was one of their customers. Good-looking, tall, sweet, and talented in singing that he was, she fell in love with this young Japanese man.

“Nag-aaral sya while magsyota kami. Kita ko room nya nag-aaral pa sya noon” *(I saw him studying while we were dating. I saw him studying in his room back then.)*

Three (3) years later, she got pregnant with their first child. The club owner asked her to abort the child but she chose not to. After finishing the contract, she returned to the Philippines.

“Umuwi akong Pilipinas. Four months yung tyan ko, nasa club pa rin ako pero yung Hapon na club owner ko gustong ipalaglag ko. Ayaw nila kasi number one ako sa kanila. Sabi nya, “Ang bata-bata pa nyan wala namang pera yang boyfriend mo na yan. Sayang yang future mo, 21 years old ka pa lang. Ayaw talaga nila.”
(I went back to the Philippines. I was four months pregnant; I was still working in the club but the Japanese club owner wanted me to have an abortion. They did not want the baby since I was their top performer, their number one. He said, "You're still so young, as well as your boyfriend, he doesn't even have money. What a waste of your future, you are only 21 years old. They really do not want it.)

The researcher noted that Mrs. A's desire for the baby stemmed from her deep love for her first husband at the time, indicating her contentment with the decision to have the child.

During that time, entertainment visa only lasted for six (6) months, and they needed to return to the Philippines. Filipino entertainers only got paid in full once they completed their contracts, and the money was handed to them at the airport. If many customers requested them to return to Japan, they could renew their visa for them to return to Japan.

“Six months six months lang kontrata talaga noon. Pati sahod ganun din talaga. Within six months nila ibibigay, hindi every month ibibigay. Sa airport nila binibigay yung sahod namin pag pauwi na kami. Makakabalik ka depende sa performance mo pag madaming customers na gusto ka pabalikin sa tulong ng agency, kaya yung iba di na nauwi, nagtatago, nagpapakabilog *(“bilog”)* meaning malaking O, short for *“overstay.”*

(The contract was strictly for six months back then. The salary scheme was also fixed. They would release the salary within the six-month period, not on a monthly basis. Our salary would be handed to us at the airport upon our departure. You can come back depending on your performance if there are many customers who requested you to come back with the help of the agency or you will simply decide to remain in Japan without a legal status or legal visa to work.)

Her Japanese boyfriend, who is the father of her first child, followed them in the Philippines, where they eventually got married, and then processed their visas. As a college student and due to financial problem, it took her husband almost three (3) years before he could bring her back to Japan with their daughter who was then almost three years old. However, when they returned to Japan, and had a second child, things slowly changed. After sixteen (16) years of marriage, with on and off in relationship, they finally separated due to their individual and cultural differences, third party, and conflict with her mother in-law.

Overview and Analysis of the Initial Encounters and Short Anecdotes of Mrs. A's Love with her first Japanese husband

Some people thought, like Mrs. A, that the inappropriate way of touching her was just part of Japanese culture; the researcher negated this since, living in Japan for almost twenty years, the researcher thought Mrs. A experienced this because she worked in a nightclub. Based on the researcher's personal experience, most Japanese were reserved, educated, and decent enough not to engage in such inappropriate acts. However, in some cases, based on the experience of the researcher's female friend, who is also a Filipina and an engineer, who was at the convenience store, was inappropriately touched by middle-aged or older Japanese men who thought that all Filipinas were entertainers or prostitutes, as part of the stereotype.

However, in some cases, this indirect communication, such as touching/hitting one's head in Japan, was also a way to signal to that person that he/she likes them.

Mrs. A, through a feminist lens, exemplified self-autonomy through the decisions she made, including finding employment in Japan, ending her relationship with her first Filipino boyfriend, choosing to give birth to her firstborn, marrying a Japanese man, and later choosing to divorce him due to conflicts with in-laws and cultural challenges. Misunderstandings and cultural differences made an impact on how she and her partners perceived and responded to each other's behaviors and expectations. She tried to adapt to Japanese culture while maintaining her original cultural identity. As a migrant in Japan, she faced challenges and opportunities in her life.

C. Initial encounters, and Gist of Mrs. A's Love Story with her Second and Current Japanese husband

After four (4) straight years of separation from her first husband, Mrs. A met her second Japanese husband at the club again. To quote Mrs. A:

"Nagkita nga kami sa isang club na pinagkakatiwalaan ako nung me ari. Sabi nung club owner ko in Japanese, Mrs. A (not her real name) pumunta ka doon kasi parang mas magaling ka mag-English. Parang may nagkakagusto sayo doon na lalaki."

(We met at a club where the owner trusted me well. The club owner said, Mrs. A (not her real name), you go there because you seem to speak English better. Looks like someone likes you there.)

"Umupo ako para maggreet sa taong ito or sa mga grupong ito. Grupo kasi sila. Grupo sila so parang wala lang sa akin. Sabi ko sino ba to, like daw nya ako. Siyempre ako, ayaw ko syempre di ba? "

(I sat down there to greet this person who was in a group. Because they were in a group, it was nothing to me. I asked who he was, and he said he liked me. Of course, at that time I still did not want to enter another new relationship because of my first failed marriage.)

Acknowledging that her first marriage had just ended, Mrs. A thought she was not yet ready to become romantically involved again. She admitted to not being attracted to the guy at first.

Communicating with her second husband was way easier than with her first husband since they could communicate directly in English and Japanese, aside from the non-verbal cues such as eye glances or eye contact, smiles, and even touching.

“Wala, wala talaga. So, sabi ng kasamahan ko, “ang choosy mo naman.” Sabi ko, Bakit? Ayun nag greet lang ako tapos nilayasan ko siya. Tapos parang tinapik niya yung pwet ko sabi nya, “I like your hips,” sabi nya ganun. Sabi ko, are you discriminating me because you are living in the USA?

(At that time, it was nothing at all. So, my colleague said to me, "you're so choosy." I asked them, why? Then again, I went to their table, greeted them, and then I left. Then suddenly he patted my bottom, and said, "I like your hips," he said like that. I said, " Are you discriminating against me because you are living in the USA?)

The researcher observed that Mrs. A seemed amused, excited, and even proud that somebody did such acts to her and treated her that way. She appeared very pleased when she could get all the attention from these Japanese men. She was so happy reminiscing about their first encounter. All this direct communication in English and Japanese, along with non-verbal cues, led to a new relationship.

In the mid-2000s, at that time her second Japanese husband was working and living in the USA, and was just visiting Japan. He can speak, and understand English although not fluent. His current husband asked her at that time:

“Oh, you do not like me? I am leaving Japan again, and will go back to US in three days.” “Gusto niya raw makipagdate sa akin. Well, sabi ko pagiisipan ko. Pag ka greet ko sa grupo nila nilayasan ko na sila. Sabi nya bumalik daw ako, gusto nya na magselfie kami, picture daw kami. Then tinanaong nya cellphone number ko tapos in the morning tumawag sya. Sabi nya “ayaw mo bang sumama sa akin? Paalis na ako papuntang America. Itong lola hindi na nagpa-choosy so sabi ko sige when?”

(He said he wanted to date me. Well, I said, I will think about it. After I greeted their group, I just ran away from them. He told me to return so that he could take a picture of us together. Then he asked for my cellphone number, and then in the following

morning he called me. He said "don't you want to come with me? I am leaving for America. So, at this age, I thought I should no longer be choosy so I said yes to him and asked him when? After that encounter he invited me to the Tanabata festival, a poster of which was in our club. He then asked me to join him go shopping at Mitsukoshi mall, then he bought me two sets of summer kimono (yukata). In my mind, he is rich.)

According to Mrs. A, it was like a whirlwind romance. His second husband is very generous; despite having just met him, he sent her a computer with $1,000 for her allowance while he was still in Central USA. Since then, they were communicating through Skype for 24 hours. He even sent her two smartphones, an iPhone and an Android. They met in July, and he returned in December. When he returned, he asked her to pick him up in the airport instead of his mother. That day, he proposed to her. She joined him in the USA for a few months there, and later returned to Japan.

“At that time, nahihiya na kasi ako, walang-wala na kasi ako that time. Lubog na lubog na ako sa ex ko. Parang sya ang sumalo.” Sya savior ko. Mga pagkukulang ng ex ko, siya na yung umangkin nun, bigay todo sya. Puro yes kasi, kapag me bababayaran ka kasi hindi na makapagbayad ako ng rent noon.”

(I was ashamed, because I had nothing at that time. I was so broke at that time due to my ex-husband. I should say, that my second husband is my savior.” My ex's shortcomings, he was the one who took responsibility for them, he gave his all. It was always a yes, because whenever you had to pay for something, I could not afford to pay the rent back then.)

And now they have been living together for 15 years after that proposal.

Overview and Analysis of Mrs. A's Narrative about her Second and Current Japanese husband

After four years of being separated from her first husband, Mrs. A met her second Japanese husband at a nightclub as well. Initially disinterested and still dealing with the aftermath of her failed first marriage, Mrs. A was only persuaded by a co-worker to engage with her future husband that night. This led to a whirlwind romance and marriage; they have now shared 15 years. Mrs. A views her second husband as a rescuer/savior who aided her in overcoming the hardships left by her first marriage.

In establishing interpersonal relationships, having shared experiences of attending Tanabata Festival and giving presents, it became their symbols too in building a connection to each other. In Feminist Perspective, even at first, her second husband objectified her body during their first meeting, she acknowledged her personal needs and wants; chose and accepted her second husband; made her own decision; and took control of her own life. Her past relationship shaped her present marital relationship. The two's direct and indirect communication later led to a more intimate and supportive relationship. All these indirect communications and symbolically generous acts of giving gifts, romantic gestures, and several invitations by her current husband reshaped her understanding of marital relationships. This led her to reevaluate and see things in a new light.

As she explored Japanese culture and adjusted to new social rules, her main integration was through mutual changes instead of complete blending in or what we called mutual adaptation where both tried to adjust to each other's culture.

Second Participant's Life and Migration Story: Mrs. Bee

Similar to Mrs. A's story, Mrs. Bee did not consider marrying a foreigner at first—not to mention, a Japanese man.

"I have always wanted to be married to a Filipino. To marry a foreigner? Wala akong balak, gusto ko lang magkasawa ng Filipino, tumira abroad. Parang American dream, kasi dun ako brought up. Sa idea na yung mga tao nagpupunta sa Amerika, or sa Australia. Tapos dun nagmemake ng life nila. So, yung mga uncle ko nasa States din. Pero hinulaan ako nung college ako na ang mapapangasawa ko raw ay foreigner. Tama naman pala ang hula, di ko yun naisip."

(I did not have any plans of marrying a foreigner, I just wanted to get married to a Filipino, and live abroad. It was like an American dream, because that was where I was brought up. With the idea that people go to America, or Australia. Then they make a new life there. My uncles are also in the States. When I was in college there was a prediction that I would marry a foreigner in the future, but I just shrugged it off at that time. However, the prediction turned out to be right, I did not think of that until this time.)

Mrs. Bee was born into a rich family in Manila, Philippines. Her father previously worked in an International Organization as a Director of one of the departments (the researcher intentionally did not disclose the Department's actual name), while her mother was a homemaker. She came from a large, well-cultured, and well-educated family with several of her siblings being doctors, and specialists working abroad. They were all professionals just like her. She grew up surrounded by her nanny, housekeepers, and had a very comfortable life in the Philippines. She graduated from

one of the most prestigious, and oldest universities in the Philippines (the researcher intentionally did not disclose the university's actual name for her privacy). She graduated with a degree in Bachelor of Arts in Manila, Philippines.

She has been married to her Japanese husband for almost 30 years now. They were office mates in the Philippines back then. They later fell in love, and got married in the Philippines in 1993. After marriage, she moved to Japan and lived with her Japanese husband's family for a short time. She has been living abroad for almost 30 years. After the wedding, they first lived in the Philippines, other Southeast Asian countries, the Western USA, and various prefectures in Japan. Due to her husband's profession in Sales and Marketing, she was initially unable to work and was a homemaker for the first few years of her marriage.

She started working in Japan 15 years ago. Her first job in Japan was as a laboratory staff member, and as of this interview, she works as an English teacher where she has been working for 9 years.

In the past, Mrs. Bee's husband consistently dissuaded her from speaking Japanese unless it was flawless, to avoid being ridiculed by his Japanese relatives and colleagues. In this situation, her husband tried to mute her if she could not adjust perfectly to their Japanese language.

Since then, she has been seeking validation from her spouse. Her success in winning a Japanese speech contest and featuring her on local traditional media gave her greater self-esteem.

"Ayaw niya minsan akong magsalita in Japanese kasi hindi fluent na fluent. Hindi magandang maganda yung choices of words ko. Yung type of Japanese ko is Kanto. Kasi yun yung Manila version nila eh bukod sa walang accent, very standard.

Nasanay naman ako sa standard. Syempre yun ang standard. Nasanay ako lalo na yung nanay nya tinuturuan ako ng Japanese dati so more polite yung Japanese ko. Kaya lang sasabihin niya minsan wag na lang mag-Japanese kasi worried sya dun sa image."

(Sometimes, he does not want me to speak Japanese because I am not very fluent. My word choices are not great. The type of Japanese I use is Kanto, which is like their version of Manila. It is standard and has no accent. I am used to it since it is the standard, especially since my mother-in-law taught me Japanese before, so my Japanese is more polite. However, he sometimes tells me not to speak Japanese because he is concerned about the impression it may create.)

The way Mrs. Bee's husband communicated with her without considering her feelings and considering the seriousness of the tone of his voice led her to doubt herself, to speak fluent Japanese, and since then, she has been seeking validation.

Overview and Analysis of the Life and Migration Story of Mrs. Bee

Mrs Bee never dreamt of marrying a foreign man, particularly a Japanese man. However, she ended up marrying one and even moved to different countries. Mrs. Bee narrated the difficulties of marrying someone from a different culture where language, expectations and cultural practices differ. This impacted her adjustment to her identity and cultural adaptation. Her need for validation and the restriction placed on her linguistic abilities revealed how traditional gender roles can limit the freedom of women. Her Japanese husband tried to control her by not letting her speak the Japanese language unless it is flawless and fluently perfect.

“Ayaw niya minsan akong magsalita in Japanese kasi hindi fluent na fluent. Hindi magandang maganda yung choices of words ko.”

(Sometimes, he does not want me to speak Japanese because I am not very fluent. My word choices are not great.)

The two research participants did much work to conform to the standards set by their husbands as well as wider social expectations. It was also evident how their voices were continuously restricted and devalued.

This aligns with the Theory of Muted Group, asserting that certain groups, especially women, are subject to marginalization, including a “muting” effect, which renders them invisible in communication structures within the dominant culture. As such, it is crucial for women to receive the necessary support to balance cultural expectations and gender roles.

Their international relationship is quite difficult. Mrs. Bee’s husband's disapproval and criticism of her Japanese language proficiency skills and concern for how she is perceived indicate a relationship influenced by complex cultural and gender expectations. Winning the Japanese speech contest only showed how she empowered herself to regain her self-esteem and integrate into this new culture. Mrs. Bee also attempted to adapt to Japanese culture and language while maintaining her original cultural identity, her struggles with the language and the pressures from her husband created challenges in assimilation.

B. Showing Verbal and Non-Verbal Communication during Initial Encounters and Short Love Anecdotes of Mrs. Bee with her Japanese husband

Mrs. Bee met her Japanese husband in the Philippines as an officemate, he was eight (8) years her senior while she had just graduated from college. They worked together for (3) three years at ABC Company (not the real name since it no longer exists) in the Philippines. At that time, as an AB graduating student, Mrs. Bee was one of the two designers, and her husband was the investor representative in the Philippines. As a graduating student, she never envisioned herself marrying at that time, especially to a foreigner. Besides she had a mutual understanding with a Filipino man at that time but they were not committed since they were just graduating students. There was no attraction on her part at that time when she saw her future husband. Unknown to her for the past three years her husband started to like her especially when he saw, and observed how caring her mom was during his visits in their house. He believed that she would be like her mother in the future, who is also a caring person.

“Minsan pag wala kami mapaglagyan sa mga warehouse namin dinadala sa bahay yung mga products kasi malaki yung lanai namin. Tapos pumupunta sya doon nilalaro niya yung mga aso kasi mahilig sya sa mga aso. Pinapanood pala niya yung mom ko kasi feeling nya how you see the mom is how the daughter is. Kung gaano kabait yung mommy ko, kung paano sila sa bahay, kung paano sila magasikaso sa amin, yun yung inaaano nya sa akin na yung basis niya for finding me. Napapansin ko naman kapag tumitingin sa akin or whatever, kaya lang wala yun sa isip ko kasi kakagraduate ko lang that time.”

(Sometimes when we have no more space to store in our warehouses, the products were brought to our home because our lanai was huge enough to store some of our products there. Then he went there many times, and played with our dogs because he loved dogs. I did not know he was observing my mom because he felt that how you see the mom is how the daughter. How kind my mom was, how was she at home, how she took care of us, and that was his basis for liking me too. He strongly believed that I would also be like my mother who was loving and caring housewife. I already noticed his actions especially the way he looked at me. I knew there was something but I just disregard it because I was just a new college graduate at that time.)

Non-verbal cues like lingering eye contact, giving presents, and gestures of kindness to her and to her friends were ways in which Mrs. Bee's husband tried to communicate her feelings for her.

"Madalas nya akong bigyan ng flowers through his driver, nahihiya kasi. Sometimes, mga *"omiyage"* or *souvenirs* from Japan ang binibigay niya sa akin. Minsan naman binibili nya ako tickets for a concert for us to watch. One time, nagswimming kami all officemates sa beach, and he paid for everything. He is very generous."

(Most of the times he will give me presents or gifts like flowers or souvenirs from Japan. He will give those to me through his driver out of shyness. Sometimes he buys me concert tickets so we can watch. One time, he paid all the expenses when we went swimming at the beach.)

"Almost every day siyang tumawag sa akin using landline pag bumabalik siya sa Japan. Nagkukuwentuhan lang ng mga pangyayari ng araw na iyon. Wala siyang sinasabi about his real intention." He's showy but not very vocal about his feelings."

(He also started calling me almost every day through the landline, especially every time he returned to Japan. However, he never told me his real intention. He's showy but not very vocal about his feelings.)

Mrs. Bee's Japanese husband's communication style reflects the high-context culture of the Japanese people, who rely on indirect communication, such as nonverbal cues like eye contact, gestures, and facial expressions. He thought that by giving gifts, lingering eye contact, going out to concerts and on trips, and making every day calls; he was already conveying his real feelings to Mrs. Bee.

"Nagulat ako bigla na lang nag-propose sa akin. Four times nag-propose noon. But four times ko din turned him down kasi di ko nakikita ang tunay na siya. I do not know his family, I do not know where he lives, we just met here. I do not know what kind of person he is except sa kung ano nakikita namin sa Pilipinas. Parang sa akin very risky 'yan na hindi mo alam."

(I was surprised he just suddenly proposed to me, but I turned him down four times. He proposed 4 times, and I just turned him down because I did not see the real him. I did not know his family, I did not know where he lived, and I did not know what kind of person he was, except for what we observed in the Philippines. It seemed to me that it was very risky to have a relationship with a person whom you did not know much about.)

In their initial encounter, it was very hard for Mrs. Bee to communicate with her then-future Japanese husband, since he relied on nonverbal cues to show his feelings to her—no direct communication like "I love you; will you be my girlfriend?" as Mrs. Bee expected. He just kept inviting her, giving her gifts like matching jewelry for couples, and visiting her at their house.

“One-time naman, pinakita niya yung bagong bili niyang condo, pero pinakita niya rin doon ang other members ng company. Hanggang one-time lumabas kami para kumain. May binigay siya sa aking watch; sabi niya, tingnan ko daw if kasya sa akin. Kumakain kami noon sa Makati; sabi niya, ‘Look, it is the same as mine. Pangbabae version lang yung sa akin. Hanggang binibigyan na nya ako ng mga jewelries pero hindi naman yung mga mahal. Yung mga fashion jewelry, mga ganun. Tapos madalas napunta sa bahay. Parang warm-up na rin yung parents ko sa kaniya.” *(But one time, he showed me his newly bought condo, and he also showed it to other members of the company. One time we went out to eat, then he suddenly gave me a watch. He told me to see if it fit me. We were eating at a restaurant somewhere in Makati at that time. He urged me to look at his watch too. He said we have the same watch, but his was for men; it was a “couple” watch, and mine was a women’s version. Since then, he kept giving me jewelry, not luxury jewelry but only fashionable jewelry. Then he always visited our house almost every day. So, it was like a warm-up for my parents. They knew there was something between us.)*

During their early encounter, this high-context, indirect communication was very evident to Mrs. Bee’s husband. He would do things indirectly, by showing her that he liked her and that they were a good match.

“Bigla na lang one-time noong pauwi na kami ang sabi nya sa akin, ‘Can you wake me up every day?’ Hindi pa nagsink in sa akin. Pero one Christmas time dumating sya sa bahay may dala syang ring. Yung first time talaga, sabi ko sa kanya. I think it is very difficult. Kasi mahirap ata yung international marriage. Second hindi ko pa nakikita family mo. I do not know where you live. Nagbe-base lang ako sa mga

sinasabi mo sa akin. Dito ako sa Pilipinas nakatira. How will that be? At the same time against din nung una yung father ko since di nila alam ang marami about him. At the same time sa parents' side niya naman, ganun din, "Pilipina yan di ba? Usong uso pa naman mga Japayuki dito. Ang pangit ng impression ng mga Filipino that time. I was hesitant kasi natatakot ako eh. Parang it's such a big leap for me. Kung meron na siguro mga Facebook or something, makikita mo siya sa video or whatever. He did not even say anything, totally nothing, Nakikita ko lang ay yung nasa Pilipinas sya. *(Suddenly, one time when we were on our way home, he said to me, "Can you wake me up every day? It has not sunk in on me yet at that time that we were already a couple. But one Christmas he came home with a ring. That was the first time I told him. I think having this kind of relationship would be very difficult. Because international marriage might be difficult. Second, I have not seen your family yet. I did not know where you live. I was just basing your story on what you told me. I live here in the Philippines. How will that be? At the same time, my father was also against it at first since they did not know much about him. At the same time on his parents' side, the same thing, "Isn't she a Filipina? Japayukis are infamous especially at that time in Japan. The impression of the Filipinas at that time was unimpressive. I was hesitant at that time because I was also afraid. It seemed like such a big leap for me. If there were Facebook or something at that, you could see him in the video or whatever. He did not even say anything, totally nothing, I could only know him better every time he was in the Philippines.)*

Mrs. Bee and her family just realized that her future husband was serious about marrying her when his parents flew to the Philippines despite not knowing how to speak Tagalog or even English. Even more, they knew that Filipinas in Japan had a

bad reputation because of *Japayuki,* aside from the fact that the Philippines is a third-world country.

“After his parents visited us in the Philippines feeling ko parang boyfriend ko na sya that time. Pero walang “yes” na nangyari hindi niya sinasabi sa akin straight eh. Although sinasabi niya na he likes me, makikita mo lagi syang nakabantay sayo, laging sweet sayo. Pero hindi niya talaga iniexpress verbally. Parang naging mutual understanding na parang kami na parang hindi hanggang nirereto na sya kung kani-kaninong Pilipina at ayaw ko yung ganong idea kasi alam ko yung mga babaeng nirereto ng mga driver niya.”

(After his parents visited us in the Philippines, I felt like he was already my boyfriend at that time. But still I never said "yes, it never happened. He also did not tell me directly his feelings. Although he said that he liked me, and you could see that he was always watching over and protecting me, he was always sweet to me. But he did not really express it verbally. It was like a mutual understanding. There was no label. There was even a time when his driver paired him with other Filipinas, which I did not like the idea. These Filipinas worked at the nightclub in the Philippines.)

Mrs. Bee discovered that most Japanese, including her husband, tend to be more expressive through non-verbal cues. He conveyed his affection for her primarily through non-verbal means like eye contact, giving gifts, being kind to her, being always at her side, talking with her, and inviting her to some events.

“More of actions sya talaga, giving flowers, mga presents. Kaya noong nakita na ako ng in-laws ko doon din talaga sila nagdecide na “Ok na kami diyan kay Mrs. Bee (not real name). Sa side naman namin, for them to come here, nag-effort, talagang yun ang nagseal sa akin and everything.

(He was more of a man of action, he gave me flowers, he generously gave plenty of presents. So, when my in-laws saw me when they went to the Philippines, they decided that I am the right one for their son. They said, "we're ok with Mrs. Bee (not real name). While on our side, for them to come here in the Philippines, they made a great effort, that was what really struck me; eventually in the end I accepted him.)

After that visit, a marriage proposal already followed. “There was no mentioning of “tayo na” or something, wala yun.”

Mrs. Bee and her husband moved to Japan a few months after getting married. She became a full-time homemaker for the first 15 years since her husband worked in other countries, and was assigned to different destinations. She then could not afford to have a full-time job because they kept moving from place to place. It also surfaced that Japanese men never say or do not commonly say “I Love You” to their girlfriends, instead they express the words “*I really like you*,” in Japanese it means “*Daisuki desu.”*

Mrs. Bee informed the researcher, that non-verbal cues were very important in communicating with Japanese people. Generally, Japanese people are reserved people, they do not say "I love you" out loud. Rather, one has “read between the lines” society, where people believe their acts are already an expression of love. A culture where actions are perceived as manifestations of affection, requiring others to interpret these subtle cues, like eye contact, smiles, gift giving and so on.

Mrs. Bee: “ Di sila masalita, more of reading the air or between the lines sila.”

(They are men of few words, more of reading the air…)

The researcher also noted that a Japanese man might have a serious romantic interest, if he starts asking you some personal questions, such as “Will you pick me

up at the airport?" in the case of Mrs. A, while in the case of Mrs. Bee, "Will you call me to wake me up in the morning?" even without confessing their feelings.

Overview and Analysis of the Initial Encounters and Short Anecdotes of Mrs. Bee's Love with her Japanese husband

Mrs. Bee and her Japanese husband were not attracted to each other the first time they met. She never even thought of ending up together. Her narratives were about the cultural differences she experienced in this international marriage. Moreover, she learned to adapt to every country she visited, particularly Japan. She was unfamiliar with Japanese culture then, but later, she was able to adapt and interpret her husband's non-verbal cues for expressing love. Effective intercultural communication would involve recognizing and adapting to these differences, which Mrs. Bee did over time as she learned to interpret her husband's actions as expressions of his love. Mrs. Bee also experienced societal expectations and gender dynamics as a full-time homemaker. Giving presents and showing affection through actions (without verbal communication) were also examples of the traditional gender role played by her husband.

As Feminist Communication Theory deepens one's understanding of the impact of gender roles on communication and relationships, such an impact was exemplified by Mrs. Bee's reluctance and eventual acceptance; social expectations for women include being nurturing, caring, and supportive. Her husband, meanwhile, behaves in accordance with traditional social expectations for men: provider and protector. These roles are apparent in both Japanese and Filipino cultures. In this

case, effective communication included the interpretation of and response to non-verbal cues, such as eye contact and actions. The relationship evolved through the interpretation of non-verbal signals and how Mrs. Bee learned to interpret such actions. Mrs. Bee's migration also changed her social role from a professional to a homemaker, then reverted to being a professional, which required her to adjust and adapt to a new cultural environment.

Research Question 1: How do Filipino migrant wives communicate with their Japanese husbands, using verbal or nonverbal forms of communication, and what exactly happens during this communication process?

Verbal and Non-Verbal Communication of Mrs. A and her Japanese Husband

In the early stages of their relationship, Mrs. A typically communicated with her first husband verbally, mostly in Japanese, and nonverbally, through eye contact, holding hands, singing to her with gestures, and bringing her to their home. To quote her:

“Nag-uusap kami nung una broken English and broken Japanese di pa ako magaling mag-Nihongo noon. At sa unang pagkikita pa lang alam ko na gusto nya ako dahil sa madalas na pag tingin-tingin nya sa kin noong una, at laging ako request na mag-entertain sa kanya…madalas kinakantahan nya ako ng love songs sa karaoke…later on, naging kami na, lagi nya akong dinadala sa bahay nila at sa kwarto nya noon.

(With my first husband, we communicated at first in broken English and broken Japanese since I was not yet good at Japanese. The first time I met my first husband, I knew he liked me because he kept looking at me, always asking me to serve and entertain him… most of the time, he would sing love songs to me at karaoke. Later, when we became lovers, he would always bring me to their house and to his bedroom.)

"Nung maging kami na, sa club hawak lang sa kamay, pero sa bahay nila pag kami lang may kissing na, hawak dito hawak dun, we had sex, mas aggressive na siya."

(At the club, we only hold hands, but in their house, we kissed, touched, he was more aggressive, we had sex.)

In addition to face-to-face interaction, Mrs. A utilized various ICTs to communicate with both her husbands, verbal cues such as tone of voice, and non-verbal cues such as prolonged pauses and deep breaths. Throughout her initial physical separation from her former husband, they maintained communication for nearly three years through landline telephones.

"Tumatawag siya sa akin gamit landline / telepono, kinakamusta kaming mag-iina niya na nasa Pilipinas. Di pa daw nya kami makuha pa Japan kasi estudyante palang sya wala syang pera, sa tono ng boses nya malungkot sya, namiss nya kami, kaya mabagal syang magsalita, minsan hininga lang nya naririnig ko."

(He usually calls me using their landline phone to ask how we are with his child in the Philippines, and tells me he cannot bring us to Japan yet because he doesn't have enough money since he was still a student. The tone of his voice was sad; you won't hear his voice, only long pauses of breath.)

Furthermore, during her second husband's employment in the USA, technology again played a crucial role in fostering their initial connections and sustaining their relationship. Apart from providing financial assistance, her husband sent her a laptop and a cellphone to facilitate their communication due to the time zone difference. Mrs. A's husband's generosity in giving gifts also conveyed nonverbal cues that he likes her.

"Madalas syang tumawag, laging direct call kasi wala pa akong alam sa computer that time…" Sabi nya, "magpapa-package ako sayo ng computer, so after a week mabilisang pangyayari, he also sent me 1,000 dollars for allowance ko daw, that time set up nya na lahat yung password. So, every day na kami nag Skype, 24 hours na yung skype namin".

(He frequently made calls, always direct because I did not know anything about computers at that time... He said, "I will send you a computer package, so after a week, it quickly happened. He also sent me 1,000 dollars for my allowance; he already set up all the passwords at that time. So, we Skyped every day, our Skype lasted like for 24 hours.)

"Aside sa computer, binili niya ako ng dalawang smartphones: Iphone at Android para makausap niya ako kahit wala ako sa bahay…dahil dito nagkatuluyan kami."

(Aside from the computer, he bought one iPhone and one Android, so he could talk to me even outside of the house. Due to technology, we end up together.)

Mrs. A predominantly communicated verbally in Japanese, while her second and current husband occasionally conversed with her in a blend of English and Japanese, or mostly in Japanese.

“Pano kami magcommunicate? May English, May Japanese. Madalas na lenguwahe? Japanese. Di namin pinagusapan basta na set na sa Japanese mag-usap. Pag nagfi-Filipino ako minsan natatawa lang siya, sabi nya Japanese mo na lang, Mas gusto nya English kesa Filipino. Mas naiintindihan nya kasi.”
(How can we communicate? There's English, there's Japanese. The most common language? Japanese. We did not talk about it; we simply decided to converse in Japanese. Sometimes when I speak Filipino, he just laughs and tells me to speak Japanese instead. He prefers English to Filipino. He could easily understand English more than Filipino.”)

The direct communication and immediate response or feedback from Mrs. A’s husband helped her adjust how she communicates with her husband and understand each other better.

In Mrs. A's case and with her current husband, it also shows that, if not Japanese, a Japanese husband prefers to communicate in English rather than in Filipino, the wife’s native language, so they can understand each other. This open communication and honest conversation help them to communicate better.

However, even at the time of the interview, the couple relied on the Internet and smartphones to assist Mrs. A and her husband in translating Filipino or English words into Japanese or Japanese to English using Google Translate if they did not understand each other.

“Minsan nagse-search siya sa Google or ako ang nagse-search sa Google.
(Sometimes he searches on Google or I am the one who searches on Google.)

In this context, the language barrier was addressed and may have accounted for the potential impact of technology on communication effectiveness.

After residing in Japan for more than 35 years, Mrs. A still struggled to convey certain technical terms in Japanese, specifically legal jargon, work-related terms, and medical terms.

After a day's work, being sensitive and asking each other about their day helped them start conversing at night, making them more comfortable sharing their feelings.

"Isang beses, dahil sa trabaho, di niya ako nasamahan sa hospital and after that tinanong niya if ok naman daw ako…? Pag ganun, doon ko siya tinatanong yung mga di ko naiintindihan sa hospital o kaya tungkol sa trabaho. Very encouraging and helpful sya, appreciate ko siya dun."

(One time, he could not join me for my hospital check-up when I returned. He asked me if everything was ok and if I was ok. That's when I asked him about things I did not understand at the hospital or at work. He is very understanding and helpful, and I appreciate that.)

Aside from being honest about their feelings, asking open-ended questions, and showing appreciation for one's effort greatly improved their communication. Even non-verbal cues like hugging and kissing also help them to communicate well.

"Pag may ginagawa siyang mabuti o pag tinutulungan niya ako pag may problema sa Pilipinas, binibigyan niya ako ng pera para itulong at ipadala sa Pilipinas…pag ganun, pagluluto ko siya ng paborito niyang pagkain para mapakita ko naman ang pagpapasalamat ko sa kanya, may kasamang kiss and hug yun…"

(I cooked his favorite food to show appreciation, and I hugged and kissed him once he helped me send money to the Philippines, especially if there's a problem there.)

In this way, Mrs. A showed her gratitude to her Japanese husband. Both felt love for each other. For the Japanese husband being understanding and for Mrs. A

being grateful and showing appreciation, they both thought these examples led to their successful marriage.

Mrs. A felt more comfortable asking her husband if she had trouble understanding some Japanese words, especially when she heard his calm and understanding voice.

“Yung mga deep na language, sa law, about work. Sa hospital, ok naman, pero minsan sinasabi ko pa rin sa kanya tungkol sa medicine. Explain nya sa Japanese na madali kong maintindihan then igu-google nya sa English.” Di ako natakot magtanong lalo na pag narinig ko na ang kalma nyang boses saka pasensyoso siyang tao.
(The profound language or technical term used in law and work is quite different, so it was difficult. It is ok at the hospital, but I still sometimes talk to him about medicine. He will explain it in simple Japanese and use Google Translate to translate it. I won’t be afraid or hesitant to ask him, especially hearing his understanding and calm voice; he is very patient.)

Despite both being divorced, they have gained valuable insights from their past relationships. During moments of uncertainty, they made a pact to communicate before going to bed. They have grown accustomed to each other's preferences and could easily discern their desires by simply gazing into each other's eyes.

“May schedule talaga kami bago matulog; nag-uusap kami tungkol sa mga pangyayari nung araw na iyon. Sana’y na ko, sa tingin pa lang sa mata niya alam ko na, nagkakaintindihan na kami.”
(We have a daily schedule of talking to each other before going to bed, and we talk about what happened that day. Just merely looking at his eyes, we already understood each other.)

Setting a daily routine of talking to each other before bed improves these couples' communication. Being mindful of tone of voice and the right timing to be serious or not also helps them communicate and understand each other.

“Nag-uusap talaga kami pag may tampuhan. Pag namura ko siya, magsasabi siya na masakit daw akong magsalita. Hayun, nag-so-sorry kagad ako, tapos natatawa na lang siya. Saka bigayan kami, malumanay ako pag sya ang galit. Ganun din sya. Pag gabi, may good night kiss kami, saka may hawakan kami ng kamay habang natutulog. Binabangungot kasi ako minsan.”

(We really talk when we have misunderstandings. When I curse at him, he says that I speak hurtfully, then I immediately apologize, and he just laughs. I stay calm when he is angry and vice versa. We hold hands and kiss one another at night, especially when I have nightmares.)

In summary, Mrs. A and her Japanese husband engage in verbal and non-verbal communication. They communicate verbally through face-to-face interactions and using Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) such as landline telephones, laptops, smartphones, and online platforms such as Skype and Google Translate. ICTs are important for building and maintaining the participants’ respective relationships.

“If di siya nagpadala ng computer para mag-usap noon sa Skype and Iphone and Android para tawagan lang ako gabi-gabi noong nasa USA siya, baka di naging kami…ok din at merong Google Translate pag di kami magkaintindihan, nagagamit namin.

(*If he did not send me a computer to connect via Skype, and sent an iPhone, and an Android, and called me every night, we won't end up together...it was also good that there is Google Translate, so we can use it if we do not understand each other)*

Technology was vital in building their connection during their initial separation until now to sustain their relationship. However, technology can also ruin trust in a relationship. According to Mrs. Bee:

Mrs. Bee: “Nahuli kong me babae ang asawa ko, fling-fling ba sa isang masahista. Nakita ko usapan nila sa smartphone nya while naliligo siya.” Nakakasira ba ng relasyon to or dapat magpasalamat ako sa technology at nahuli ko sila.”
(I caught my husband cheating on me. He had a fling with one of those masseuses. I saw their flirty text messages while he was taking a shower. Technologically can ruin, or I should be thankful for this technology because I caught him cheating.)

Some non-verbal cues they commonly use are body language, facial expressions, eye contact, and physical touch (holding hands, hugging, and so on).

While some English is used, Japanese remains the primary language the participants use with their husbands. Mrs. A’s husband prefers English to Filipino, which is Mrs. A’s first language. Despite their reliance on Japanese, both partners often use translation tools like Google Translate.

Additionally, they employ non-verbal gestures, such as eye contact, hand-holding particularly during night time to offer comfort and having affectionate hugs, goodbye, and good night kisses, for deeper emotional connection.

“Pag tutulog kami laging me goodnight kisses kami at lagi nyang hawak kamay ko madalas kasi akong bangungutin…Pag aalis siya ng bahay para pumasok sa

trabaho, sinasanay ko siyang yayakap at hahalik muna sa akin bago umalis. Minsan sa sobrang busy ko nakakalimutan ko pero sya pa minsan ang nagpapaalala sa akin." *(When we go to bed, he makes sure to kiss me goodnight and sure to hold my hands to protect me because I always have nightmares…Before going to work, he would kiss and hug me first since I trained him. Sometimes, I forgot because I'm busy, but he would remind me to hug and kiss him first.)*

However, after nearly twenty years in Japan and studying its culture, the researcher was surprised to discover that Mrs. A and her Japanese husband are comfortable showing affection in public.

"Naglalakad kami holding hands minsan nga magka akbay pa…umaga or gabi sa daan." Nauuna pa ang asawa ko na humawak ng kamay ko at akbayan ako sa daan."

(We walk holding hands and put his arms on my shoulders, while walking, morning or evening, does not matter, and he even initiates them.)

From the researcher's perspective, people in Japan often prefer to maintain distance from one another, especially in public. A Japanese husband might appreciate personal space, and public displays of affection are generally rare. The reason, as explained by an older Japanese wife, a researcher friend, is that Japanese culture values personal space and a reserved demeanor in public to show respect and minimize attention.

The researcher explained this to her participant, who agreed. However, both Mrs. A and her current husband faced challenges in their past relationships and wanted their marriage to succeed. As a result, they tried to communicate openly about their expectations.

“Pareho kaming divorced kaya gusto naming magtagal ang relasyon namin.” *(We are both divorced, so this time we want this relationship to last and succeed.)*

Verbal and Non-verbal Communication between Mrs. Bee and her husband

In the case of Mrs. Bee, initially, their communication was limited to English, but even after her partner relocated to Japan, they continued to converse solely in English over the phone.

“Every day siyang tumatawag sa akin through landline kahit noong bumalik siya sa Japan for a while. Nagkagaanan kami ng loob dahil sa pagtawag-tawag.
(He calls me every day, even when he returns to Japan for a while, and we became comfortable with each other.)

Now that they are married, the couple resided overseas for over (5) five years, predominantly using English both at home and in the workplace. Initially, they lived in Indonesia for (2) two years, then spent a year and a half in Sacramento, United States, before relocating to Johor, Malaysia, where they stayed at a hotel for a year. During that period, she had the opportunity to learn a new language, such as Bahasa, in addition to Japanese. Her spouse is proficient in English from his previous work experiences in Australia and Los Angeles. Their social circle mainly consisted of foreigners due to her husband's business connections.

“We have been directly communicating in English since the beginning, since I cannot speak Japanese, and he worked in the Philippines. Then we moved to other English-speaking countries, so we still speak in English. There were also times when

we spoke in Bahasa when we lived in Indonesia, and we also learned the language…most of our circle of friends at that time mga propesyonal na me mataas na position *(mostly professional with high position in the society)* and most of them fluent sa English."

Moreover, her husband picked up some Tagalog words during their year-long stay in the Philippines and his work there even before they tied the knot. Their primary means of communication is English. Upon their return to Japan, she actively acquired conversational skills in Japanese. Subsequently, during their uninterrupted (10) ten-year stay in Japan, she had the opportunity to work and no longer had to relocate frequently. During her tenure as a laboratory assistant for eight (8) years, she expanded her knowledge of the Japanese language, specifically vocabulary, and became proficient in communicating in Japanese.

"Marunong ding magtagalog ang husband ko dahil tumira kami sa Pinas for a year but not fluent. Madalas English pa din kami magusap. Pero nung tumira na kami sa Japan, natuto na kong mag Japanese after working sa isang laboratory noon, purong Japanese talaga ang gamit ko dun for eight years, ako lang ang foreigner na worker kaya natuto ako."

(My husband can speak some Tagalog words but not fluently. Most of the time, we still communicate in English. However, when we moved and lived permanently in Japan, and I worked in a laboratory there, I learned Japanese. I am the only foreign worker there.)

Mrs. Bee and her husband communicate easily and directly in different languages, such as Bahasa and Tagalog, and most of the time in English. After living

and working in Japan, Mrs. Bee learned to communicate in Japanese. This made it easy for them to understand each other through verbal communication.

However, using nonverbal cues alone, Mrs. Bee would find it hard to communicate with her Japanese husband, which sometimes led to disagreements.

“Nasa party kami noon. After party, napagsabihan ako noon na next time huwag daw akong sasabat sa usapan nila dahil parang napahiya ko siya dahil sa di pag-agree sa sinabi niya… nag-iba ang tono ng boses niya at galit ang mukha niya noon at lumayo sa grupo namin… Simula noon, aware na ako sa hitsura niya, sa boses niya, lalo na pag nakita kong tumahimik na nang magtagal at kunot ang noo pag ganun, may nagawa akong di niya gusto. At doon ako nahihirapan pag ’di siya nagsasalita, kailangan maging sensitive ako sa mga actions niya. CEO ang asawa ko. Mataas ang position, kaya ganoon.

(After the party, he talked to me sternly and reminded me to stop disagreeing with him in front of others. I just realized I might have embarrassed him in front of our group, since his voice changed, and his face looked angry at that time, and he went away from our group…Since then, I have become fully aware of his presence, noticing his face, his jaw, his tone of voice, and the wrinkles on his forehead. If that is the case, I did something wrong. Once he stopped talking, it was hard for me just to look at his actions. I need to be sensitive. My husband holds a high position as a CEO.)

Comparing the Non-verbal Communication of Mrs. A and Mrs. Bee with their Husbands

Both Filipina research participants emphasized the importance of unspoken messages and gestures in effectively communicating with and connecting with their Japanese husbands.

Mrs. A and her current husband both initiated morning and evening hugs and kisses, and even held hands while sleeping.

“Kagandahan talaga pag minahal ka. Kasi sabi nila malamig daw mga Japanese, ok lang sila sa una. Pero depende kasi nasa sayo yun. Choice mo kasi yun. Kasi kami meron kaming morning hugs and kisses and may evening kiss at holding hands in bed.”

(It is truly great when you are loved. They say that Japanese people are cold, and they are just okay at first but I think it all depends on you. It is your choice. Because we have our morning hugs and kisses, evening kiss, and holding hands in bed.)

“Talagang kusa yun, at may exposure din kasi sya sa US.” Before kami umalis, nagha hug kami, minsan sya pa yung “Hoy, halika dito.” Sya pa yung manghihila.”

(It was genuinely done out of his own will, and he also has experience living and working in the US. Before we left, we hugged each other, sometimes he is the one saying, "Hey, come here." He is the one who pulls me along.)

Upon reviewing Mrs. A's Facebook account, the researcher confirmed that, as she had stated, they travel often, and on their Facebook, pictures were posted and public display of affection was evident.

In the case of Mrs. Bee, she mentioned reading between the lines and reading the air (atmosphere), which in Japanese, is *"kuuki wo yomu*". This is customary in Japanese culture and is encouraged.

Mrs. Bee: "Sa Japanese tawag nila doon ay *"kuuki wo yomu".* dapat sensitive ka if dapat mong gawin ang isang bagay or dapat pa bang itanong ang isang bagay, dapat alam mo if di malalagay sa alanganin yung tao.

(It means reading the air, or reading between the lines… You should be sensitive enough that if you need to do something or ask something, it should not cause any inconveniences to another person.)

Mrs. Bee acquired this skill through continuous interactions with Japanese people and by watching television programs and commercials in the Japanese language.

"SA pakikipagusap ko sa mga Hapon at kakakpanood ng TV the more ko naiintindihan ang kultura nila. Sinasabi ko ang gusto pero pag naramdaman ko na ayaw niya ay hindi ko na uulit-ulitin yon. Parang alam ko na yung sagot kasi sa tagal ko na syang kasama sa bahay kaya alam mo na yung taboo to kaya wag ng uulitin kahit mga kapatid ko alam na nila kaya minsan sila pa nagsasabi na wag ng sasabihn sa asawa ko at sila na umuiwas na pagsimulan pa ng away namin. Subtle gestures like slight nods or small hand movements, alam ko na gustong mangyari ng asawa ko. Iba sa atin, expressive tau, mas friendly. Pag natutuwa yun sa akin, for example I gave him present, aside saying "Arigatou gozaimasu," he also says "Thank you" with a bow, parang appreciation nila din kasi yun."

(I learned Japanese culture more through interactions with Japanese people as well as watching on TV. I express my desires, but once I sense his disinterest, I refrain from repeating them. Even my relatives tried to read his actions to understand him

better and try to avoid things that would cause our disagreements. Simple gestures, I already knew what my husband wanted. If he is so fond of me because I gave him a present, in addition to expressing gratitude with "Arigatou gozaimasu," he also conveys his appreciation by saying "Thank you" while bowing, which reflects his appreciation and gratitude.)

Japanese culture strongly emphasizes subtlety and indirect communication, which reflects its dedication to maintaining harmony.

Mrs. Bee: “Example, tinanong ko siya if gusto niyang sumama sa family reunion namin at pag sumagot siya ng…aahhh na may kasamang long pause, dapat gets ko na yun na ayaw niya, so ako na dapat magsabi kagad na it's ok, I know you're busy. And he will appreciate that na he doesn’t need to tell it directly anymore.”

(If, for example, I asked him if he wanted to come with me to attend our family reunion and I heard him saying “ahhhh or with long pausing…I should be sensitive enough to understand that he doesn’t want to come, so I need to tell him that it’s ok if he can't come since he is busy, and he will appreciate it more if he does not directly answer” “No, I do not want to come”)

However, as a Filipina herself, the researcher knows and understands those nonverbal ways to communicate, like the expressive and lively body language of Filipinas, with lots of smiles, vibrant and expressive facial expressions, and gestures like hugging or touching compared to other Asian countries like Japan. This reflects Filipino cultural values that focus closely on personal connections and warmth. This encourages displays of affection and friendliness and shapes the behavior of Filipinas.

Both the research participants and the researcher are Filipinas who love to use nonverbal communication, such as hugging and kissing family members and close friends. However, this does not apply to all Filipinas, as their backgrounds differ.

Filipino culture emphasizes community or *"bayanihan system"* and personal connections, which are key factors in the warmth and affection that are seen in Filipino interactions. This expressive style of communication reflects the cultural value placed on openness and emotional expression in personal connections among Filipinos. In the same way that these two research participants connect to their husbands.

Acknowledging these differences is critical to maintaining harmony in an international relationship. It is a mutual learning process where a Japanese husband might need to get used to showing affection more openly. In contrast, a Filipina migrant wife, meanwhile, may have to observe and more closely interpret her Japanese husband's subtler and reserved communication style. Adaptation to each other's expression styles may be improved through open communication about non-verbal cues.

Research Question 2: In what ways do cultural and linguistic disparities shape the communication dynamics between Filipino migrant wives and their Japanese husbands, and what impact do these differences have on their marital relationships?

Cultural and Language Disparities

These are the factors that affect the way Filipina migrant wives communicate with their Japanese husbands. Filipina wives mentioned that they must engage in open and honest communication about cultural norms and taboos that pertain to physical affection, sexuality, and privacy, as these aspects may vary between spouses.

The research study identified nine prevalent cultural differences, including: Relationship with Extended Family, Religious Belief, Gender and Marital Roles, Starting a Family/Childrearing, Access to Assets and Finances. Marital Intimacy and Challenges, Foods, Residency, and Influence of Institutions, Laws, and Policies on Sense of Self.

On the other hand, regarding communication and language differences, the research participants mentioned the difficulty in communicating in the Japanese language as a second language to their spouses and in-laws. Therefore, it was hard for them to assert and express their real feelings. Moreover, communicating in verbal and non-verbal ways became more difficult since Japan has a “high context way of communication.” It is where the Filipinas need to be more sensitive around their surrounding and learn to read between the lines most of the time.

Furthermore, the two research participants also mentioned the utilization of media platforms for building (or ruining), and maintaining relationship, and for communication and language learning. The complexities of language fluency and translation challenges and errors in translation also affect the dynamics in marriage since there is no exact meaning or direct translation in the Filipino language or English or in Japanese language.

Cultural Differences

A. Extended Family Relationship (In-Laws): Preconceived Notions or Stereotypes/Prejudices, and Discrimination

Marrying someone from another country with a different culture is also like marrying the entire family. Relationships with in-laws can build and sustain relationships and, at the same time, can ruin one's marriage.

“Ayaw sa akin ng (unang) biyenan ko kasi nagwowork ako sa club at sinira ko daw buhay ng anak nya kaya nakapagasawa ng maaga,” kaya siguro di naging successful pagsasama namin dahil sa pakikialam ng biyenan ko, ibang kultura, saka dahil na rin sa pagkakakaiba ng personality namin” Masyado syang “mazakon” (mama’s boy), ako independent and hard working.” said Mrs. A during the interview. *(My mother-in-law did not like me because I was working at a club and she said I ruined her son's life by getting married early. Maybe that is why our marriage did not last because of my mother-in-law's interference, cultural differences and because of our different personalities. He was too much of a mama’s boy, while I am independent and hard working. said Mrs. A during the interview.)*

According to Mrs. Bee, their relationship faced skepticism initially, from both sides of the family. On her husband's side, Filipinas were viewed negatively as *"Japayuki".* This kind of derogatory word for women is an example of linguistic subordination since language is man-made.

“Pilipina yan di ba? tanong ng pamilya ng asawa ko. Kahit nung first time ako nag-apply ng work ng malaman na pinay ako di na ko interview pinauwi na kagad ako. Usong-uso pa naman ang mga Japayuki dito noon. Ang pangit talaga ng impression

sa mga Filipino that time 80s and 90s. Good thing, my husband travels a lot and we lived abroad for many years so exposed na sa ibang culture husband ko and I did not have to live with my in-laws. But there were few months we lived with my in-laws and they wanted me to wake up early and serve my husband well, usually iniistorbo nila tulog ko, napasok sila sa kwarto namin para pumunta sa altar nila at magdasal nasa kwarto kasi namin yung altar nila."

(She is a Filipina, right? His family asked her husband. When I tried to apply for a job for the very first time, they did not even interview me after they found out I am Filipina. Instead, they just told me to go back home. Japayukis were very troublesome here. The perception of Filipinos during the 80s and 90s was truly disappointing. Fortunately, my husband traveled frequently, and we resided overseas for numerous years, so exposure to other cultures made my communication to my husband easier and I did not have to stay with my in-laws. However, there were a few months when we stayed with my in-laws, and they expected me to wake up early and attend to my husband's needs; often disrupting my sleep by entering our room to access their altar and pray, as it was in our room. This was their way for me to rise and begin with doing household chores.)

Mrs. Bee found it challenging to adapt to life in Japan due to her upbringing with nannies and housemaids, a stark contrast to the absence of household helpers in Japanese culture.

"Pati pagkain na papakain ko sa husband ko chinecheck nila. While on my family side, they still did not know him well saying "Anak di natin alam kung saan nga sa Japan yan nakatira." Saka my father wanted me to live here in the Philippines para malapit sa kanila. My husband even promised that to my father but it did not happen, we lived abroad due to the nature of my husband's job."

(They also inspected the meals I prepared for my husband. On the other hand, my family members did not know him that much, expressing, "My daughter, we are unaware of his whereabouts in Japan." Subsequently, my father suggested that I reside in the Philippines to be near them. Although my husband assured my father that we would live in the Philippines, circumstances led us to live overseas because of his job requirements.)

"From the very beginning, I felt like yung impression sa atin as a third-world country. Lalo yung Japayuki image, na maingay din tayo, hindi pulidong gumawa. Kaya I really wanted to prove that we are more than what they think we are."
(From the onset, I have perceived the impression of us as a third-world country. Especially the Japayuki image, that we are also loud, not skilled at work. Hence, I was eager to show that we are more than what they perceive us to be.)

Mrs. A has stated numerous times that her mother-in-law has advised her son against bringing Mrs. A to family gatherings such as weddings, funerals, graduations, and birthdays. This has deeply upset Mrs. A. "Kinakahiya talaga ako."

(My husband's family is ashamed of me"] Nevertheless, they were always eager to see their grandchildren.)

"Mahal naman nila ang anak namin. ["They love our two children."]. My children were always present in all occasions in their family and other relatives even accepted them." It was only me who they did not approve of because I worked in the bar."

"Yung si daughter, at saka yung time to time na me get together din as family, si daughter lang at yung son ko ang laging bitbit ni ex. Ako nasa bahay lang ako. Umiiyak ako. Yun nga lalo na pag me mga kasal, may namatayan palagi akong naiiwan. Hindi nila ako niyayaya. Kaya talagang umiiyak ako. Nagwawala ako na

parang bakit di ako kasama, parang di ako welcome. Tinanggap ko yun lahat. Umiiyak nga lang ako. Hindi talaga ako tanggap."

(My daughter and son are always brought to family gatherings by my ex. I am always left crying at home because I feel unwelcome. It's hard for me, especially when there are weddings or funerals. I feel so left out and unaccepted.)

Apparent on the researcher's observations during the interview was Mrs. A's harbored feelings of pain, resentment, and animosity towards her mother-in-law. Relationship with extended family might also affect one's relationship.

As the interview progressed, Mrs. A rose from her seat, began pacing and recollecting the memories. She concluded that her second husband was completely different from her first. Mrs. A felt cherished by her present mother-in-law, who regularly sent them gifts and groceries every month.

"Yung ngayon naman mapagmahal sobra. Sobrang mapagmahal, Walang no, always yes. Kahit ano, all over. Pati mga biyenan ko, mga kapatid niya, welcome na welcome ako. Me pa-grocery pa na bigay sa akin mga yun. Regalong damit base sa season. Yung sa ex ko hindi ako welcome, yun ang pinagkaiba. Parang sobrang bonus talaga sa akin ni Lord."

(My husband now is very loving. Extremely loving. No "no," always "yes." He never says "no, even my current in-laws, his siblings, I am very welcome. They even give me monthly groceries. They provide clothing as a gift based on the color of the season. With my ex, I was not welcome, that is the difference. It is like a real bonus from the Lord.)

The researcher asked and clarified whether the reason for Mrs. A's approval from her current in-laws was because she owns now a delivery or forwarding service

and due to her current employment in a factory, as opposed to her previous work at the club. Mrs. A maintained that her ex-mother-in-law did not approve of her, despite her success later in life as a businesswoman and her employment in the factory.

Overview and Analysis: Cultural Disparities with Extended Family Relationship (In-Laws)

As a Filipina herself and having lived in Japan for almost 20 years, the researcher has observed the two cultures. The standards and expectations set by Japanese society, particularly in honoring and respecting its elderly, are strictly and formally most important. They even have a *sempai* (senior)-*kohai* (junior) relationship. Conversely, Filipino families are known for their warm and close-knit relationships, and their communication style is generally direct and open, and with a focus on fostering emotional connections such as sharing feelings.

Language Skills and Fluency

When the Filipina migrant wife and her Japanese husband interact with each other's families, they may encounter communication challenges. Misinterpretations or conflicts in expressing subtler feelings or opinions may be a result, especially if there is no shared language. Mastering a language or being good at it is very important since it goes hand in hand in resolving conflicts. Being fluent helps each other to communicate better, which can really smooth out misunderstandings and disagreement.

Conflict Resolution

The research participants, as Filipinas, tend to be more honest and straightforward in sharing their worries with their Japanese spouse. People in Japan often like to communicate in a way that is not too direct. They might try to avoid arguments by hinting at problems or using body language instead of saying things outright—for example, remaining quiet and keeping away. While they may appear to be agreeable through smiles and nods, they may internally disagree with your perspective.

Mrs A: “Pag alam niya na galit ako, tahimik syan minsan nalayo siya at pag alam niya na ok na ako saka siya lalapit, me itatanong kunwari…ganun din ako sa kanya, pag siya mainit ang ulo, tahimik ako, minsan naman nagkakatawanan na lang kami, dahil ang tahimik naming pareho Dinadaan na lang namin sa tawa.”
(He kept quiet when he knew I was mad, and stayed away from me. Once he knows I am ok, he will come and pretend to ask something. Same with me: if I know he is mad, I just stay cool. Sometimes we take it lightly; we just both laugh because we are so quiet.)

Japanese culture, additionally, assumes the extended family will have a more formal social role and less daily interactions. Important in this context are honoring boundaries and hierarchical roles and maintaining traditions. Meanwhile, in Filipino culture, in-laws typically have greater participation, especially in decision-making. Both research participants demonstrated the influence of cultural and linguistic disparities in communication dynamics between Filipino migrant wives and their Japanese husbands. The former often faced negative stereotypes and prejudices from the

Japanese in-laws. Both participants, for example, reported being subjected to derogatory terms like *“Japayuki.”* Moreover, Mrs. Bee also experienced cultural stereotypes and had difficulties securing employment due to her nationality.

According to intercultural communication theory, these cultural differences lead to misunderstandings and conflicts. Both research participants experienced marital challenges, particularly in terms of cultural and language barriers. The culture of Japan tends to value formality and conventional gender roles. However, in the Philippines, open communication and very close kinship are valued most.

For instance, both married Japanese "*chonan,"* (firstborn sons), who hold significant duties within the family. This is why their husbands received better treatment than their siblings and acted more domineering. Analyzing the situation through a feminist communication theory reveals that the experiences of these Filipina migrant wives illustrate significant power imbalance and societal expectations. Differences in personalities were also mentioned by one participant that led to their divorce. It means that differences in personalities can affect marital effective communication satisfaction. In Mrs. A’s case, she has a more independent personality compared to her first spouse, whom she described as a “mama’s boy” or *mazakon* in Japanese. Moreover, Filipino migrant wives often bear additional burden due to homesickness, or being away from their home country and from the support of their family.

Further, Filipino migrant wives’ experiences of prejudice, negative stereotypes, and social expectations exemplify the symbolic meanings associated with their original cultural identities and their impact on interactions with their in-laws. Mrs. A’s feelings of being unwelcome, as well as Mrs. Bee’s efforts to prove her worth, highlight how these symbolic interactions shape their experiences and self-perceptions.

B. Religion

According to Mrs. Bee, “we both share the Catholic faith even prior to entering into a relationship.” It somehow helped their relationship to grow and understand each other better through a common religious belief. They spent more time together when they went to church every Sunday, and attended English mass, especially when they still lived in Indonesia and America. During Christmas season they sent gifts as donations to the Church, and they spent time shopping for the presents, wrapping and giving them away during Christmas.

Mrs. A stated that religion made her more submissive due to familiarity with Bible verses. She also became more active in church services and became a more forgiving person because of their shared faith. She believed that religion also played a crucial role in their marital relationship, especially with her current husband since they are both Catholic, unlike her first husband who did not practice religion.

Additionally, their shared faith has allowed them to form friendships within the Filipino community, where they actively participate in church services.

Mrs. A: “Nagpepray kami pati yung mga apo ko (bago kumain). Sasabihin pa minsan sa akin ng asawa ko, “pray.” Siya mismo kahit before work. Nagstart kaming magsimba magkasama noon sa US, minsan Saturday, Easter Sunday, pag me lakad kami.”

(We pray, including my grandchildren, before eating. Sometimes, my husband reminds me to "pray." He does so before work. We started attending church together in the US, sometimes on Saturdays, Easter Sunday, or when we have plans.)

For Mrs. Bee and Mrs. A, their shared Catholic faith facilitated a smoother integration of their Japanese husbands into Filipino culture.

C. Conventional Roles

Since both participants were raised in households where their mother took care of the house, and their father worked, being a homemaker has never been an issue for them. They both believed that staying at home and taking care of the house were the right things to do, and they enjoyed doing these tasks.

According to Mrs. A's narrative: “Oo naman gusto ko mga gawaing ganun. Syempre babae ka. Yung sa akin kasi ang nagpupukpok yung lalaki, lalaking trabaho Hindi ko ginagawa yung mga gawain na me turnilyo. Walang problema sa akin ang maglinis, mamalantsa...walang problema.”

(Certainly, I enjoy such activities. Naturally, as a woman, I perceive that tasks involving hammering are typically associated with men. I do not engage in activities that require the use of screws. However, I have no issues with cleaning or ironing clothes; those tasks do not pose any difficulty or problems.)

However, according to Mrs. Bee: “Eh napunta ako sa yun ngang stereotype na talagang ang mga Hapon is like that, yung hindi mo mararamdaman na siya yung magprepare ng food for you. Ito yung conservative Japanese huh, na parang “ay nagtatatrabaho din ako, nakalimutan ko na ba aside from the whole house sya

nagaasikaso, nagtatatrabaho pa ng full time? Parang naging “atarimae,” common sense, na parang ordinary na nagtatatrabaho na ako tapos buong bahay akin pa. Lahat ng kailangan niya from his interview to pagedit ng mga documents niya for foreigners, natulong ako eh, pati paglinis ng kotse, katulong ako, pero pagdating sa trabaho ko, wala siyang ginagawa dito. Wala talagang division of labor. Wala talaga. Ako lahat pati pag-aasikaso dito sa aso namin.”

(I married a very conservative Japanese man, whom you will not expect him to prepare food for you. It is as if the conservative Japanese mindset suggests that one partner, typically, the woman, is expected to manage all household tasks while also maintaining a full-time job. There is a complete absence of a division of labor; I am solely responsible for all aspects of our household, including caring for our dog.)

When they began working, their spouses informed them that even if they had permission to work, they still needed to ensure they could take care of their husbands and take the household chores first. They needed to compromise.

Mrs. A: Sabi nya (current husband), “Pwede ka magtrabaho basta asikasuhin mo yung pagkain ko, bahay natin.” Yung isa naman (ex-husband), “Pag namamalengke kami, ang bigat-bigat, parang pinababayaan nya na lang ako. Kasi ganun daw kultura ng Japan. Pag namalengke ang mga nanay, walang tutulong sayo, Ikaw lang. Yung anak mo bitbit mo, lahat! Pinapaano nya sa akin na ganun kultura ng Japan na pinapababayaan nya ako. Trying to tell me na matuto ako!

(According to her current husband, she can work as long as she takes care of his meals and their home. The other one (my ex-husband) "When we go to the market, I have to carry everything, it feels so heavy, he's not helping me, just leaving me to do all the work. It seems he wants to show me that is the culture in Japan. It's like when

mothers go to the market, no one helps them, just you. You carry your child, everything! He is trying to make me believe that the Japanese culture! Trying to tell me to learn!)

In Mrs. Bee's case, her husband preferred separate bedrooms for privacy reasons and uninterrupted sleep—as a respect to the partner, not disturbing his/her sleep if one needs to use the restroom, or gets up early for work. Despite this, Mrs. Bee disagreed and asserted that such sleeping arrangements were not typical in the Philippines. She explained that in the Philippines, the husband and wife should sleep together in the same room and on the same bed. At that time, she was already crying while explaining her culture to her husband, so they eventually compromised. From then on, they shared a room and a bed, but her spouse suggested that they acquire two larger beds so he could have more space. Again, they needed to compromise. One important thing to consider in an international marriage is to compromise and be culturally sensitive.

"Nung nagplan sya ng bahay namin, nakita ko bakit merong two master's bedroom, nagtaka pa sya. Bakit daw? Gusto ko ba daw na magkasama kami?"
(When my husband was planning our house, I noticed there were two master bedrooms in his drawing. He was even surprised and asked me, "Why is that? Do you want us to be together?)

"Marami sa mga kaibigan ko at kakilala na me asawang Hapon ay ganun din ang arrangement nila, pero sa akin, I tried to explain our culture, na ganun ba na papasok ako sa bedroom ng dad and mom ko nun na mgakayapos sila sa kama."
(Many of my friends and acquaintances married to Japanese have the same setup, but I tried to explain our culture to my husband. I told him it was normal for me to walk

into my parents' bedroom and see them in one bedroom while they were hugging in bed.)

Here, Mrs. Bee's husband tried to actively listen to her, and Mrs. Bee showed that she was upset and tried to compromise by sharing her culture and using some emotional aspects, such as crying and speaking slowly and non-aggressively, to assert herself to her husband.

Meanwhile, Mrs. A's ex-husband often displayed cold and ungentlemanly behavior. These are characteristics often associated with a traditional, patriarchal Japanese man. Some examples of such behavior include prioritizing himself over Mrs. A, failing to help her carry shopping bags, or not doing his part in household chores.

However, her present spouse occasionally assisted her in the kitchen, particularly when she was already exhausted or unwell. He also helped her dispose of the trash and cleaned the bathroom.

"Is it because your current husband has more experience living and working abroad?" the researcher questioned. "Maybe, because he was already exposed to American culture," she replied. She added that her second husband, however, is a genuinely respectful gentleman, and they grew from their second marriage. Their acknowledgement of each other's cultural backgrounds helped greatly in communicating effectively.

Mrs. A went on to describe that her present husband is different from both her and her former husband, whom she characterized as abusive, impulsive, lazy, and highly dependent on her mother-in-law. Her former husband represents a complete contrast to her as well. They married very young then (in their early 20s). Meanwhile, she met her current husband when they were already both in their 40s, and that both

had previously experienced failed marriages. In addition, she described the personality of her current husband as different—he is hardworking and self-sufficient.

Spouses with similar personality traits, on the other hand, are found to experience more harmonious relationships and better marriage quality (Lewis & Yoneda, 2021). The converse was evident in Mrs. A's narrative, in that the likelihood of conflict grew with increased differences in personality and values between spouses.

In both cases, their spouses also have expectations of gender roles. Mrs. Bee added that her husband is a traditional Japanese man who expects her to put their home and well-being first before anything else. She needed to serve her husband and complete all the housework before leaving for work.

Despite the researcher's multiple invitations to meet, Mrs. Bee consistently declined, particularly when her husband was present. Upon reviewing her Facebook profile, the researcher did not find any photos of Mrs. Bee with her husband, possibly reflecting preference for privacy. In contrast, Mrs. A frequently shared photos of her activities and trips with her second husband, whom she described as supportive and open-minded. This contrasted with her first husband's traditional patriarchal attitudes, which, like Mrs. Bee's husband, did not involve in household responsibilities.

Traditional gender roles lead to significant communication problems. The cultural norms that Filipino migrant wives encounter daily have significant differences from the norms they grew up with. For instance, Mrs. Bee's husband embodies traditional Japanese gender roles, which affect his beliefs on how home duties and responsibilities should be handled. With this in mind, negotiation and compromise are often prerequisites for effective communication between spouses. When Mrs. Bee and

her husband finally agreed on their sleeping arrangements, it was clear how staying flexible and understanding each other's cultures is important to assuage conflict.

D. Starting a Family / Child-Rearing

There was also a time when Mrs. Bee already wanted to have a child, but her Japanese husband had no desire to procreate. For him, it was expensive to raise children in Japan, and he took much responsibility for it. Later, her husband expressed his desire to have kids, but he never followed through, especially regarding doctor's appointments. So, Mrs. Bee felt he was not truly interested in having kids. She, therefore, stopped insisting. Although her husband was not a hands-on fur parent, they agreed to take care of the dogs.

On the other hand, although Mrs. A's first husband never contributed in raising their children, she witnessed how affectionate her second husband was toward her grandchildren (the children of her children from her previous marriage). Despite having no children of their own, she became more comfortable talking to her second husband than she had been with her first.

However, Mrs. A could not forget that there was a time that, since her ex-mother-in-law did not like her, her first daughter was not allowed to be included in their family registry.

"Ayaw ng parents ni ex-husband sa akin kaya ayaw din niyang i-register yung name ng baby namin sa "koseki" nila kasi nagaalinlangan sila if anak ba nya daw talaga yun. Magkasama kami pero di madalas umuwi sa akin si ex-husband kaya ayun

nagtitinda ako ng mga damit na pang-club at alahas dun ako kumukuha ng pang diaper ng anak ko. Naghirap talaga ako noon. Madalas kaming iwan ng ex-husband ko, at many times ko syang pinapatawad."

(The parents of my ex-husband disapprove of me, which has led him to hesitate in registering our child's name in their family registry, or "koseki," due to their doubts regarding his paternity. Although we live together, he does not frequently return home, prompting me to sell clubwear and jewelry to support our child's diaper needs. During that period, I faced significant hardships. My ex-husband often abandoned us, and I found myself forgiving him on numerous occasions.)

Mrs. Bee: "It is like this, yung husband ko talaga does not want to have children. I did not know about that kasi hindi naman niya na sinasabi sa akin. Syempre Sagrado tayong Catholic and everything so para sa atin children are blessings. My mother has twelve siblings. Then noong kasal na kami doon ko narealize yung mga kasama niyang friends dini-discourage siya na magkaanak. Kapag daw nagkababy maingay or something, gusto mo na patayin kasi iyak ng iyak sa gabi. So, dito kasi choice talaga yun not to have children in Japan. Hindi yun parang jina-judge or whatever parang sa atin na hindi magkaanak yan or kailan ba magkaka-anak, palaging ganun. Dito kasi choice yun. So, yung ang choice nya, but it was not mine. Pero nung time na gusto ko, humigi ako sa kanya miski isa, pero dun ko nalaman na may problema ako na, I would have difficult times having a child. Pwede naman pero hindi kasi sya super supportive ayaw pumunta ng hospital, madami kasing steps yun and kasi nga in the first place ayaw nya talaga. Ayaw din nya ng mga IVF kasi feeling daw niya parang hindi natural and all those things."

(My husband truly does not want to have children. He never mentioned it to me before. As devout Catholics, we believe that children are blessings. My mother has twelve siblings. It was only after we got married that I realized his friends were discouraging him from having kids. They said that if we had a baby, it would be noisy and we would want to kill it because it would cry all night. In Japan, it is a choice not to have children. It is not judged like in our culture where not having kids is questioned. It is a choice here. That was his choice, but not mine. When I wanted to have a child, I asked him for just one child, but that is when I found out that I had fertility issues. It was possible, but he was not very supportive. He did not want to go to the hospital, as there were many steps involved, and he did not want a child in the first place. He also did not want to try IVF because he felt it was unnatural.)

"Meron din namang artificial insemination lang and all and hindi naman kailangan IVF kagad kasi yung rate ng success non is really very low. So magastos kasi you have to try and try and try. So, yun man lang na artificial insemination na kailangan lang makarating yung sperm sa'yo, para mafertilized yung egg, hindi ko nagawa yung process na yun kasi everytime I go to the clinic kasama ko ate ko kasi hindi nga sya masyadong cooperative. Bata pa kasi siya noon and in his mind ayaw niya. Ayaw talaga nya ng anak noon."

(There is also the option of artificial insemination alone, without the need for immediate IVF, as the success rate of the latter is significantly low. It can be costly as multiple attempts may be required. Therefore, even just artificial insemination, where the sperm needs to reach the egg for fertilization, I did not pursue it anymore since my sister accompanied me to the clinic each time instead of my husband, and my husband was

not very cooperative. He was still young back then and, in his mind, he did not want it. He really did not want a child at that time.)

It is evident from this situation that despite Mrs. Bee's desire to have a child, her husband remained firm in his decision not to have one. She remained voiceless in this situation.

Overview and Analysis: Starting a Family / Child-Rearing

The narratives showed the communication challenges and tensions in the marriages of Filipino migrant wives and their Japanese husbands, especially around raising children and family life. Mrs. Bee struggled with her Japanese husband, who was against having kids because he thought it would be too difficult and costly. As a Christian, Mrs. Bee believed that having a family is about raising children. This conflicted with his husband, who does not want to have kids and does not support her.

The narratives reflected her disappointment with his refusal to consult the doctor or consider fertility options, making her feel unheard in their relationship. It was unfortunate for Mrs. Bee, for she had never discussed this matter before their marriage, which she thought was very important. She thought that open communication should start as early as possible in their relationship.

In the case of Mrs. A, her second Japanese husband supported her in raising her grandchildren and was very hands-on with them. She also remembered her experience with her first Japanese husband and her in-laws. They first refused to register their children in the *"koseki,"* or the Japanese family registry, an important way of acknowledging one's child as legitimate. However, after a few years, her first

husband and in-laws finally accepted and registered their children. This kind of cultural clash leads to communication issues and emotional distress. When evaluated through feminist theory, Mrs. Bee's situation, in which she had limited control over whether she would bear children, shows how gender inequality and power struggle can manifest in a marriage. Due to their contrasting perspectives, the couple faced communication issues, and her struggle between assimilation and acculturation is evident. While Mrs. Bee attempted to assimilate and align herself with her husband's expectations, it was not without emotional and cultural challenges.

E. Access to Assets / Finances

When Mrs. Bee started working, her husband expected her to contribute to all their expenses. Before, as a homemaker, her husband only gave her twenty thousand yen (more or less eight thousand Philippine pesos) for their monthly groceries and her allowance. However, after she got a job, her spouse stopped giving her an allowance and wanted her to help with grocery shopping, paying water and electric bills, and other household expenses. She became more assertive now that she was able to contribute something to the household. She can now buy and eat foods that she likes without checking the price and telling his husband, unlike before.

(Upon reaching financial stability, my husband wanted me to pay electricity and water bills. As soon as I found employment, I started contributing to the expenses for water and electricity. However, my husband continued to handle everything from insurance to telephone bills and other expenses. He did request that I take responsibility for the water and electricity bills, but other than that, I had full control over my finances.)

According to Mrs. Bee, they both know how much each other's salary is, but they have never touched each other's finances.

"When we got married, wala akong knowledge of may pera ba kami? Pera ba namin yun? Kasi everything is given to me. Binibigyan lang ako ng allowance every month to buy food or kung ano kailangan bilhin sa bahay. Nahahawakan ko ang passbook, even yung hanko (carved stamp) pero di ko naiintindihan at saka online banking naman. Hindi ako yung naghawak nun, when it comes to finances, it was always him. Yung ibang kakilala ko na Pinay nagasawa ng Hapon is ganun din. Pero yung mga properties and everything. Alam ko din lahat yun. Halimbawa bumili sya ng lote sa Pinas sa akin nya ipapangalan bawal kasi sya bumili at foreigner sya. Yung lupa din namin sa USA ganun din nasa name ko at binabayaran ko yung taxes. I do not know why sa akin naka name. Pero nasa USA kasi mga sisters ko. Yung passbook nya pwede kong hawakan but I never had any reason to touch it or hindi ako nag demand because it was never called for. Di ako taga hawak din pero kasi di pa ako sanay sa denomination ng yen, pati yung gaano kamahal ang mga bilihin. He always asking me if magkano ang magagastos ko sa isang araw. "

(Upon our marriage, I had no knowledge of whether we had money or not. Was that our money? Because everything was given to me. I was just given an allowance every month to buy food or whatever needed to be purchased for the house. I held the passbook, even the hanko (carved stamp), but I did not understand it, and there was also online banking. I did not handle that, when it came to finances, it was always him. Some other Filipinas I know who married Japanese men are the same. But when it comes to properties and everything, I also know all of that. For example, if he buys land in the Philippines, he cannot put it in his name because he is a foreigner, so he

puts it in my name. The land we have in the USA is also in my name, and I pay the taxes. I do not know why it is in my name. But my sisters are in the USA. I can hold his passbook, but I never had any reason to touch it or demand it because it was never called for. I am not the one who handles it, but I am not used to the denomination of yen or how expensive things are. He always asks me how much I will spend in a day.)

"Talagang in every decision he makes, talagang nakikinig siya sa akin, pero pinapakinggan lang nya yung opinion mo pero siya ang nagmemake ng decisions in everything. Hindi naman ako waldas sa pera pero maluwag ako sa pera. Ah gusto mo ng ganitong pagkain? O sige bibilhan kita, mga ganun, bibili ako. Tapos pag nalaman nya, Binili mo to? Magkano to? Ganito kamahal binili mo? Wala lang sa akin kasi I am more on quality, di baleng mahal. Sya laging nakaabang sa sale. Sa mga coupon. Pag nalaman niya kung magkano at mahal yung pagkain, magagalit sya pero nageenjoy niya kasi masarap. Baligtad din kami personality."

(He truly listens to me in every decision he makes, but he only hears your opinion while he is the one making decisions in everything. I am not extravagant with money, but I am generous with it. Oh, you want this kind of food? Alright, I will buy it for you, things like that, I will purchase. Then when he finds out, did you buy this? How much is this? You bought it for this much? It does not matter to me because I am more focused on quality, regardless of the price. He is always on the lookout for sales. For coupons. When he finds out how expensive the food is, he will get angry but enjoys it because it is delicious. Our personalities are also opposite.)

On the other hand, Mrs. A claimed that her ex-husband was never a good provider, she continued to work at the club during that time to support their two kids.

She was even urged to provide money to her ex-husband to support his vices. She left her marriage because she knew her ex-husband was constantly lying and having extramarital affairs with different women, whether with Japanese women or with Filipinas working at other nightclubs.

This is the exact opposite of her current husband, whom she characterized as responsible, faithful, and a good provider. Even though she has been making her own money from working in the factory, running a delivery *"balik-bayan"* box or forwarding business, her current husband nonetheless still provides all the household expenditures, and still gives her allowances for their expenses.

Speaking of properties, Mrs. A and her present husband have properties in the Philippines, including apartments and a forwarding business which are all under Mrs. A's name.

On the other hand, Mrs. Bee also owns properties in the Philippines and the United States, including houses and lots, which, similar to Mrs. A's properties, were all registered in her name. Both Mrs. Bee and Mrs. A acquired these properties and assets in accordance with their respective husbands' decisions. Moreover, each of them maintained their own savings account. Mrs. Bee had the ability to check her husband's account if she wished, but she chose not to do so, and her husband likewise did not interfere with her savings.

The researcher learned from her Japanese female acquaintances and colleagues that it is customary for Japanese husbands to hand over their entire salary to their Japanese wives, who then manage household finances and provide a monthly allowance to their husbands. Nevertheless, both Filipina participants expressed to the researcher their lack of interest in such an arrangement, citing difficulties with language barriers in paying house rent and other expenses. Additionally, they noted

that their husbands only provided them with monthly allowance or pocket money. Therefore, the researcher thought of a potential area for future research about whether the dynamic would be changed in the case of well-educated Filipinas with advanced degrees who are fluent in Japanese and are able to manage their finances.

Overview and Analysis: Access to Assets / Finances

Filipino migrant wives often deal with cultural and financial issues shaped by their Japanese husbands. In Japan, it is common for the Japanese wife to manage the household money while the husband gives her his entire paycheck. However, language differences and varying financial views can cause Filipina migrant wives to let their Japanese husbands take care of their finances. Still, cultural differences affect how financial decisions are made. For example, Mrs. Bee shows financial contributions can enhance independence and communication. This gap can impact how they manage money and their happiness in their marriage.

Feminist theory shows how gender roles and power dynamics affect financial choices. Filipino wives may end up in traditional roles, like Mrs. Bee, whose husband controls most financial matters. Even though they contribute financially, the husbands still hold the main power, reflecting traditional patriarchal views in both cultures.

Financial management is made more effective through good communication. When Mrs. Bee was restricted from buying expensive food she wanted to buy, it caused tension in her marriage. Improvements happened when she started to contribute to the household income by working.

Meanwhile, for Mrs. A, the meaning of financial control changed from a source of conflict in her previous marriage to a perceived sign of respect and stability in her current relationship.

Filipino migrant wives may encounter difficulties in acculturation, primarily due to language obstacles and differing customs regarding financial management.

F. Intimacy in Marriage between Japanese Husband and Filipino Migrant Wife

Both Filipina participants mentioned cultural differences when it comes to showing affection. The Japanese do not show affection openly in their choice of words and in public setting.

However, Mrs. A had no problem displaying affection towards her husband and children. She said that because of her former job as an entertainer, she did not pay much attention to what others thought, even when other people were present. She did not notice any discomfort from her ex-husband or current husband. She believed it was probably because of her lighthearted approach to showing affection, since she is a very humorous person. Besides, one should possess such characteristics if she is an entertainer. She also uses humor to get something or assert herself to her husband. They both communicate verbally and non-verbally to get intimate. Her husband sometimes humorously asks her in English but with a Japanese accent.

"Are you ready, Baby?" and I will humorously say "Hai" *(yes in Japanese.)* Mr. *** *(using a new naughty Japanese word that I learned)* and that's start of our "loving-loving" *(making love)* alam mo na yun." *(you know what I mean)* or we will just use eye contact and start becoming touchy."

On the other hand, Mrs. Bee's husband is not a fan of public displays of affection because he believes they go against Japanese culture and in the way he was raised in his family.

Initially, he wanted separate rooms and beds for privacy and convenience, but they eventually reached a compromise.

“Ang disadvantage is more on culture, kasi lumaki ako na ang parents ko natutulog sa iisang bed, pagpapasok ka sa room nila, nakayakap yung daddy mo, sa mommy mo. Kaya nung gumagawa kami ng plan ng magiging bahay ng asawa ko, nung nagdo drawing sya, dalawang kama nasa master’s bedroom. I really clearly remember it so I asked him. Bakit dalawa yung kama? Tapos sabi nya, Bakit gusto mo bang magkasama sa kama? Edi culture shocked na naman sa akin yun. Lumaki ako na nasa iisang kama ang parents ko, ganun naman talaga kasi american oriented tayo. Sa Japan pala kasi mine-maintain yung identity ng bawat isa, maski me asawa na…napakabilis kasi mga activities in a day and work lalo na sa mga lalaki, mga gabi na umuuwi puro trabaho so kailangang me space yung babae na pwedeng magpahinga on her own. Nakita ko din noon sa parents nya na magkahiwalay ang bed sa room nila. So, actually, di ako pumayag sa ganun. Umiyak ako noon sabi ko ayoko ng ganyan. Hindi ako nagasawa ng ganyan lang na me kasamang roommate. Yun pala ang reason nya for privacy, dahil sa paghilik, minsan nagge game sya, pag winter nangaagaw sya ng kumot so dun ko narealize na di talaga sya family oriented. It is more of convenience sa kanila. Kailangang me space for privacy sa kanila so both can rest when they want to…so now dalawa kama namin pero magkadikit ang kama namin pero hiwalay unan at kumot so yun ang compromise for me, na I will never live with my husband in a room na hiwalay ang kama. Pati yung friend ko sa S*** na me

asawa ding Hapon ganun din sila talagang ganun pala sa kanila. Minsan nga me mga cases na hiwalay pa talaga ng room totally different room and hindi issue yun sa kanila. Sa atin issue na talaga yun kasi nga pinalaki ako sa di ganun. Sa kanila consideration yun sa asawa mo. Kailangang nakakapagrest din yung isa. Ngayon ok na ako sa ganun may privacy ka at may sarili kang space."

*(The disadvantage lies more in culture, as I grew up with my parents sleeping in the same bed. When you enter their room, your dad is hugging your mom. So, when my husband and I were planning our future house, and he was drawing, he included two beds in the master bedroom. I vividly remember this, so I asked him why there were two beds. He replied, "Do you want to sleep together in one bed?" That culture shock hit me again. I grew up with my parents sharing a bed, as we are American-oriented. In Japan, they maintain the identity of everyone, even if they are married. The activities in a day and work are very fast-paced, especially for men, who come home late at night after work, so women need their own space to rest. I also noticed that his parents had separate beds in their room. I disagreed with that. I cried and said I did not want that. I did not marry to have a roommate. That was his reason for privacy, because of snoring. Sometimes, he played games, and during winter, he hogged the blanket. That is when I realized that he could have been more family-oriented. It was more about convenience for them. They needed space for privacy so both could rest when they wanted to. So now we have two beds, but they are close together, with separate pillows and blankets. That was the compromise for me, that I would never live with my husband in a room where the beds are separate. Even my friend in S***, who is married to a Japanese man, has the same setup. That is how it is for them. Sometimes, there are cases where they have separate rooms, and that is not an issue for them. It*

is a real issue for us because I was not raised that way. For them, it is a consideration for your spouse. Both need to be able to rest. Now I am okay with that - you have your privacy and your own space.)

Moreover, Mrs. Bee occasionally resorts to non-verbal cues when she desires intimacy but refrains from asserting herself if her husband is busy or tired. This demonstrates her willingness to make sacrifices. Again, it was intentional for her not to speak up since she is willing to make sacrifices to make their relationship last.

Overview and Analysis of Mrs. A and Mrs. B's Narratives Regarding Marriage Intimacy between Japanese Husband and Filipino Migrant Wife

Mrs. A and Mrs. Bee, both from the Philippines, have very different perspectives on intimacy in marriage relative to their husbands. Mrs. A, previously an entertainer, is more at ease with showing affection in public. She adjusts her actions to match what her husband likes, often using humor to help bridge their cultural differences. Mrs. Bee, on the other hand, is experiencing stronger cultural conflicts. This includes expressing affection both in private and public, since her husband has a preference for maintaining personal space. The couple even slept in separate beds; this initially surprised Mrs. Bee. Later, she understood it as part of what makes their marriage work. Mrs. A and Mrs. Bee's experiences illustrate how cultural differences can impact their views on marriage, especially in an international setting. One participant uses both verbal and nonverbal cues to communicate, while the other participant uses more nonverbal cues to get intimate with their husbands.

G. Food

Both participants love trying food from different cultures because of their experiences in other countries. They have also created their own special recipes by combining Japanese and Filipino ingredients. On special occasions, such as birthdays, both participants said that they would always prepare a delightful combination of Japanese and Filipino cuisine.

Moreover, they use chopsticks for Japanese dishes and a spoon and fork for Western cuisine. Mrs. A and her husband both love using their bare hands when indulging in Filipino cuisine. However, Mrs. Bee's husband permits her to eat with her bare hands, but she never anticipated him doing the same.

“Natutuwa asawa ko kapag bumubili sya ng crabs at nagkakamay ako. Accepted naman nya. Madalas kong ginagawa yun pag wala sya kasi hindi rin naman nya ginagawa ang ginagawa ko kaya pati sa pagkain namin, tsaka ako nagluluto ng Filipino food pag wala sya, madalas lutong Hapon talaga din niluluto ko sa kanya. But once in a while he likes eating chicken adobo or sinigang na baboy or lugaw mahilig sya sa lugaw or arroz caldo sa atin na me manok, atay and balunbalunan.”
(My spouse is delighted when he buys crabs and I eat with my bare hands. He accepts it. I often do that when he is not around because he does not do what I do, so even in our meals, and I cook Filipino food when he is not around, I usually cook Japanese dishes for him. But every now and then, he enjoys having chicken adobo or sinigang for a meal. He particularly likes porridge or chicken with arroz caldo with liver and chicken gizzard.)

“Pag New Year dito ako ang gumagawa ng osechi or ozoni may sarili akong recipe na original kasi for every household me original na ozoni na niluluto, so meron ako nun para sa aming dalawa. “

(During New Year's, I am the one who prepares osechi or ozoni here. I have my own original recipe because every household has its own original way of cooking ozoni, so I have one for the two of us.)

Mrs. A's two husbands did not exhibit the same level of attention to detail in food preparation as Mrs. Bee's husband. For instance, Mrs. Bee was content to consume Japanese food purchased from the mall in its plastic container, whereas her husband insisted on transferring the food to a plate before eating and refused to eat directly from the plastic container. Mrs. Bee’s husband also had a dislike for consuming leftovers or having repetitive meals for both lunch and dinner. Mrs. Bee's husband also expressed disapproval of her inclination to purchase expensive food items at the mall, citing it as impractical. Nevertheless, this perception changed when she began using her own funds to pay for their meals.

According to Mrs. A, Japanese people are polite especially in eating. “Madisiplina sila, lalo na sa ano nila sa pag-galang. Like sa pagkain may *“Itadakimasu”* sila, pagkatapos kumain me *“gochisousama”* sila. Pero sa atin okay lang din naman, minsan me mga nagdarasal, minsan wala.

(They exhibit a strong sense of discipline, particularly in their expressions of respect. For instance, before meals, they always say itadakimasu or (thank you for the meal) and after eating, they express gratitude with "gochisousama (deshita)." In contrast, our practices are more varied; sometimes we pray before meals, while at other times, we do not.)

This is the Japanese way of being grateful and appreciative for all the blessings they received and be thankful to all the people who prepared their food, from the farmers or producers, to those who cooked the food, and to the mother earth as well. They do it by clasping their hands together in front of them and bowing.

Overview and Analysis of Mrs. A and Mrs. B's Narratives Regarding Food

Mrs. Bee adapts by preparing traditional Japanese meals and modifying her food purchasing habits to align with her husband's expectations. However, Mrs. A combined both culture of Japan and Philippines in preparing and cooking their meals.

Both Japanese and Filipino cultures are leveraged when Mrs. A is preparing and cooking their meals. It is clear, in Mrs. A and Mrs. Bee's narratives, how important understanding and addressing cultural differences are when it comes to food habits.

As the Intercultural Communication Theory explains, an individual's cultural background has an impact on their behavior and expectations towards food. Mrs. A is able to mix different cultural practices, while Mrs. Bee's husband prefers traditional Japanese food customs. This difference highlights the negotiation that happens in intercultural relationships.

Their quotes also reveal a power struggle where Mrs. Bee's husband has strong opinions about how food should be presented and eaten, which creates some initial conflict. Mrs. Bee's readiness to change her shopping and cooking habits shows how they negotiate gender roles and expectations in their marriage within their cultural setting.

Mrs. A and Mrs. Bee's communication on food with their husbands, including compromises and adjustments, is highlighted in the narratives. Mrs. Bee's husband, for example, prefers formal food presentations and dislikes leftovers. The latter causes a communication issue; Mrs. Bee addresses this by altering her food preparation. Different eating methods, like chopsticks or forks, show understanding and respect for cultural values. Mrs. A and Mrs. Bee's eating habits show their efforts to blend and honor both Filipino and Japanese cultures. Changing recipes and how food is presented shows how they negotiate cultural symbols in their relationships. Food preparation and how it was served showed cultural and language differences and needs communication between husband and wife in an international marriage. Filipinas need to blend their own traditions to Japanese culture.

H. Residency

Both participants mentioned how residency has been discussed throughout the relationship. During the early years of their marriage, he also relied heavily on his mother because he was still attending university and was unemployed. Mrs. A herself preferred to reside in Japan, partly because she believed that raising their children in an environment involving three languages could be confusing for them, besides there were wider array of opportunities present in Japan as opposed to the Philippines. Life, for them, is better in Japan.

For Mrs. Bee, moving and living in different countries for the first (10) ten years of marriage required communicating in English, Indonesian-Bahasa, Tagalog-English,

and Japanese languages. She learned it would be easier for her husband to understand her feelings or it would be easier to negotiate with her husband if she would communicate with him in Japanese rather than in English or in other languages. However, she learned that her husband could easily understand if she was mad when she already spoke in straight English, this way her husband tried to take her seriously especially if she will cry or remain silent when mad.

Both participants were receptive to the notion of relocating to a different country or to the country of their husbands to explore new cultural experiences, opportunities, and to be in proximity to their families. Both also noted that due to their husbands' experience of working and living abroad, communication with them is easier compared to a typical Japanese man who has never had such experiences of living and working abroad.

In Mrs. Bee's case, her husband had previously promised his dad that they would be staying in the Philippines. He later, however, did not fulfill the promise. Mrs. Bee suggested that as a compromise to living in Japan, he will let her come home to the Philippines every year.

"So, every year talagang umuuwi ako. Nag-pandemic lang kaya hindi. "
(I make it a point to go home every year. I was only unable to do so because of the pandemic.)

Overview and Analysis of Mrs. A and Mrs. B's Narratives Regarding Residency

It is evident in the quote how difficult it is for Filipino migrant wives to adjust to their intercultural marriages in relation to their complex cultural differences, particularly

on the language. These challenges influence both their choice of residence and communication practices.

Mrs. A chose to remain in Japan to pursue better opportunities and minimize linguistic confusion for her children. Similarly, Mrs. Bee, who has lived in several countries, found that communicating in Japanese helped her husband understand her better. Although her husband had failed to fulfill his promise to his father to remain in the Philippines, she was able to negotiate a compromise by arranging yearly visits back home.

Symbolic interactionism, which studies the meanings people ascribe to certain interactions, may be used to analyze the two women's communication styles and choices of residential areas. In Mrs. Bee's case, a deeper emotional connection with her husband is symbolized by communicating with him in Japanese. Her situation shows acculturation, as she learns Japanese while keeping her Filipino identity and practices, like visiting the Philippines every year.

The stories of Mrs. A and Mrs. Bee illustrate how migration affects family ties and communication. Their ability to adjust to new languages and cultures significantly affects their marital relationship and happiness. Even while living in Japan, Mrs. Bee's yearly trips back to the Philippines show her effort to stay connected to her culture while adapting to a new place.

I. Overview and Analysis regarding Institutions, Laws, and Policies

Mrs. Bee: "There was a time I opted for a lawyer to find out what kind of things I need to prepare or ano yung mga rights natin as a wife, as a woman. Ang unang sabi

sa akin ng lawyer noong rocky yung marriage ko nakapag opt ako for pro-bono kasi entitled tayo to 3 pro bono without pay. Noong pumunta ako tinatanong ko kung ano yung options ko and everything. Ang sinabi sa akin ng lawyer pag umalis ako I may be charged for abandonment. Kailangang me consent ang asawa ko na hihiwalay ako sa kanya. Pag hindi ko nakuha yung consent tapos basta lang lumabas ng bahay at kumuha ng apartment, I can be charged for abandonment. Next sabi nya willing dapat akong i-give up yung work. Kaya ako pumunta sa kanya to know my rights. Feeling nya ang reasons kaya nagkakaganyan ang magasawa ay dahil nagsimulang magwork yung babae, kaya wala ng time. To think yung lawyer na mismo yung magsasabi, sa loob-loob ko kaya ako nagpunta dito to ask for opinion and everything is because gusto ko malaman yung mga rights ko tapos sasabihin sa akin agad yung about work. Theres no such thing as conjugal property sa Japan. Makikita mo sa laws nila ang ganoon din."

(At one point, I decided to consult a lawyer to understand the necessary preparations and the rights I possess as a wife and as a woman. The lawyer initially told me. It was emphasized that I would need my husband's consent to separate from him; otherwise, if I simply left the house and secured an apartment without his agreement, I could be accused of abandonment. Furthermore, I expressed my willingness to relinquish my job, which was one of the reasons for my visit—to gain clarity on my rights. The lawyer suggested that a marriage's underlying issues may surface once the woman begins working, which may leave less time for the relationship. I found it somewhat disheartening that the lawyer focused on my employment, even though my primary intention was to seek information about my rights. There were also no such conjugal properties in Japan.)

In Mrs. A's case, her advancing age led her to leave the club and to start working at a car factory. However, she felt dissatisfied with the Japanese work culture.

"Ang panget lang dito minsan, nabu-bully ka, nadidiscriminate ka sa work. Halimbawa, hindi ka na nila mapakinabangan na sa work, aanuhin ka na nila, na ok na tapos ka na. Chugi ka na. Wala lang, parang ganun lang. Goodbye bunot. Matanda ka na! May loyalty ka sa work tapos di nila ma-appreciate yung work mo. Madali ka nilang paltan. Na-discriminate ako sa work parehong mga Haponesa at mga Pilipino. "Pag magaling ka sa trabaho, yung dinadamihan ka ng trabaho. Yung dadamihan nila bigla yung trabaho na hindi ko na pala kaya, at kung san-sang area ka na lang ipupunta. Minsan naman sasabihin nilang '*dame-dame*' kahit magaling ka sa trabaho mo. Pag nagabsent ka naman ang dami-dami nilang tanong sayo. Pag ganun quiet lang ako kaya lalo silang nagagalit sa akin, pinapabayaan ko na lang sila minsan lang ako magsalita at sinasabi ko "mind your own business." Pero hayun dadamihan nila trabaho mo. "

(The management will replace you when you are no longer useful to them. I have experienced discrimination from both Japanese and Filipino colleagues. When one excels in their role or work like me, I often find myself burdened with an excessive workload, being assigned tasks beyond my capacity, and being shifted to various areas of responsibility. Additionally, there are occasions when my colleagues may dismiss my capabilities by saying "dame-dame" which means "no, your work is not good, it's useless" despite evident of competence. If I took a leave of absence, I often met with numerous inquiries upon my return. In such situations, I tend to remain silent, which can further provoke frustration among my peers, leading me to occasionally assert, "mind your own business." Nevertheless, this often results in an increased workload for me.)

"Pero me isang araw na nagwalk-out ako, nilagyan ako ng maraming work. Kaya nagbagsak na lang ako ng mga ibang parts ng car at di ako pumasok ng 2 days. Tapos kinausap ako ng boss ko. Sabi ko grabe yung binigay sa aking trabaho, hindi ko naman yun trabaho. Sabi niya pagpasensyahan na raw about this at buntis daw, parang ako raw yung pinaglilihihan. "Osuwari" daw ang tawag sa ganun. So, tanggap ko naman naging friend's pa kami."

(*One day, I decided to walk out due to overwhelming tasks. In response, he suggested that I should be understanding, attributing the situation that my Japanese co-worker who gave me the task is pregnant, and experiencing pregnancy cravings. Ultimately, I accepted his explanation, and I managed to maintain a friendly relationship with that Japanese co-worker thereafter.)*

"Yung sa kapwa Pinay naman, sumbong ng sumbong na ako daw ay ganito. ganiyan sa big boss naming Hapon. Sip-sip sya, di ko sya pinapatulan. Madalas syang magparinig…tinapos ko yung work tapos minura ako, P******** mo, Mrs. A. P.I. sya ng P.I. sinabihan ko lang sya ng "may God bless you" pero lalong nagalit, inggit na inggit lalo na nung nagpasa ako ng leave with pay ko at saka kala nya sinabihan ko syang mataba."

(A fellow Filipina has been consistently reporting to our Japanese superior that I am behaving inappropriately. She is quite sycophantic, and I choose not to engage with her. Frequently, she makes insinuations. After I completed my work, she insulted me, using derogatory language. I simply responded "May God bless You," but this only intensified her anger. She appears to be envious, particularly when I submitted my leave request with pay, and she mistakenly believed in the past that I had commented on her weight.)

"Depende siguro sayo kasi it is your choice kung papatulan mo. Positive kasi ako palagi. Meron kasi akong motto na work ang pinunta ko dito, hindi kayo."
(It ultimately depends on your decision, as it is your choice whether to engage or not. I maintain a positive outlook consistently. I adhere to my personal motto, I'm here to work.)

Language Disparities

A. Media Utilization for Japanese Language Proficiency and Communication and Challenges in Translation as a Second Language

Both participants mentioned the importance of learning Japanese to facilitate communication with their husbands and the wider Japanese community and to access more opportunities, such as employment.

Mrs. A: "Noon pa naman, may hilig na akong mag-aral ng Japanese, saka mas madami akong makukuhang customer noon sa nightclub. Kung magaling ako sa Japanese, maraming binibigay na customer sa akin si 'mama-san' *(superior lady in the club.)* Noong araw, mga diksyunaryo ang gamit ko o nagpapaturo ako sa mga nakatatandang kasamahan ko sa club noon. Ngayon, madalas sa internet na ako nakakapag-aral ng mga salitang Hapon na di ko maintindihan gamit ang tablet ko o kaya smartphone.
(Ever since, I have been interested in learning Japanese, and the better I speak Japanese, the more customers I will have. Our elder superior at the nightclub will give me more customers if I speak Japanese well. I am using a dictionary or asking my

senior colleagues to help me learn Japanese. These days, I am using the internet most of the time. If I want to learn Japanese words that I do not understand, I will use my tablet or smartphone.)

Mrs. A and Mrs. Bee occasionally used a mix of English and Tagalog words, but their main language of communication with their husbands was Japanese. They did not have a specific agreement on which language to use, but it was understood that they would speak the local language of their residence. This helped them easily find more opportunities in Japan.

Mrs A: “Nasa Japan tayo kaya dapat marunong tayong mag-Japanese para may work tayo… di na naman napag-usapan kung alin ang gagamitin na salita basta Japanese na kami mag-usap, minsan may mga salitang English or Filipino.”
(We are here in Japan, so we should know how to speak Japanese to find a job. We did not talk about which language to use; we just decided to use Japanese or sometimes some words in English or in Tagalog.)

Mrs. Bee: “Parang natural na sa amin , if asan kaming bansa yun ang gamit namin. Nung nasa Pilipinas kami nag tatatry asawa ko magsalita ng Filipino saka fluent siya sa English. Nung tumira kami ng magtagal sa Indonesia both namin natutunang magsalita ng Bahasa. Kaya dito sa Japan parang natural lang na dapat Japanese ang salita mo para mas magkaintindihan kayo saka mas maraming job opportunities… Nag-uusap pa rin kami sa English and Filipino. Mix Japanese, English and Filipino.
(It was natural for us to learn the local language of the country where we are. When we lived in the Philippines, my husband tried to learn Filipino, and we both were fluent in English. When we lived in Indonesia, we learned to speak Bahasa. So, it's natural

that we should speak in Japanese since we are here and for us to understand each other better. Besides, there will be more job opportunities for you if you know their language. But we still communicate in English and some Filipino words We speak in mix Japanese, English and Filipino.)

Mrs. A mainly conversed with her children from her previous marriage in Japanese, with a sprinkle of English here and there. The eldest child had a good grasp of the language and would sometimes use English words. Since the kids were studying English in school, they could also understand some basic English terms. The process of learning a new language was fun, interesting, engaging, and enjoyable for both participants, especially during the early stages of their relationships.

Mrs A: "Yung mga anak ko, madalas Japanese kami mag-usap. Minsan may mga salitang English kasi nag-aaral naman sila sa school. Me English subject sila…Nag-e-enjoy ako mag-aral ng salitang Hapon talaga kahit noong simula pa lang." *(I speak to my kids mostly in Japanese; sometimes there are English words since they are also learning English at school.) They have an English subject. Ever since I have found it enjoyable learning Japanese.)*

Mrs. Bee mentioned that at the beginning of their relationship, it was enjoyable for them to spend time together and learn a new language, like English or Japanese, to communicate better. Fluency in language affected their connection, and her self-sufficiency. Initially, she relied heavily on her husband as she spent most of her time at home. However, in the course of a few years, while being at home and watching TV frequently, she effortlessly acquired the Japanese language and familiarized herself with the Japanese culture. Technology greatly helps her to create bond to her husband by learning his language through TV.

Moreover, Mrs. Bee mentioned that by engaging in traditional media and interacting face-to-face with Japanese individuals, she developed the essential conversational skills needed to communicate in Japanese. This progress was further boosted when she joined a Japanese company, where she had to use Kanji and speak Japanese as the sole foreign employee in the laboratory.

Mrs Bee: “Mga unang taon ko dito sa Japan, sa TV at sa radio ako natutong magsalita ng Hapon. Kahit we are both fluent in English ng asawa ko, gusto kong matuto ng Hapon para mas lalo kong maunawaan ang feelings ng asawa ko saka para mai-express ko ang sarili ko sa kanya…saka naexperienced kong di tanggapin sa work dahil sa kakulangan ko sa pagsasalita ng Hapon at dahil na din Pinay kasi ako. Mababa ang tingin noon sa mga Pinay. Akala nila lahat ng Pinay nagwo-work sa gabi (nightclub)… Sa unang work ko bilang laboratory assistant, natuto rin ako ng mga salitang Hapon sa paggamit ng computer. Lahat kasi nasa salitang Hapon.

(I learned my Japanese through watching TV and listening to the radio. Even though my husband and I are both fluent in English, I still want to learn Japanese to better understand his feelings and to express myself more clearly to him as well. I was once discriminated against and not accepted at work because I could not speak Japanese well, and it's because I am also a Filipina. They taught that all Filipinas worked at the nightclub at that time, and they looked down on them…I was a laboratory assistant, which was my first job in Japan, and I also learned Japanese using a computer at work since it's all in Japanese.)

Additionally, although Mrs. Bee’s husband understands and speaks English, he shifted to communicating primarily in Japanese when they returned to Japan after more than six years abroad. When she struggled to understand him, he would become irate. She recalled an incident in which he became irate with her when he had to

reiterate his instructions on the kind of clothes she needed to prepare for him. Although she understood his instructions, she wanted confirmation, but her limited proficiency in Japanese at that time prevented her from repeating his instructions precisely, leading her husband to misinterpret that she was not paying attention.

Mrs Bee: “Nung dito na kami tumira sa Japan mas madalas na magsalita ng Japanese and husband ko. Pag me instructions sya sa akin halimabawa pag prepare ng kanyang damit at inulit ko ang instructions nya sa salitang Hapon naiinis siya kasi di ko properly nasabi ng tama sa Hapon pero naintindihan ko naman ang sinabi nya. Me mga tamang Japanese words lang talaga ang dapat gamitin. Kaya pag ganun, ini-English ko if me gusto akong i-confirm.

(When we started living here in Japan, my husband also started to speak more Japanese. When he gave me instructions on how to prepare his clothes and I repeated them in Japanese, he became irate, thinking I did not understand because I did not use the proper Japanese words. That is why if I want to confirm something, I use English for us to better understand each other.)

Mrs. Bee: “Mabilis din siyang magalit pag pagod siya tapos paulit-ulit pa ako…kaya check ko muna talaga kilos niya if mabagal meaning pagod yun, pag tahimik pagod yun… para iwas away”

(He easily gets angry if he is tired, and I keep bugging him, so I try to be more sensitive with his non-verbal cues, like if he is acting sluggish or quiet after work, it means he is tired, so I stop bugging him to avoid arguments.)

This context illustrated how communication is shaped by emotional states and physical conditions, including fatigue and exhaustion. This research demonstrated that language is essential in successful communication, especially in international

marriages. This is likely because “language cannot be separated from culture” (Flor, 2007), where there is a complex relationship between language and culture.

Mrs. Bee believed that she needed to improve her perception, sensitivity, and ability to interpret nonverbal cues to better understand her husband.

In Japan, subtle communication is relatively common. Some Japanese terms and idioms do not have a direct translation in other languages. Knowing one's language helps build intimacy and trust in relationships like international marriages.

Overview and Analysis of Language Learning and Acquisition Using Media and Challenges in Translation by Both Research Participants

Both research participants emphasized the importance of using a language widely spoken in their current place of residence.

Mrs. A: “Siyempre, andito tayo sa Japan, kailangan nating matuto ng Japanese language. Mas madaming oportunidad.”

(Of course, we are here in Japan, so we need to learn the Japanese language and for more opportunities as well.)

Mrs. Bee: “It will open up more opportunities…especially when you are looking for a good job.”

It would be more advantageous for them to adopt the Japanese language, considering that they have been living and working in Japan. Moreover, their family members and the Japanese society expected them to adjust to Japanese culture and practices.

Mrs. A: Gusto ng dating kong biyenan, nasa bahay lang ako at anak lang niya ang magtatrabaho. Di naman pwede; nagpapadala ako sa Pilipinas ng pera.

(My ex-mother-in-law wanted me to be a full-time housewife while his son worked alone, which is impossible since I am also sending money to the Philippines.)

Mrs. Bee: While living with my in-laws for a couple of months, they will enter our bedroom, make noise, and pretend to pray at their altar pero sa totoo lang parang gusto lang na sabihin na dapat gumising na ako para magluto ng breakfast *(but in truth they just wanted me to get up and prepare our breakfast.)*

Both research participants also expressed their mutual interest in learning a new language.

Mrs. A: "Madaldal ako kaya nagpapaturo ako sa mga kasamahan ko sa club na mas matanda sakin. Mahilig din akong gumamit ng dictionary para matuto kagad ng Nihongo. Ginagamit ko kagad ang natutunan ko sa mga customers ko.
(I am very talkative and asked my elders in the club to teach me Japanese, and I even use a dictionary to learn Japanese quickly. I immediately used the Japanese words I learned with my customers.)

Mrs. Bee: "Ang TV ko laging nasa Japanese, kasi ang husband ko Hapon e. So, ako nanonood ako ng program, nasasasanay yung mind ko tsaka yung ears ko na makarinig ako ng words until naga-grasp ko na yung ibig sabihin. Tapos tanong ako ng tanong sa kanya (asawa ko), tapos sinasabayan ko yung mga jingle. Tapos nanonood ako ng NHK, programs for children. Syempre and simple-simple ng Japanese nun. So, natuto ako. Mas natuto ako ng conversation ng Japanese kasya sa yung, grammar and all that. Sa conversation ng Japanese talaga ako sanay."
(My television is always tuned to Japanese channels because my husband is Japanese. As a result, I watch programs and gradually my mind and ears become accustomed to hearing words until I understand their meaning. I then ask my husband questions and sing along with the jingles. I also watch NHK, which has programs for

children, so the Japanese used there is simple. I have learned a lot from it. I have learned more about Japanese conversation than about grammar and all that. I am really used to Japanese conversation.)

"Malaking tulong talaga sa akin ang TV. Sinabi ko nga sa mga kaibigan kong Pinoy dito na kung me TV kayo at wala kayong balak magbayad ng NHK or something just let the TV bukas nyo lang. Tapos lahat ng naririnig niyo doon, lalo na pag advertisement. Repetition yan. So, mariringig mo, maintindihan mo, tapos minsan manunuod ka ng drama, "Ay yun pala ang ibig sabihin noon." Hanggang sa nai-apply mo na, "Yun pala yon, pala ibig sabihin nun. Hanggang sa nagagamit mo na din, tapos tanong nga ako ng tanong sa asawa ko. Nangungulit, "ano ibig sabihin ng ganun?" *(The television has been a great help to me. I have told my Filipino friends here that if you have a TV and you do not plan on paying for NHK or something, just leave the TV on. Then, everything you hear there, especially during advertisements, is repetition. So, you will hear it, understand it, and sometimes you will watch a drama and say, "Oh, so that's what it means." Until you apply it, "So that's what it means." Until you start using it, and then I keep asking my spouse, "What does that mean?)*

The two Filipina participants used technology to enhance their communication skills, enabling them to communicate effectively with their Japanese husbands and avoid misunderstandings.

Mrs. A: "Makulit kasi ako so yung mga beterana na kasama ko from time-to-time tinatanong ko sila kung ano to, anong language na to. Parang nahihiya na ako mangambala sa kanila so nag-self ako ng sariling kong pagaaral (ng Hapon). Minsan nanonood ako sa TV ".

(I am persistent, so I occasionally ask the veterans with what this is, what language is this. Later, I feel embarrassed to bother them, so I decided to study on my own (Japanese). Sometimes I watch TV.)

For them, being proficient in the language will open various opportunities for them, particularly in the realm of employment.

Mrs. A: “Nagaaral ako (ng Hapon) para magka customer. Tapos from time-to-time yung mama (san) namin may booking na ako.”

(I studied Japanese to attract customers. Then, from time to time, our mamasan (a woman in charge of a night club) arranges bookings for me.”)

Furthermore, Mrs. A also mentioned to the researcher that as husband and wife, they would use a word of endearment, such as “*baby*”, when addressing each other. Using such helped her to engage and communicate with her husband.

In addition, her husband regularly checks in with her to inquire about her location and well-being by calling her.

Mrs A: “Baby” ang tawagan namin.” I am like a baby eh kahit nagmeet kami nasa 40 or 39 na ko, sya noon 38 na. Sya naman mahilig maglambing parang bata nagpapaluto ng foods mahilig yun sa pagkain kasi kaya pagluluto ko.”

(We call each other 'Baby.' I act like a baby even though we met when I was already 40 or 39, while he was 38. He, on the other hand, loves to be affectionate like a child, asking me to cook food because he loves eating, that is why I cook for him.)

It only shows how important mutual appreciation is in facilitating effective communication. Regularly checking in with one another also shows care and promotes intimacy and openness between couples.

“Minsan tanghali, Kumain ka na ba? or minsan nakarating ka na ba sa work? Nasaan ka na ba? Nasa parking ka na ba?

(Sometimes during lunch, he will call and ask me, have you eaten lunch yet? Have you arrived at work yet? Where are you now? Are you already in the parking lot?]

If not face-to-face, the couples tried to interact by calling each other through their smartphones (mediated by technology).

For Mrs. A and her husband, once they learn new anatomy-related words online through their smartphones, they use them to convey intimacy.

"Pag me bago akong natutunan o nakita sa smartphone ko na medyo bastos na Japanese words tungkol sa parte ng katawan ginagamit ko yun sa asawa ko para yayayain na mag loving-loving kami…"

(Once I learned new Japanese naughty words about any parts of the body, I used these words humorously for us to get intimate)

Both Mrs. A and Mrs. Bee primarily spoke in Japanese with their husbands, though some English and Tagalog were also used. They both found learning the Japanese language fun. Traditional media like TV and radio helped Mrs. Bee learn Japanese, and working in a Japanese setting using a Japanese computer has boosted her confidence in learning and using the language. It greatly improved both participants' communication skills, grew their independence, and demonstrated successful acculturation. The usage of media both helped these two participants in improving their communication skills in Japanese thus resulted to fit in Japanese society and to have more positive marital relationships.

B. Communicating in Japanese as a Second Language, and Expressing Oneself

The Japanese language is complex because it includes *Hiragana* (native to Japan), *Katakana* (used for foreign words and loanwords), *Romaji* (the Roman alphabet), and *Kanji* (derived from Chinese characters). Japanese culture additionally places importance on non-verbal communication. More direct translations are required for certain words. Honorifics, like *"keigo,"* are also commonly used since respect for elders is important in Japanese culture. Such cases demonstrate the close link between language and culture. The communication between Filipino migrant wives and their Japanese husbands is greatly affected by these cultural and language disparities.

Mrs. A: "Yung husband ko palibahasa mas matanda sa akin, tapos siya pa ang panganay na anak na lalaki sa pamilya nila, at CEO pa sa company nila, mataas ang posisyon di siya sanay na kausapin siya ng casual saka masyado silang pormal mag-usap sa pamilya kumpara sa usapan ng pamilyang Pilipino…I need to adjust my words especially if I am using Japanese words sa kanya, dapat more respectful…pati tono ng pagsasalita ko, dapat mas calm and mas feminine…"

(Since my husband is older than me, he is the firstborn child in the family, holds a high position in their society and workplace, and was raised in a very traditional Japanese family, I must use more respectful and formal Japanese when talking to him. Even the tone of my voice I have to change, much calmer and more feminine.)

These problems are worsened by the absence of direct translations for some Japanese ideas and words, complicating effective and good communication.

Misunderstanding these symbols can lead to confusion and influence how they view their roles in the relationship, and how their Japanese husbands see them. Assimilating to Japanese culture may cause stress to Filipino migrant wives.

C. Challenges with the In-laws: Interaction and Communication

In-law relationships can become challenging when there is a language barrier between them. In Mrs. A's, she had a difficult relationship with her ex-mother-in-law. She never had the chance to communicate openly with her in-laws. Right from the start, her mother-in-law did not like her due to her past as an entertainer. Her ex-in-laws would only communicate with her through her husband, relaying messages.

However, with her second husband, things were different. Although they did not speak English, they were trying to learn and use the English language to communicate with her. They even use hand gestures, facial expressions, and smartphones to help translate words they did not understand. Sometimes, her present in-laws helped each other to talk and understand her. On Mrs. A's part, she is now able to speak conversationally in Japanese since she has been staying in Japan for more than three decades.

Mrs A: "Kung anong malas ko sa una kong biyenan, napakaswerte ko naman sa pangalawa kong biyenan na Hapon. Binibili nila ako ng mga damit na base sa season ng Japan. Me mga padalang groceries pa ang mga yun sa akin. Pag di kami magkaintindihan, gumagamit sila ng kusa ng smartphones nila para itranslate yung gusto nilang sabihin sa akin. Naghahand gestures din sila at exaggerate nila expression nila sa mukha para maintindihan ko."

(I was so unlucky with my mother-in-law, but I was very, very lucky to have my second mother-in-law. My second family-in-laws love me so much, always buying me clothes based on Japan's seasons and giving me free groceries every week. They voluntarily use their smartphones to help us understand better. They even exaggerate their facial expressions to express themselves and for me to understand them.)

On the other hand, while Mrs. Bee's in-laws have limited proficiency in English, they tried to communicate with her using both verbal and non-verbal cues. Mrs. Bee's family seemed to show high respect for her husband since he is the firstborn or the "*chonan*" in the family, who is considered precious in Japanese culture. It is expected that all family members adhere to and respect the decisions made by her husband especially now that her father-in-law is old..

Mrs Bee: "Nagta-try akong makipag-communicate sa kanila noon. Tsaka nagtatry din sila na mag-English. So pareho kaming nagkakapaan, pero somehow madali-dali lang naman usapan namin. Tapos pag kukwento sya/sila parang naiintindihan ko ng onti. So, paginintindihan ko, oo lang ako ng oo."
(I attempted to communicate with them back then. And they were also trying to speak in English. So, we were both struggling, but somehow our conversations flowed easily. Then when they tell stories, I seem to understand a little. So, when I understand, I just nod along.)

"Yung kapatid nyang babae di masyadong pinapansin, traditional family sila. Ang husband ko is a conservative Japanese man. Pag-unang anak ka, tapos lalaki ka, "chonan" ka, ikaw ang prinsipe, ikaw ang hari ng bahay, hindi yung tatay niya. Siya yung head of the family maski nandoon ang tatay niya sa bahay nila. Kasi sya yung successor. Parang ganun. So lahat ng basic decisions sya na nagdedecide lalo ng nung tumanda ang ama nya. Nung naging adult na sya ay sya na yung tinatanong.

Katulad noon, sinabihan nya yung father nya na “O pagdating mo ng 70 hindi ka na magdrive, hayun wala ng magawa ang ama nya, di na nga nagdrive. Ganun sya kastrict, o old type na Japanese na tinatawag. Na talagang nagaadhere na ang babae sumusunod lang sa lalaki.”

(The younger sister is not given much attention, as they come from a traditional family. My husband is a conservative Japanese man. In their family, the firstborn son is considered the prince, the king of the house, not the father. He is the head of the family even when his father is present at home. This is because he is the successor. It is like that. So, all basic decisions are made by him, especially when his father grew older. When he became an adult, he was the one being asked. For example, he told his father, "When you turn 70, you should stop driving," and his father followed without hesitation. He is very strict, an old-fashioned Japanese man. He strictly adheres to the belief that women should simply follow men.)

“Sa atin, very strong family ties, sila di ganun. Babae yung kapatid nya kaya sya lagi ang fine favor. Mutyang-mutya sya bilang first born na lalaki sa pamilya. Tapos yung mga cousins nya laking mga North pa sya eh city boy kaya lalo ng precious sa family nila. Yung sister nya me sariling buhay at ganun din sya. Nung mga bata sila nagkakasama lang silang magkapatid sa mga theme park sa traveling ganun lang di sila close. Sabi nung sister nya mas gusto pa nga daw nya ako kesa sa kuya nya. Kasi nagkakasama kami nagkakausap sa coffee shops or restaurant hopping kami minsan sila di sila close na magkapatid.”

His sister has her own independent life, and he is similarly self-sufficient. During their childhood, as siblings they spent time together primarily at theme parks and during travels, but they were not particularly close. His sister has even expressed a preference for her company than with her older brother, as they often engage in

conversations at coffee shops or enjoy restaurant outings together as in-laws, unlike the more distant relationship she shares with her brother.

The researcher also observed that a significant number of Japanese single women, including some of her acquaintances, preferred to refrain from marrying a "*chonan*" (firstborn son) due to the considerable responsibilities associated with being the future wife of a *chonan*, which includes the obligation to live with the in-laws and take care of them in their old age.

Instead, they tend to favor marrying the second-born or the youngest son, as this is associated with greater autonomy in their marital relationships. Notably in this research study, each participant entered marriage with "*chonan"*, or the firstborn son, who is precious to the Japanese family. Future research may further examine the experiences of Filipinas married to Japanese firstborn sons.

Overview and Analysis of the Challenges with the In-laws: Interaction and Communication

The quotes exemplify how communication is influenced by gender in intercultural relationships. Mrs. A's experiences also show the gender-related challenges in adapting to family dynamics in a culture with clear gender roles. Because of Japan's patriarchal culture, the husband often dominates decision-making processes and the communication styles of family members. Effective communication, for Filipino migrant wives, involves the observation and negotiation of such symbols. It is also crucial to fit in better with their Japanese families.

Mrs. A, because of her longer stay in Japan and ability to speak Japanese, achieves of a certain level of assimilation. The extent to which an individual blends in

or maintains their original cultural identity can influence family interactions and relationships.

Migration brings cultural and language challenges that affect how people communicate and relate to each other. Both participants face these challenges and have learned to adapt as well as their husbands.

Research Question 3: How do Filipino migrant wives address and adapt to the major challenges within their intercultural marriages, and how does this adaptation process impact their mental health?

Major Challenges within International Marriages Based on the Narratives of Mrs. A and Mrs. Bee

A. Relationship with Extended Families: Dealing with discrimination and being proficient in the host country's language

It was a huge challenge for Mrs. A to earn her mother-in-law's respect, resulting in her first failed marriage. Despite having worked hard to have a "*balik-bayan box*" or forwarding business, her in-laws still could not accept her because of her past work at a nightclub. It was difficult for her to communicate her frustrations to her ex-husband due to her poor knowledge of the Japanese language, plus the unfair treatment and prejudgment she received from her ex-mother-in-law at that time.

"Mukhang pera lang daw ako, visa lang daw ang kailangan ko. Kaya pinakita ko sa kanila na hindi pera ng anak nila or visa ang kailangan ko sa anak nila. Nagsikap

ako, nagkaron ako ng company dito, forwarding business. Pinakita ko sa kanila na hindi pera ang kailangan ko sa kanila."

(They accused me of just after their money and visa, so I worked diligently to establish a company here, specifically in the forwarding business, thereby illustrating that I do not require their financial support.)

Regarding discrimination, Mrs. Bee, on the other hand, recalled an instance from their first year of marriage when her husband referred to her as a "Filipino-American" rather than a native Filipino when he introduced her to his friends and coworkers. When she asked her husband, he simply stated that his friends would ask additional questions if he introduced her as a Filipina and not as Filipina-American. He was embarrassed to tell them about it. She felt discriminated at that point. She found it difficult to express negative emotions in Japanese and therefore used English while she was crying. She believed that her husband knew she was mad every time she spoke straight English, yet she felt that greater fluency in Japanese would enable him to understand her emotions more deeply.

"Hindi nya ako basta-basta isinasama sa mga parties, and everything kasi ayaw nya yung idea na tinatanong sya tapos ang sasabihin ang asawa nya ay Pilipina. Even kahit now modern times na andun pa rin yung idea na ay Hapon to, ang asawa Filipina? Paano nya nakilala yung Filipina? Lagi ang impression sayo ay more on the entertainer side, hindi yung paano ako pinalaki. Until now nagkakaroon ng embarrassment dun ang asawa ko. Doon ako nasasaktan kasi kung ikucompare kaming dalawa hindi naman sa pagaano me mas kaya ang pamilya ko sa pamilya nila sa Japan. There was a time that he really denied saying it na Filipina ako instead parang she is Filipina born and raised in the States naglie sya nun kaya nag-away kami. Alam nya kung san nya ako nakuha, alam nya university graduate ako, maganda

school ko at pamilya ko bakit nagakakroon ka pa rin ng embarrassment pag sinasabi mong Filipina ang asawa mo? Nag imposed din sya na pag kaharap namin mga Japanese na kaibigan wag daw ako magsasalita ng Tagalog, English lang daw. Somehow it hurts me as a person and yung pride ko as Filipino bakit mahihihiya kang Filipina ako eh ang babait ng mga Pilipino dito mga responsible. Ayaw din nya magsasalita ko ng Japanese if not fluent na fluent especially if di maganda yung mga choices of words ko. Hindi naman sa pag ano, marami din naman akong naging friends na naging caregivers na mga dating Japayuki, iba mga salitang Japanese na gamit nila parang gay lingo sa atin, Sasabihin ng asawa ko na wag ko silang gagayahin sa pag gamit ng ganung salita ng mga Japanese. For example, wag ko daw gagamitin ang salitang “jodan dakke” (just kidding) feeling nila pag nakarinig sila ng ganun ay mga entertainers na nageentertain ng mga umiiinom. So natuto ako ng mas mga polite Japanese words. Pati yung mga accent nila. Me tinatawag na Kanto Japanese, Osaka ben, importante yun for their status. Standard ang Kanagawa accent, me mga status sila na tinitingnan, kaya sinasabihan nya akong wag na lang mag Japanese minsan if not fluent or proper usage of words which should be polite kasi worried sya sa image. *("He does not easily bring me to parties and events because he does not like the idea of being asked and then having to say that his wife is Filipina. Even in this modern era, the notion of "Oh, she's Japanese, and his wife is Filipina?" persists. How did he meet a Filipina? The impression of you is always more on the entertainer side, not on how you were raised. Even now, my husband feels embarrassed about it. That is where I get hurt because if we are compared, modesty aside, I came from good and well- off family than his family. There was a time when he really denied saying that I am Filipina, instead, he said that I am Filipina born and raised in the States, which was a lie, so we argued. He knows where he met me, he knows I am a university graduate, from a*

prestigious school, with good family background, so why do you still feel embarrassed when you say your wife is Filipina? He also imposes that when we are with his Japanese friends, I should not speak Tagalog, only English. Somehow, it hurts me as a person and my pride as a Filipino. Why would you be ashamed that I am Filipina when the Filipinos here are kind and responsible? He also does not want me to speak Japanese if I am not fluent enough, especially if my choice of words is not good, proper, and polite. It is not that I have anything against them but I have had many friends who were former Japayukis and now care givers, they use different Japanese words that are like gay lingo to us. My husband would tell me not to imitate them in using those words. For example, he said not to use the word "jodan dakke" [just kidding or joke only because they might think we are entertainers who entertain drinkers. So, I learned more polite Japanese words, even their accents. There is what they call Kanto Japanese, Osaka-ben, which is important to their status. The Kanagawa accent is standard, and they have status to consider, so he tells me not to speak Japanese sometimes if I am not fluent or using the words properly. I have learned more polite expressions in Japanese, including their various accents, because there are distinctions such as Kanto Japanese and Osaka dialect, which are significant in terms of social status. Certain standards are observed, like the Kanagawa accent and specific social hierarchies. I have also received advice to avoid speaking Japanese at times if I am not fluent enough, or if I have an inadequate understanding of polite language. These may cause concerns about the impression I create.]

In this narrative, the husband attempted to exert influence over her, dictating what she should say, and when and how to communicate effectively in Japanese.

“One-time naman nag-try akong mag-work, part time lang noong mga 4 years na ko sa Japan at bored na ko at suggestion din ng neighbor ko noon but during

interview, pag tinanong kang, where are you from? Sasabihin kong I am a Filipina; I am from the Philippines ganun. Tapos, they will tell you “Gomen nasai,” (sorry) ganun lang, ganung kadrastic. Maghuhugas lang ako ng pinggan noon. Hanggang sa umuwi umiiyak ako. Di man lang ako interview, nasaktan ako kasi College graduate ako. Di lahat silang Hapon nakakatuntong ng college ako pinaghirapan ako ng magulang ko na makatapos ng kolehiyo, maganda school ko, tapos pagliligpit na nga lang ng pinggan ayaw ka na kagad bigyan ng chance dahil Pinay ako.”

(I tried working part-time for a while during my four years in Japan, as suggested by my neighbor and out of boredom. However, during the interview, when asked where I was from, I proudly said I am a Filipina from the Philippines. The response was simply "Gomen nasai" (sorry), I went home in tears, feeling hurt that despite being a college graduate from a good school, I was not even given a chance just because I am a Filipina even as a dishwasher.)

The participant experienced significant discrimination in this instance that she was refused to be hired based on race and preconceived notions about being a Filipina.

On the other hand, Mrs. A also recalled that she must learn the language quickly so that she can attract more customers, as they prefer someone who can communicate with them in Japanese.

Relating to this narrative of Mrs. A, Mrs. Bee also recalled an incident when a Japanese individual mistakenly assumed that her Filipina friend, an exchange student, was a former *Japayuki* due to her fluent Japanese speaking skills. Some elderly Japanese women immediately assumed that being fluent in the Japanese language and being Filipina meant that they were *Japayuki*. They believed that for *Japayukis* to attract more customers, they had to learn and speak the Japanese language

proficiently. Nevertheless, if they engaged in a conversation with a Caucasian woman and exhibited proficiency in the Japanese language, they immediately assumed that these individuals were well-educated scholars who had pursued their studies in Japan.

The researcher also received this feedback from a Japanese family friend and another Filipina immigrant. This surfaced as a contributing factor as to why some professional Filipinas who were well-educated, or scholars and educators in Japan choose to communicate in English rather than the Japanese language, even though they know how to speak it.

Overview and Analysis of the Relationship with Extended Families: Dealing with discrimination, and being proficient in the host country's language

Due to language issues, discrimination, and cultural differences, both participants encounter many difficulties in intercultural communication. Mrs. A faced bias from her in-laws regarding her background, even though she ran a successful business later in life. Mrs. Bee has had her fair share of discriminatory experiences: for instance, her husband purposefully mislabeled her as "Filipino-American" in an attempt to escape the negative stereotypes associated with being pure Filipino. And because of her limited Japanese, she had challenges with self-expression, emotional vulnerability, and daily interactions. As such, intercultural understanding and communication must be improved so that spouses with different cultural norms and expectations may have a harmonious relationship.

Mrs. Bee's case also shows the need for Filipino migrant wives to adjust to the host and dominant culture while simultaneously facing discrimination and communication barriers. This process often demands a lot of emotional effort and

resilience, which can affect their mental health as they deal with feelings of inadequacy, frustration, and being marginalized.

Filipino migrant wives face many challenges in intercultural communication, mainly due to language barriers, discrimination, and cultural differences. Both participants were discriminated due to their background as Filipinas. Mrs. Bee's spouse introduced her as a *Fil-Am* instead as pure Filipina due to the stigma attached as Filipina in Japan. Linguistic and cultural differences and the continuous seeking for approval led to increased stress that greatly affects their mental health. Good communication is vital in keeping healthy relationships.

Mrs. A and Mrs. Bee are influenced by the meanings their cultural backgrounds hold for their in-laws and the society. Filipino migrant wives often need to confront and reshape the negative stereotypes related to their identity, which affects how they see themselves and their emotional health.

Assimilation and acculturation are apparent in both women's experiences. Mrs. A strives to prove her worth beyond financial contributions, while Mrs. Bee adapts by adjusting her language. The two women demonstrate the different ways one may handle cultural disparities. Filipino migrant wives usually face hardships in trying to balance fitting into a new culture and preserving their original cultural identity. Recognizing these factors can help provide better support for migrants in intercultural relationships.

B. Upholding Hygiene Standards and Health-Related Problems

Many Filipinas married to Japanese men informed the researcher that a significant number of Japanese men are uncircumcised due to religious beliefs.

Mrs. Bee has experienced recurring vaginal infections attributed to her husband, according to her doctor. Because of the risk of offending him, she faced difficulties in encouraging her husband to practice adequate hygiene, particularly in his uncircumcised genital area. The situation improved when she convinced him to attend a medical appointment, during which the doctor directly addressed her condition.

“Nagka-UTI ako noon. Sabi ng doctor, isama ko na lang ang asawa ko sa check-up para siya na ang mag-explain sa asawa ko kung ano dapat niyang gawin. Parang lalaki sa lalaki.”

(I had a UTI, and my doctor convinced me to bring my husband, and told me that he would be the one who would explain everything and teach him what to do man-to-man).

Having someone who was a professional, like Mrs. Bee’s Japanese doctor, helped her communicate her concern to her husband with ease.

In the case of Mrs. A, it was hard for her to understand medical terminology. She also expected her ex-husband to accompany her for a pregnancy check-up at the hospital, just like in the Philippines, where normally the husband accompanies their wife. However, he did not.

“Noong bago pa lang ako dito sa Japan, nahirapan akong intindihin yung mga technical terms na gamit sa hospital nila kaya nagpapasama ako dati dun sa una kong

asawa na Hapon sa ospital. Ayaw nya akong samahan. Nalaman ko na lang na dapat babae sa babae. Dapat yung nanay nya or kapatid na babae ang dapat sumama. Kasi bilang babae mas nakakaintindi sila. Kaso ayaw nga nila sa akin kaya kapatid kong babae ang kasama ko noon. Mahirap."

(It was hard for me to understand medical terms since I was just new in Japan. My husband did not accompany me. I subsequently discovered that it is common practice for a mother, sister, mother-in-law, or another female associate to accompany individuals to such appointments in place of the husband, as they possess greater knowledge regarding the female reproductive process. However, his family was against me, so I was with my sister, it was hard for me.)

Overview and Analysis of Upholding Hygiene Standards and Health Related Problems

Mrs. A had to deal with different expectations for medical support. These symbols shape their views and responses to health issues. Both participants tried to adjust to their husbands' cultural practices while trying to keep their own cultural identities. The experiences of Mrs. Bee and Mrs. A highlight challenges related to acculturation rather than assimilation. Mrs. A and Mrs. Bee expected to receive the same treatment as those Filipinas who are married to Filipino husbands.

C. Gender Roles/ Patriarchy

Japan is as a patriarchal nation, where wives are expected to take care of the home and cook while their husbands are at work. For both participants, it posed a significant problem. For example, their husbands expected them to handle all household responsibilities even though they were already both employed. There was no division of labor even though they were both exhausted after working in the office. Working wives could not complain about how tired they are after office work. They are still expected to prepare dinner without their husbands' help, while their husbands relaxed in front of the TV. They knew that if they voiced their complaints, their spouse would either tell them to stay home or say it was their choice to work.

"Pag nagreklamo ako na napapagod ako, he will just say na ako ang me gusto noon. Magstop na lang daw ako magwork and magstay na lang sa bahay ng di ako napapagod."

(If I complained that I'm too exhausted doing housework after a day's work, he just shrugged and told me to stop working and be a full-time housewife.)

Mrs. Bee added that his husband, as the firstborn in the family, was very controlling; she mentioned that even his family obeyed him, especially when her father-in-law became old. His husband started deciding for their family and for her.

"Panganay sya sa pamilya nila kaya para syang hari, na siya dapat lagi nasusunod. Matanda na yung ama niya at noong sinabi niya na huwag ng magdrive, sinunod nga sya. Siya na ang madalas nagdedecide sa pamilya nila since siya ang panganay. Siya din nag dedecide kung saan kami tititira at kung saan ako unang magwork nung unang dating namin dito."

(My husband acted like a King since, as the firstborn son, he has a big responsibility of taking care of his family. He decided for his family and also where we live and where I work the first time we arrived here in Japan,)

As mentioned earlier, she remembered when they were still living in Indonesia, at a party, she positively agreed and sided with his husband's colleague's opinion and disagreed with her husband's opinion. After the event, his husband confronted her, shouted at her, and told her that it would be the first and last that she would voice her opinion unless he asked her in front of his co-workers. She discovered once more that Japanese women are educated to believe that it is an essential aspect of their heritage to consistently display submissiveness towards their spouses, especially in public scenarios.

Moreover, the involvement of their husbands in extramarital relationships posed a significant challenge for both Filipina participants. As quoted from Mrs. Bee:

"Alam mo naman mga lalaki, parang normal na magkaroon ng ganyan. Lalo na husband ko lapitin kasi mataas ang position nya."

(As you may expect with men, having such tendencies is almost normal. This is especially true with my husband, who holds a high position.)

This is a manifestation of power dynamics in a patriarchal society.

D. Having and Rearing Children

Both participants mentioned the influence of cultural differences, as well as personality, on parenting approaches and beliefs. Mrs. A assumed full responsibility or parenting since her husband was tasked with earning a livelihood and working for her mother-in-law's company.

“Lahat ng gawain sa bahay at pag-aalaga sa mga anak namin ako lang gumagawa di man lang ako tinutulungan nung dati kong asawa.”
(I did all the housework and took care of our kids without any help from my ex-Japanese husband.)

She longed for her former husband to have been more engaged in raising their children. Mrs. A claimed that her previous husband dedicated less time to cleaning and childcare than she did. She hoped to get her husband's participation in housework and childcare during those times.

Another challenge was that, due to the prevalence of the Japanese language in their surroundings, she spoke less English to her children, resulting in their limited fluency in both English and Filipino.

“Since dito kami sa Japan nakatira, di magaling sa English o Filipino ang mga anak namin. Sa Japanese sila magaling magsalita.”
(Since we are living here in Japan, my kids cannot speak in English or Filipino, they are fluent in Japanese.)

On the other hand, Mrs. Bee was unaware of her husband's hesitation about having children before they got married. By the time she found out, it was already too late.

They have remained childless because her husband made the decision years ago not to have children, citing the heavy responsibility and high cost of raising a child, particularly in Japan. To find a compromise, they decided to become fur parents instead by adopting a dog.

“Bago kami ikasal hindi ako alam na ayaw palang magkaanak ng aking asawa kasi magastos daw at madaming responsibilidad…kaya heto napapayag ko siya na kahit aso na lang.”

(I never thought before marrying my husband that he didn’t want to have children, since it's a great responsibility to have kids here in Japan; aside from that, it's too expensive as well.)

Overview and Analysis of Having and Rearing Children

Mrs. A handled most of the childcare while her husband concentrated on his job. She wanted her husband to help more with the kids and household tasks. The Japanese language around them made it hard for the children to speak English and Filipino well. Mrs. A felt this was due to her not using English or Filipino much at home. On the other hand, Mrs. Bee realized it is important to discuss family planning prior to marriage. She also mentioned that being genuinely in love, open-minded, respectful, and willing to compromise are very important in an international marriage.

“Importante talaga na tunay mong mahal ang taong pakakasalan mo. Para kahit anong mangyari ay hindi mo basta maiiwan. Dapat open-minded ka dahil iba ang kultura nila. Napaka importanteng may respect sa isa’t isa at kailangang talaga na mag-compromise kayo para magtagal ang relasyon niyo.”

(It’s very important that you really genuinely love the person you will marry so that whatever happens, you will remain together. One should be open-minded, respectful, and know how to compromise if you want this international marriage to last.)

E. Love Expression

Compared to Filipino culture, Japanese culture is characterized by a more reserved approach to expressing affection through words and actions. While their Japanese husbands were comfortable in showing affection through non-verbal means in private settings, they found it challenging to display the same level of affection in the presence of others, especially their Japanese friends and family, due to feelings of discomfort.

In Mrs. Bee's case, her husband wanted to limit their physical intimacy in front of their family and friends. She shared that even though her husband expressed his love verbally, she desired more verbal affirmations of love. Nonetheless, they communicated effectively in a private setting. Mrs. Bee noted that her husband explained that, apart from cultural norms, his upbringing did not emphasize verbal expressions of emotions, even within the family context, more so in public situations.

"Kinausap ako ng asawa ko na wag daw kaming ma PDA (public display of affection) lalo na sa harap ng mga kamag-anak at kaibigan nya. Di daw sila pinalaki na ganoon. Ok lang sa akin, pero gusto ko pa rin na sinasabihan na mahal nya ako o kaya pini-praise niya ako. Pag kaming dalawa lang naman sa bahay ok lang sa kanya na maging sweet kami"

(My husband suggested that we should not display public affection especially infront of his relatives and friends. He was not raised like that. But of course, I like him telling me he loves me, and I want him to compliment and praise me. Privately, if just us, we are sweet.)

In the case of Mrs. A, her second husband is more demonstrative and verbally affectionate in both private and public settings. Saying "*Daisuke*" ("I like you very

much") instead of "I love you" is more acceptable to both participants, since "*Aishiteru*" or "I love you" is not common in daily situations.

Overview and Analysis of Love Expression

Both participants said that Japanese people, particularly Japanese men, are primarily reserved and not expressive. Japanese people will communicate more indirectly and with more non-verbal cues. Both participants could see their husband's love more through their actions rather than words. They are generous in giving gifts and showing affection more when they are in private, not in the public eye. They both also mentioned that they had communicated their husband their expectations before, for instance, about kissing.

They also learned how to read the room or the atmosphere, and their husbands' gestures or actions. For instance, they could gauge their husbands' responses through facial expressions (if they have wrinkles or clenched jaws), through their gestures (whether they clench their fists), their tone of voice, and response time. If they respond quickly, the answer is favorable. Conversely, the longer they take to answer, the more negative the answer.

In the case of arguments, both Filipinas mentioned encouraging their husbands to talk, not just to stay quiet but to speak and be more expressive. They also believe it is important to ask more questions, to learn more about each other's culture, to compromise, and be more culturally sensitive.

Overview and Analysis of the Major Challenges in International Marriages Experienced by Mrs. A and Mrs. Bee

Maintaining good hygiene, being health-conscious, and being aware of one's religious practices are important, particularly in international marriages. Besides

language and cultural disparities wherein the participant's relationships with their in-laws or extended families were affected due to language fluency, it is also noteworthy to mention that traditional gender roles (patriarchy) also affect their decision-making in terms of laws (policies)--in childbearing and child rearing, in marital intimacy, and in worst cases, extra-marital affairs, infidelity, and involvement of third parties.

Research Question 4: What other unique insights and emerging themes, distinct from the primary narratives of Filipino migrant women as wives in the study, were identified?

OTHER EMERGING THEMES AND INSIGHTS

Utilization of Technology for Language Learning, Mental Well-Being, and Building and Sustaining Relationships

Participants used technology, including language translation tools, smartphones, and social media, to connect and maintain communication with family and friends in Japan and in the Philippines.

Mrs. A: “Nagwowork sya sa USA, Andito ako sa Japan kaya kung di nya ako binigyan ng computer, mga smartphones katulad ng Android and Iphone baka di

natuloy relasyon namin…naguusap kami gamit ang SKYPE, minsan Facetime noong araw.” Pag di kami magkaintindihan gumagamit kami ng Google Translate, buti me mga ganito na before dictionary gamit ko”

(He used to work in the USA, and I worked here in Japan. If he had not sent me a computer or gadgets like an iPhone and Android smartphones, we would not have had such a relationship today. If we cannot understand each other, we use Google Translate. Good thing we have these things these days, before I used a dictionary.)

Mrs. Bee: “He was a sales representative from Japan, kaya madalas siyang bumalik sa Japan, kaya pag nasa Japan siya, madalas niya akong dinalaw dito sa Pilipinas gamit ang telepono. Siguro kung di siya matiyagang tumawag para kamustahin lang ako noon baka di rin natuloy ang relasyon namin na ito, nakita ko yung determinasyon nya at pagtitiyaga talaga na makuha ang loob ko.” Siyempre, gamit ko rin ang smartphone ko pag di kami magkaintindihan para i-translate ang kaso mo, minsan di siya eksakto sa meaning, kaya we have to give more examples.

(He was a Sales representative in Japan, so he frequently goes back to Japan and leaves me here in the Philippines*. He always makes long-distance calls using the telephone just to ask about my day. Through his determination and perseverance, I started to notice him and started to like him. I also use my smartphone when we don’t understand each other. We use translation, but sometimes it is not the exact meaning so we have to give more situational examples.)*

Participants also mentioned that in periods of homesickness, illness, work-related stress, and misunderstandings with their husbands, they use their gadgets to connect with their relatives and friends, which provide emotional relief.

Mrs. A: “Natawag ako sa Pilipinas gamit Iphone ko kada me problema sa bahay o kaya sa work. Minsan naman, kaka-TikTok ko or Facebook or Line or YouTube,

nawawala ang stress ko…stress reliever ba…especially nung bago pa lang ako dito sa Japan, super akong na-homesick dahil iba ang salita at kultura.
(I called my relatives in the Philippines every time I had problems at work or at home. After using TikTok, Facebook, or Line, or watching YouTube, all my stress was gone. These are my stress relievers…especially during my early years here in Japan, I always feel homesick due to language barriers and a different culture.)

Both research participants expressed that maintaining contact, with their family in the Philippines or with close friends in Japan, though their smartphones or tablets significantly contributed to their mental well-being.

Their stress relievers include traditional media, like the home television or the car radio. They find entertainment in using LINE and Facebook, or in watching YouTube and TikTok.

They often contact relatives back in the Philippines during spells of loneliness or sickness, or sometimes confide in their husbands, particularly on financial concerns. When homesickness is intense, they would gather with friends at karaoke bars to sing, dine, and dance. Additionally, they mentioned that Church teachings and attending Sunday masses helped them become more forgiving and understanding of their husbands.

As they began learning Japanese, they engaged in self-directed study using traditional media like television and car radio, along with print resources like books and dictionaries. They also sought support from their husbands, close friends, colleagues, and in-laws. Both participants undertook Japanese language courses in to enhance their Japanese proficiency. They also tried interacting with their Japanese neighbors and colleagues to improve their fluency.

On a different note, the Filipinas favored English-speaking medical professionals. They also sought assistance from their husbands, families, or Japanese friends during medical appointments. As highlighted by Mrs. Bee's experiences with divorce proceedings, Filipina migrant wives find the Japanese legal system particularly difficult, prompting them to seek advice on legal issues from non-profit organizations, Filipino groups, or local government services.

Overview and Analysis of the Benefits of International Marriage

Aside from learning Japanese, one participant also learned other languages, such as Bahasa Indonesian, while temporarily living in Indonesia and acquiring sewing skills. They are also able to travel for free, all expenses shouldered by their husbands. Both also learned about and enjoyed cooking cuisines from other countries. They also mentioned that most Japanese husbands are dependable (emotionally and financially). Both husbands of the two research participants are particularly good and responsible at managing their finances. They were able to invest in real estate and in financial securities.

Mrs. Bee:' I prefer him managing our finances, para walang problema…saka sa akin naman niya pinapangalan mga investments namin katulad na lang mga properties namin sa USA…yung mga bayarin dito siya na din nag-babayad noon though nitong huling taon nung maging teacher na ko tinutulungan ko na sya pagbabayad ng mga kuryente, tubig, gas man lang…"

(I prefer my husband managing our finances to avoid future problems… besides, all our investments, like properties in the USA, he named them all in my name.) He

shouldered all the expenses here, though recently I have been helping him pay our electricity, water, and gas, and other utility bills when I became a teacher here.)

Mrs. A: “Yung pangalawa kong asawa, napaka-responsible; sa kanya, lahat ng bayarin. Di ko pa nga siya asawa noon, siya na nga ang nagbabayad noon ng bahay ko at mga bayarin tulad ng kuryente at iba, saka lahat ng free travels hanggang ngayon.”

(My current husband is very responsible; he is paying all the house expenses. Even when we were just boyfriend and girlfriend, he was already paying my house rent and utility bills. Even on our trips, he shouldered all the expenses (everything).

Moreover, both research participants became more appreciative and respectful of others' cultures; they learned to be humbler and more open-minded. Mrs. Bee developed a great appreciation of her cultural identity, while Mrs. A is grateful to have beautiful and talented bi-racial children.

Overview and Analysis of the Strategies for Managing Stress and Adjusting for Filipino Migrant Wives

The Filipino migrant wives manage stress and maintain their well-being through a combination of support systems, entertainment and media consumption, community engagement, and religious participation.

Both participants first ask for help from their family members, particularly their sisters. They also seek help from friends and colleagues. To destress and relax, they use LINE (a popular social network in Japan), TikTok, Facebook, YouTube, and Instagram.

Sometimes, they would also visit karaoke bars to sing, dance, and dine. Additionally, they would regularly attend Church services on Sundays.

Mrs. A : “Kinakausap ko mga kamaganak or mga kaibigan ko pag nastress ako. Nagkakaraoke kami, inuman, sayawan at kain. Minsan nagsasayaw kami sa TikTok, nagpopost ako sa Facebook or nanonood, nanonood sa YouTube, nagchachat sa Messenger (Facebook) or text ko mga kaibigan ko sa Line.”

(If I’m feeling stress I talk to my relatives or friends. We went Karaoke bar to sing, dance, and eat. My friends and I, dance on TikTok too. I also use Facebook to watch or post, I watch on YouTube, or chat on Messenger (chat) or text on LINE, or send direct messages on Instagram as well.)

One participant also mentioned that talking to her neighbor helps her explore their local community.

Mrs. Bee: “Aside from watching TV, listening to music using my smartphone, talking to my sisters or calling my friends, I also talk sa mga kapitbahay ko. *(I also talk to my neighbors.)*

Both research participants felt that professional marriage counseling was unnecessary and conveyed uncertainty about whether they experienced some mental health issues, since this term was not well-known at that time.

Mrs. Bee: “I do not think it’s necessary to go for marriage counseling. But I went to a public lawyer instead to consult on the pros and cons of divorce.” I am not sure if I experienced or am experiencing mental health issues since I did not ask for a consultation.

Mrs. A: “Hindi na! Problema naming mag-asawa to. Kami lang makakaresolba ng problema namin at hindi ibang tao. Di naman uso noong araw yang mental health na yan.

(No need to consult! This is our own problem. We are the only ones who can resolve them, and not other people. Mental health was not a thing in the past)

Insights Gained from International Marriages

Every marriage inevitably faces challenges and is not always filled with happiness. Mrs. A found solace in having religion as the focal point of their relationship, as it aids in their mutual understanding. She also said:

“Ang marriage life kailangan balance kasi. Ikaw ang magdadala, kung gusto mong magpaka down na down nasa sa iyo yun, di ako nagpapadown, di ka pwedeng mag nega, saka sa akin number one ay i-center natin si Lord.”

(A balanced approach is essential in married life. It is your responsibility to maintain a positive outlook; if you choose to dwell in negativity, that is your decision. I do not dwell on a negative mindset. Furthermore, we must prioritize our relationship with God above all else.)

Mrs. Bee, on the contrary, employs nonverbal cues, such as tears or silence, to assert herself to her husband. Sometimes, she speaks in straight English to make her husband aware that she is upset, which subsequently, helps her get what she wants. She also dissuaded other Filipino women from marrying Japanese men due to her negative experience. Mrs. Bee firmly believed that if given the opportunity, she would not marry someone from a different cultural background again, as it proved difficult

"I speak straight English if I want to get something or to show my husband that I am really mad." Minsan naman iniiyakan ko, or hindi ako nagsasalita, tahimik lang."
(I cried sometimes or gave him a silent treatment.)

Mrs. Bee also added that Japanese law regarding divorce filing is impartial for women, especially for foreigners like her.

"Parang ako pa sinisisi ng lawyer, we have a problem daw because I am working. It's better if I stay as a full-time housewife and pwede daw akong makulong if iaabandon ko asawa ko without considering my feelings and situation…kaya hindi lo i-encourage kayo na mag-asawa ng lalaking Hapon."
(I was to blame if we have this problem, according to the lawyer, because I am working, and it would be better if I stayed at home as a full-time housewife. There is the possibility that I will be imprisoned due to abandonment. He never listens to my other concerns. So, I won't encourage any of you to marry a Japanese man.)

Both research participants highlighted the importance of effectively and efficiently using both traditional and social media platforms to facilitate clearer communication with their partners, and of being more attentive to their non-verbal cues.

Mrs. Bee: "Kakapanood ko noon ng TV at pakikinig ng radio sa kotse mabilis kong natutunan mag Nihonggo at mas maintindihan ang asawa ko."
(*I easily learned to speak Japanese because of regularly watching TV and listening to music in our car. Now, the more I understand my husband.)*

Mrs. A: "Dahil sa paggamit ko ng social media gamit ang smartphone ko, mas marami pa akong natutunan na Japanese, mas nagkakaintindihan kami."
(Using social media via my smartphone, I was able to learn more Japanese, and the more we understood each other.)

Cultural Identity (Sense of Self)

Filipino migrant wives in preserving their sense of self or cultural identity in Japan

Combining the Philippine and Japanese cultures has led to incorporating elements from both traditions into various practices, particularly in food preparation and consumption. Mrs. Bee's husband values having different breakfast, lunch, and dinner options and dislikes reheating or consuming leftovers.

Mrs. A and her family, however, enjoyed exploring various cuisines without any problems. She discovered similarities with Asian food culture, especially in the mutual fondness for noodles. Interestingly, Mrs. A already knew how to use chopsticks before she met her husband, having picked up the skill while working at a nightclub in Japan years ago. She prepared Asian and fusion dishes, often trying new recipes inspired by social media, to the delight of her husband and kids. They used chopsticks, spoons, forks, and even their hands, reflecting Filipino traditions. They also discussed blending Filipino culture into Japanese celebrations like birthdays and festivals. Additionally, the participants noted that social media and technology strengthened romantic relationships through cooking.

Mrs. A: "Gustong-gusto ng asawa ko ang luto ko kaya nakakapag-research ako sa smartphone kung paano lulutuin yung mga favorite nyang pagkain." Malaking tulong. Hayun lagi kaming sabay kumain at nakakapag-usap. Pinagko combine ko lutuing Pilipino and Japanese. Halimbawa, pagluluto ng pansit, instead na baboy ang gamit ay seafood ang rekado ko… Pag nakain ako ng Japanese food, gamit ko ang

chopsticks; if Pinoy food, kutsara and tinidor. Minsan nga, both kami nagkakamay ng asawa ko pag Pinoy food. Natutuwa siya."

(My husband really loves eating the food I cook. I can do some research and cook his favorite food using my smartphone. It was such a big help. We always eat and talk *together. I tried to combine Japanese and Filipino food. For example, if I cook "pansit" (rice noodles) instead of using pork, I will use seafood to adapt to their culture. I use chopsticks if I am eating Japanese food, and I use a spoon and a fork, or sometimes we both use our bare hands when eating Filipino food. We had so much fun.)*

The combination of Philippine and Japanese cultures in cooking shows how intercultural communication works.

When Filipino and Japanese food cultures combine, migrant wives experience new symbols of identity. This food fusion helps them show their multicultural identity and find their place in the family and in society. Using chopsticks and other important tools shows how they continue to negotiate cultural symbols in their everyday lives.

For both women, Japanese culture is not wholly adopted; it is instead blended with certain aspects of their original cultural identities. They experience acculturation, not assimilation. This includes cooking fusion dishes and celebrating holidays from both cultures. Each spouse's culture is maintained, adapted, and celebrated. This differs from assimilation, where one culture might dominate or replace another. Their ability to combine elements from both cultures and use the technology to keep connections and support mental health shows how these women manage their new lives while keeping their cultural roots

Overview and Analysis of Filipino Migrant Wives in Preserving their sense of Self or Cultural identity in Japan

The research participants were able to celebrate their identity by incorporating English (Filipino's *lingua franca*) with the Japanese language when speaking to their husbands; and Filipino and Visaya when conversing with fellow Filipinos.

The participants also identified themselves as Filipinos in terms of food preparation. However, in preparing noodles, Mrs. A had to switch to seafood like shrimp, octopus, and squid instead of pork, since the latter is rarely used in Japanese cuisine.

She also made a concerted effort to avoid using fish sauce (*patis*) in her cooking, since Japanese people tend to dislike its odor and are not fond of "*alamang*" or "*bagoong*" (shrimp or fish paste). She tried to blend Filipino cuisine with some Japanese ingredients.

Mrs. A: "Pag nagluluto ako ng pansit …usually hipon, octopus or pusit saka di ako nagamit ng patis at ayaw na ayaw nilang mga Hapon ang amoy nito. Ayaw din nila ang amoy ng alamang or bagoong."

(I cooked noodles by using seafood like shrimp, octopus, or squid instead of pork. I do not use fish sauce, shrimp, or fish paste since they do not like the smell.)

This kind of food preparation, where Filipino and Japanese cultures are blended, can strengthen relationships between couples in an international marriage.

Additionally, she adhered to the "Japanese way" when cooking rice by washing it multiple times before cooking—up to twenty times, if possible—then stirring it again before serving. She also mentioned that she still prefers to eat rice rather than noodles.

Mrs. A : “Sa kanila dapat talaga malinaw yung tubig ng bigas bago iluto kaya dapat hugasan ng maraming beses at pagkaluto natutunan ko na dapat haluin yung kanin para mas maluto at mas maganda daw i-serve. Pero hanggang ngayon mas gusto ko pa din ang kumain ng kanin kesa mga noodles.”

(In Japan, you have to wash the rice many times before cooking. After cooking, you have to mix it to ensure it cooks evenly and looks more presentable for serving. Although I still prefer rice to noodles.)

They also enjoyed watching films from Japan, the USA (Hollywood), and the Philippines in their leisure time. Moreover, they became interested in learning Japanese, Filipino, and English songs.

Mrs. Bee: “We love watching Hollywood and Japanese movies.”

Mrs. A: “Lahat pinapanood namin, mapa USA, Philippines, Japan or Korean movies pag me time kami,”

(We watch all kinds of films, whether they are from the USA, the Philippines, Japan, or Korean movies, during our free time.)

According to Mrs. A, balance in everything is important, particularly in an international marriage. Accepting each other’s good points and flaws is also necessary. Putting God as the center of their relationship also matters.

Mrs. A: “Balanse dapat sa lahat. Dapat tanggap natin ng buo-buo ang pagkatao ng asawa natin. Mabuti o masamang ugali dapat tanggap natin. Importante din na si Kristo nasa center ng relasyon ng mag-asawa.”

(Balance is everything. We should accept both the good and the bad points of our husbands. We should entirely accept them. Most importantly, Christ should be the center of the relationship.)

Moreover, Mrs. A mentioned that she could easily assert herself, and they could avoid disagreements by taking things lightly, injecting humor, and accepting each other's constructive criticism rather than engaging in negativity in their marital relationship.

Mrs. A: “Pag meron kaming di pagkakaintindihan, dapat di sabay na galit. Pag mainit ang isa dapat yung isa cool lang. Dinadaan na lang namin sa pagjo-joke…at pinapakinggan namin bawat isa pag ok na.”

(If we have some disagreements, one should be calm and ready to listen. We both tried not to be mad at the same time. We took it lightly and were humorous instead. We accept each other's criticisms after the heated argument.)

Acculturation is also evident in Mrs. A’s food preparation, and in their shared movie-watching, which reflect blended cultures of the Philippines and Japan.

In the case of Mrs. Bee, in times of arguments with her husband, she would use non-verbal cues, such as silence or tears, to get the attention of his husband. She would also use straight English to let her husband know that she is mad.

She also emphasized the importance of compromise and open communication in a straightforward (direct) manner. Moreover, she identified that genuine love, respect, open-mindedness, honesty, open communication, and trust in one’s partner will sustain the relationship. Blending Japanese and Filipino cultures also promoted mutual understanding.

Table 4.1

I. Demographic Profile Information

Demographic Profile	Mrs. A	Mrs. Bee
Age	54	55
Educational Attainment	1st year Midwifery	Bachelor of Arts
Marital Status	Divorced/ Remarried	Married
Place of Married	Mindanao, Philippines	Manila, Philippines
Years Married	15 years currently	30 years
Number of Children	Two	None
Years Residing in Japan	35 years	24 years
Occupation	Worker/ Ex-Entertainer	English Teacher
Years Residing Abroad After arriving in Japan	3 yrs (USA/Philippines)	6 yrs (Indonesia, USA, Singapore, Malaysia)

Table 4.2

II. Reason for Migration

Mrs. A	Mrs. Bee
Work as an entertainer	Marriage

Table 4.3

III. Perception of Marriage

Mrs. A	Mrs. Bee
No idea of marrying a Japanese	Never thought of marrying a foreigner
International marriage is exciting but difficult	An international marriage would be difficult

Table 4.4

IV. Emerging Themes and Patterns

Emerging Themes	Mrs. A	Mrs. Bee
A. Ways to Communicate	Both “verbal” and "non-verbal”	Both “verbal” and "non-verbal”
B. Cultural Differences		
1. Extended family relationship	With negative /positive experience (discrimination)	With negative experience (stereotype)
2. Religion	Catholic Husband	Catholic Husband
3. Gender and Marital Roles	Household chores	Household chores
4. Starting a Family and Childrearing	Difficult (lack of support)	Difficult (husband against having kids)
5. Access to Assets and Finances	Acquired assets abroad / Husband Managing Finances	Acquired assets abroad/Husband Managing Finances
6. Marital Intimacy/ Challenges	Difficulty expressing/ Personality	Difficulty asserting herself/Values
7. Food	Blended /Fusion	Choices / Manners

8. Residency	Husband's Abroad exposure	Husband's Abroad exposure
9. Institutions, Laws, and Policies (Sense of Self)	Crab Mentality among co-workers /Discrimination	Divorce Rules/Discrimination

Table 4.5

V. Emerging Themes and Patterns (Continuation)

C. Language Differences	**Mrs. A**	**Mrs. Bee**
1. Japanese as a Complex / Second Language	Verbal / Non-verbal cues/ Various Writing Systems (Hiragana/Katakana/Kanji/ Romaji)	Verbal / Non-verbal cues/ Various Writing Systems (Hiragana/Katakana/Kanji/ Romaji)
2. Translation Challenges and Language Fluency	There is no direct translation or exact meaning	There is no direct translation or exact meaning
3. Interacting and Communicating with In-laws	Without interaction Direct and Indirect Communication Style	Different Language Indirect / Non-verbal cues Communication Style

Table 4.6

VI. Major Challenges Faced by the Research Participants

1. Cultural and Language Differences	Mrs. A	Mrs. Bee
Relationship with extended families (Language Fluency)	Discriminated	Pre-judgement/ Stereotyped
Maintaining Good Hygiene and Health Related Problems	Without support from the previous husband	(Age/Seniority) and due to Religion
Patriarchy (gender/decision-making/policies)	Household chores/ Foods/ Work	Household chores/ Foods/ Work/ Divorce (Consultation)
Starting a Family/ Childrearing	Difficult/ Without Division of Labor	Decision-making of having a child /Different Values
Marital Intimacy /Extra-Marital Affair	Personality Differences (Reserved)	Personality Differences (Traditional / Had a fling, caught on CP)/Values

Table 4.7

I. Benefits of International Marriage

Advantages	
Mrs. A	**Mrs. Bee**
Learning new culture (foods, greetings, clothes, and so on)	Learning something new (skills like learning a new culture and language, cooking, sewing, and so on)
Husband as a Savior (socio-economic for money, food, housing, and so on) and Fun	Someone to rely on (financial, properties, emotional support)
Free travel / Try new cuisines	Travels a lot, tries different kinds of foods, and meets different people
Becoming stronger (personality)	Becoming more independent, humbler, and more sensitive
Having beautiful half-children (bi-racial)	Learn to compromise (without kids, but can have pets like dogs
Comparison of Japan to Philippines	Appreciate your country more

Table 4.8

II. A Strategy for Managing Stress or an Adjustment process that influenced their overall health and wellness of Filipino migrant wives

Mrs. A	**Mrs. Bee**
Talk to Family (sisters/current husband)	Talk to Friends, Co-workers, Family
Using Gadgets/ social media	Using Traditional media/social media
Karaoke /Singing/Dancing	Visiting Friends with Karaoke at home
Filipino Community/Religious Service	Filipino Community/ Mass/Neighbors

Both mentioned unnecessary to have a professional marriage counselor	Both mentioned unnecessary to have a professional marriage counselor
Not sure if she had a mental health concern in the past.	Not diagnosed with mental health concerns

Table 4.9

III. Other Significant Emergent Themes

A. Ways of Preserving their Sense of Self or Cultural Identity	
Mrs. A	**Mrs. Bee**
Through Events/ Foods/ Language/Movies	Celebrations of Events/ Foods/ Language/Watching TV programs
B. Utilization of Technology for Building a Romantic Relationship, Learning a Language and for Mental Health Support	
Mrs. A	**Mrs. Bee**
Positive Experience (Long Distance Relationship)	Positive Experience (Long Distance Relationship)
Using social media for mental wellness like Facebook, Tiktok, LINE	Using social media for mental wellness Like Facebook, YouTube
Used smartphone/computer in building relationship and maintaining	Used landline(telephone) smartphone to maintain (or ruin) relationship

Chapter V

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

Two (2) Japan-based Filipina wives married to Japanese husbands agreed to be part of this research study as interviewees within the context of international marriage. The researcher employed a qualitative case study methodology and relied heavily on in-depth interviews conducted in-person and via Zoom, supported by participant observation, follow-up calls, and audio materials. With the participants' consent, the researcher recorded the interviews, during which, respect for privacy and confidentiality of data was observed. After transcription, thematic analysis was used.

A profile of the research participants showed that they were born and raised in the Philippines, within their closely-knit Filipino families, and who grew up in a traditional Filipino culture. Each had a different reason for migrating to Japan: one was primarily economic, while the other was due to marriage to a Japanese man. Both mentioned that marrying Japanese men was an 'unplanned' decision.

Entering an international marriage proved to have more challenges due to cultural and language differences, particularly in communication styles. Japan is considered a patriarchal society, where the females (regardless of their socio-economic status) are still considered only 'secondary' to the males. Being a Filipina married to a Japanese first-born male (chonan) made the situation more difficult. The predominant stereotype of a Filipina (as a '*Japayuki*') has had a detrimental effect on

the image and reputation of Filipinas working in Japan (regardless of their socio-economic, educational, or employment status).

Despite these differences, Filipino wives have learned to face the harsh realities of being married to a foreigner, much more to a Japanese husband, where gender roles and social relationships reflect a patriarchal culture. The participants also expressed hope that their Japanese husbands would help in their housework, particularly if both spouses were employed. This marital setup is different in the Philippines, where domestic and childcare duties are shared. However, they also acknowledged that it was more practical for their Japanese husbands to manage their finances due to the language barrier that came with the task, despite the customary roles for wives to handle the finances.

Behavioral adjustments were more of the Filipina wives' role rather than the Japanese husbands as part of acculturation. The dynamics of communication within an international marriage between a Filipina and a Japanese spouse were also verbal and non-verbal. Language barriers, combined with the high-context culture and the Japanese' more reserved nature, Filipina wives need to be more mindful of their husbands' non-verbal cues, which took them time to adjust to. Moreover, one participant described using humor while the other used non-aggressive ways to assert herself.

Like all other marriages, international marriages entail benefits and challenges. Research participants identified some advantages, such as learning new cultures and skills, receiving financial and emotional support, having beautiful biracial children, enhancing personal growth, having more travel and job opportunities, and gaining a greater appreciation of one's own country and culture, which can help one retain one's sense of self.

These two Filipinas also highlighted the role of technology in their relationships. While technology immensely helped sustain their marriage and their social connections, it could also contribute to marital conflict (i.e., using smartphones for extramarital affairs.

Both research participants also used traditional media such as TV and car radio to improve their Japanese language skills. They also mentioned using their smartphones and tablets to support their mental well-being, by accessing entertainment through LINE, TikTok, YouTube, and Facebook. They also used these gadgets to communicate with their family back in the Philippines. They also attend Church services to seek peace of mind and spiritual well-being.

Despite living in Japan for decades, the Filipina research participants have learned to grapple with this difficulty by being more open-minded, by studying the Japanese language, by resorting to communication technologies (e.g., using Google translate and watching television shows in Japanese, among others), and being more culturally sensitive and respectful of other cultures. Moreover, genuine love, respect, compromise, balance, and open, honest, and direct communication proved necessary, as in non-international marriages. One should also be mindful of the proper or right choice of words, especially in the Japanese language, and should be more culturally sensitive, particularly to all the non-verbal cues of the Japanese husband.

Conclusion

This case study aimed to answer three (3) major research questions: (1) How do Filipino wives communicate with their Japanese husbands; (2) In what ways do cultural and linguistic disparities shape the communication dynamics between Filipino migrant wives and their Japanese husbands; and 3) How do Filipino migrant wives address and adapt to the major challenges within inter-racial marriages. The research participants in this study highlighted the importance of developing adaptive skills through 'continued practice' on foreign soil to handle misunderstandings and various situations within an international marriage. Adjustment in styles of communication was essential, especially if a Filipina was married to a Japanese man.

The alignment of the 'Muted Group Theory (Ardener & Ardener, 1975), in which language and communication are dominated by those in power (Japanese husbands), often marginalizing less privileged groups, such as Filipino migrant wives, is evident. In this case, the Japanese language is constructed by and for the dominant group; marginalized individuals like these Filipinas must often translate their thoughts into a language that may not fully represent their experiences or needs. Therefore, it creates a barrier for these Filipino migrant wives to express themselves effectively. The voices of Filipinas married to Japanese husbands are often muted, distorted, or marginalized due to cultural norms and the dominant Japanese language structures shaped by patriarchal society. Moreover, as cited by Byerly (2018), this theory helped analyze the communication barriers faced by Filipina wives. As shown in the case of Mrs. Bee, his Japanese husband tried to control her voice (tried to mute her) unless she spoke in fluent Japanese. The research participants, as marginalized Filipino migrant wives,

faced challenges in being heard and had to adapt their style of communication with that of their Japanese husbands, which extended to the whole Japanese community.

The findings also revealed that Filipina wives adjusted more to learning the local language; however, it was not thoroughly revealed whether Japanese husbands tried to learn the Filipino language as extensively as their Filipina wives. Filipina migrant wives also mentioned the importance of non-verbal cues of their husbands to communicate and understand them better**.** These research participants, to sustain their marital relationships, chose to remain silent, accept their domestic roles, and tried to assimilate into some Japanese culture. Differences in culture and language also greatly affect their marital relationships and well-being.

Moreover, the behavior or form of adaptation shown by Filipinas is consistent with the theory of Kramarae (1981) and Mills (1999), wherein these women can also use language strategically to assert themselves and gain visibility and power, challenging the idea of permanent silence even in a dominant and patriarchal society. This scenario of Mrs. Bee asserting what she wants through non-aggressive ways like an emotional plea or hilarity (in the case of Mrs. A) rather than a more male-dominated speech pattern that is aggressive.

However, it cannot be concluded whether this scenario could be reversed if the research participants were already professionals upon entering Japan rather than nightclub workers or young homemakers. Moreover, it would be hard for any foreigners to totally assimilate into Japan since they will always be treated as outsiders by Japanese society regardless of how long they live there. Lastly, this study cannot be conclusive due to the limitations in the number of research participants and the scope of the study.

Recommendations

This case study was inspired by the fact that no previous study of a similar kind and purpose was conducted in Central Japan, considering the large population of Filipinos there. It is, therefore, recommended that a future study with a larger sample size of Filipina migrant wives as study participants, specifically in Central Japan, be undertaken using mixed methods (qualitative and quantitative). It is also interesting to explore whether Filipino women's socio-economic status (especially Filipinas with advanced academic degrees and fluent in Japanese language) will significantly affect marital relationships with Japanese husbands, especially in managing and negotiating their finances.

While numerous studies have been conducted on the lives of Filipino women workers in Japan, there appears to be a dearth of literature on international marriage that focuses on a couple's communication dynamics and processes, specifically in the nonverbal communication style; future studies about this will be highly recommended as well.

The findings also suggest that to render a more balanced perspective, future studies on international marriages may also tackle the experiences of Japanese husbands particularly those first born or called "*chonan*" and compare their experiences with their Filipina wives. Hence, a more encompassing study will highlight how communication impacts these international marriages.

Lastly, the study also featured some emerging themes on gender roles, which can be further explored in future scholastic undertakings.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

Guide for the Interview

In this research study, the researcher used qualitative research instruments such as in-depth interviews, observation of the participants, data analysis, and more. Your experiences and insights are crucial to the success of this study. The following is the list of questions:

1.) Demographic Profile of Interviewee: name (optional), age, sex, educational attainment, occupation, number of years living and working in Japan, number of years of marriage, place of marriage, and number of children (if any).

2.) Migration-related questions: What were your reasons for working or coming to Japan? When and where did you first leave? What was your first job? Please describe your adjustment process in the first few months/years upon arriving in Japan. What are the advantages and disadvantages of working and living in Japan?

3.) Personal aspirations: Did you have dreams/aspirations as an Asian/Filipino migrant woman in Japan? If yes, what are these? Did you wish to get married? Yes/No? If so, did you imagine what your married life would be like? Did you wish to marry a foreigner? Why or why not? Do you have an ideal married life?

4.) Questions related to Married life: Is this your first international relationship? When and how did you meet your Japanese husband? What is your husband's most attractive characteristics? Have you and your husband lived abroad? If so, how long? What are the benefits and disadvantages of marrying a Japanese man? How

was your marriage affected by your work, social and family relationships, religious practices, or beliefs, among others?

Questions based on Dimension 1: Access to Assets

1.) Has your being employed been an issue with your Japanese husband? Please elaborate.
2.) Have you acquired some assets (i.e., property) in Japan/Philippines for the entire duration of your work in Japan? If so, what is/are these asset/s?
3.) How do you make decisions involving your Japanese husband? Or do you have any freedom to decide on your own?
4.) Can you save a substantial amount of money while married? Why or why not?
5.) Is there a shared bank account you maintain with your husband? Why or why not? If so, do you have the freedom to access the joint savings? Why or why not?
6.) Do you have any stable support system (i.e., friends, acquaintances, workmates/colleagues)? How is your relationship with them?

Questions based on Dimension 2: Beliefs and Perceptions

1.) What are your similarities and differences with your husband? Did you have problems resolving the differences? Explain your answer.
2.) What is the predominant language you use at home? How do you communicate with your husband? Did your husband agree with the choice of language? Who decided to use that language, and why or why not? What is your communication style with your husband? Did it change over the years? Why and how? Do you have the language to communicate with your husband?

3.) Can you still practice religious and cultural beliefs within the household? If so, what are these?

4.) Do you have children? Do you have similarities and differences in raising children? If so, what are these?

5.) How do you regard the Japanese culture? Are you satisfied with marrying a Japanese man in this international marriage? Please elaborate.

Questions based on Dimension 3: Practices and Participation

1.) How was your typical day as a wife to a Japanese man? As a mother? As a migrant worker?

2.) How can you balance your household / parental / wife / professional duties? How do you feel about this?

3.) Does your husband partake in the child-rearing duties? Why or why not?

4.) Can you celebrate Filipino culture with your husband? Like what?

5.) Are you free to discuss intimate and personal matters with your husband? If so, please elaborate. If not, what are the hindrances?

6.) Are there any topics you are not allowed to talk about (taboo topics like World War 2 Yakuza, Comfort women, or Christianity)?

7.) How do you cope with your marital problems?

8.) What are your strategies for coping with these problems?

9.) Who are the first people you approach if you have domestic problems? In workplace?

Questions based on Dimension 4: Institutions/Laws/Policies

1.) Are you aware of specific laws concerning your rights as a migrant woman/wife
2.) living in Japan? If so, what are these? Are you able to assert these rights if you encounter problems?
3.) Has the Philippine embassy in Japan been helpful to you in your most difficult times here? If so, how?
4.) Did you encounter problems complying with policies or laws within the workplace? If so, what are these, and how did you resolve them4) Have you ever experienced any form of violence (physically/mentally, emotionally/ verbally) at home and work? Please elaborate on these.
5.) What were the actions you took after the experience? Whom did you seek for help? Why?
6.) How did you feel about these experiences?
7.) Have you ever experienced mental health problems or issues because of marital problems and work?
8.) How did you face these problems? Who did you seek help on this?

Note: In the last part of the interview, the following will also be asked:

What would be your message to those aspiring Filipinas who want to enter international marriage or marry a Japanese man?

What would you recommend to improve your living here in Japan?

Do you have something to add that we did not talk/discuss today?

Is it possible for me to contact you again if there are some follow-up questions?

Thank you very much for your time, cooperation, and for sharing your valuable experiences with us. Your contribution to this research is greatly appreciated.

APPENDIX B

INFORMED CONSENT FORM

Informed Consent Form for the research participants of the study entitled "Intercultural Communication in International Marriages: A Case Study of Filipino Migrant Wives Married to Japanese Husbands"

Good day!

As a graduate student from the University of the Philippines Open University (UPOU), who is conducting a research case study about Filipino migrant wives married to Japanese spouses in Central Japan, I, Melany Moya, my role is to gather data to contribute to the empirical understanding of their living conditions and experiences as married wives of Japanese men in Japan.

The study is part of the academic requirement of the Master of Development Communication degree program under the Faculty of Information and Communication Studies at UP Open University

In line with this, I would like to seek your consent to use your responses for a study titled "Intercultural Communication in International Marriages: A Case Study of Filipino Migrant Wives Married to Japanese Husbands."

The study aims to examine the specific experiences of select Filipino migrant women married to Japanese men, including the unspoken struggles and advantages of being in an international marriage, mainly how they communicate with each other. It also hopes to contribute to an empirical understanding of their living conditions,

considering how they assert their fundamental rights as wives of Japanese husbands and migrant workers through qualitative presentation and documentation of the plight of select Filipino wives married to Japanese men. This research case study will also benefit Filipino migrant women who may be engaged in a similar relationship or those contemplating entering such a relationship in the future.

Your participation in this research case study is wholly voluntary, and as a research participant, you have the right to decline or withdraw at any time. You can be confident that all data or information gathered will be kept confidential and utilized solely for the objectives of this study; therefore, no participants will be identifiable.

The results of this study will be recorded, analyzed, and included in the researcher's thesis manuscript. Rest assured that the data will be stored securely and deleted after the customary 3-5 years.

If you agree to be part of this study, kindly sign this consent form.

Thank you very much!

Consent

I have read or had this form read to me about the purpose of the interview and its possible risks and benefits. I acknowledge that I have the option to decline participation in this survey. I will inform the researcher early on to not hamper the research process.

I truly understand that:

1. The purpose of the interview is to examine the conditions of Filipino migrant women in an international marriage with Japanese men in Aichi, Japan;
2. My participation is voluntary, and as such, I will cooperate with the researcher in the best way possible;
3. Only the researcher has access to the data to be gathered from this study and my identity, and these will be kept confidential even after the final study is submitted.

Most importantly, I can also stop answering at any point if I feel uncomfortable with the research questions to be asked, as my comfort and well-being are of utmost importance.

Participant's Name: _____

Participant's Signature: _____

Date Signed: _____

APPENDIX C

Letter of Request to Conduct Study

Date : _____

Name of Interviewee : _____

Designation : _____

Address : _____

Dear Ms. _____:

I, the undersigned, am a student from the University of the Philippines-Open University (UPOU) who is hoping to conduct a study about the conditions of Filipino migrant women married to Japanese men in Aichi, Japan. The research study is part of the academic requirements for my Master of Development Communication course under the Faculty of Information and Communication Studies.

This qualitative research, which seeks to elucidate the experiences of selected Filipino migrant women married to Japanese men, is of significant importance. Your participation will contribute to filling a gap in this area of inquiry, particularly in understanding how Filipino migrant women communicate with their Japanese husbands and assert themselves as women and Asian migrant workers in Aichi, Japan.

To fully undertake this research, I am incredibly pleased to invite you to be one of my interviewees/participants. Your experience as a Filipino migrant woman/wife currently living and working in Aichi, Japan is invaluable. I believe that you have met

the necessary criteria or qualifications that I have crafted to achieve the objectives of my research study.

The consent form, which indicates the details of the engagement as an interviewee/participant in the study, accompanies this letter of request.

Your participation is crucial to the success of this study. Thank you very much, and I look forward to your positive response to this request.

Sincerely,

_____

Melany O. Moya