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**Space and Exchanges: Information Grounds of Selected Filipino Migrants in
Bangkok, Thailand**

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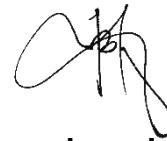
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Acceptance Page

This paper prepared by **OIKO B. TACUSALME** with the title: “**Space and Exchanges: Information Grounds of Selected Filipino Migrants in Bangkok, Thailand**” is hereby accepted by the Faculty of Information and Communication Studies, U.P. Open University, in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree Program.



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Biographical Sketch

Oiko Tacusalme is a research administrator at the Faculty of Tropical Medicine, Mahidol University, Bangkok, Thailand. He earned his Bachelor of Arts in Communication from Tarlac State University in the Philippines. Initially aspiring to become a journalist or creative writer, his role at a leading scientific research and public health institution sparked his interest in health communication and communication for development. Oiko aims to explore how effective communication can serve as a catalyst for advancing global health initiatives.

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To Erwan and Trixie, though we did not complete our journey at the same time, I know we will all achieve our goals in the end. Thank you for the wonderful memories we shared in our graduate studies!

Dedication

To my wife and our future family. You are all my reasons.

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Abstract

This study explored the information grounds (IG) of Filipino migrants in Bangkok (FMTs) by examining the characteristics of significant places for information exchange, the types of information sought and shared, and the social dynamics involved in these interactions. Guided by the Information Ground Theory and utilizing Fisher et al.'s (2007) people-place-information trichotomy as an analytical framework, the research employed a quantitative survey with 101 Filipino migrant respondents recruited through purposive and snowball sampling. Data collected via an online survey revealed that FMTs communicated in both physical spaces and increasingly in digital environments as they mentioned social media, workplaces, and churches as their primary IGs. These IGs are frequently visited for information exchange and social interaction, with preferences influenced by convenience and accessibility. The information shared often centers on work-related issues, personal matters, and news from the Philippines. Most FMTs interact in small groups of five or fewer, playing the role of information seekers while fostering moderate familiarity among members. Social interaction remains a primary motivator for engagement in these IGs. In conclusion, IGs are vital lifelines for FMTs in Bangkok, providing not only access to information but also fostering resilience, community ties, and adaptability in a foreign context. Strengthening these IGs through targeted strategies can address the unique challenges faced by Filipino migrants. This highlights the need for policies that enhance communication and support networks, and ensuring that FMTs thrive while preserving their cultural identity and connections.

Keywords: Diaspora, Overseas Filipino Workers, support networks, online spaces

Chapter I

INTRODUCTION

Background of the Study

When people leave their home countries and enter new cultures, they often face unfamiliar customs and social structures. This adjustment can be difficult, especially during emergencies or important issues. In such situations, having access to trustworthy and useful information is crucial. Both migrants and travelers seek out sources of information to handle the unfamiliar, adapt to their new surroundings, and ultimately establish stability in their lives (Wang et al., 2020).

Information can come from various sources, such as formal institutions like embassies and consulates and informal networks of fellow expatriates and online communities. This information can be crucial for navigating legal processes, accessing essential services, and connecting with potential support systems. In times of crisis, like political instability or natural disasters, having timely and accurate information can mean the difference between safety and vulnerability. Therefore, the natural human instinct to seek information abroad, especially during challenging times, emphasizes its vital role in ensuring well-being and facilitating a smoother transition into a new and unfamiliar environment (Zalivanskiy & Samokhvalova, 2020).

With its growing economy and bustling cities, Thailand has attracted many Filipino migrants in recent decades (Suksai, 2020). These migrants, hailing from diverse backgrounds and driven by various motivations, navigate a new social, cultural, and geographical landscape.

In this context, the "information ground" concept becomes particularly relevant. Information grounds are social settings where people gather, interact, and exchange information (Fisher et al., 2005).

For Filipino migrants in Thailand (FMT), these information grounds serve as crucial touchpoints, providing them with the necessary resources and support to navigate their new environment. Through these information exchanges, migrants can access vital information about employment opportunities, housing, healthcare, and other essential services, as well as maintain connections with their home country and build social networks in their host country (Vincent, 2012).

This space where people converge is what Karen E. Fisher (nee Pettigrew) (1999) first proposed as information ground (IG). Fisher conceived the concept of information grounds in 1999 from her study on how nurses, seniors, and others share human services or everyday information at community foot clinics (Pettigrew, 1999). With the assumption that the nurses provided the seniors with everyday information that the latter could not obtain elsewhere, she found otherwise that seniors were sources of information for the nurses themselves and shared information through exchanges with multiple persons while waiting for treatment.

According to Laszlo's (2017) article in *A Beginner's Guide to Information Grounds*, the concept of information grounds was shaped by the philosophy of social constructionism. As applied to information seeking, this perspective suggests that knowledge and reality categories are actively formed through social interactions

within cultural contexts. People's interactions, relationships, situations, and shared experiences shape their information needs and how they seek, use, and share information.

The IG concept is related to the 'third place' idea, inspired by Oldenburg (1999). The term "third place" was introduced as where one is found when one is not home (first place) or at work (second place). It is with the assumption that IG is created in a 'third place'.

Serendipity plays a key role in the context of IG. Individuals may stumble upon information they were not explicitly looking for, which turned out to be relevant, interesting, or useful. IG posits that people go to their "third place" for purposes other than to acquire information but receive it through casual conversation or simply overhearing other people's exchanges. For example, a passenger goes to a bus station to buy tickets but unexpectedly learns from another passenger and staff member that the schedule for the bus going to his destination is delayed. The information ground theory also aims to understand how individuals share or use their acquired information.

Third Space for Filipino Migrants

Fisher et al. (2006) defined information grounds as a temporal place or environment where people exchange information, share experiences, and engage in social interactions. These spaces could be formal or informal, such as libraries, cafes, online forums, workplaces, and community centers. Fisher (née Pettigrew) and colleagues conducted several studies using the information grounds framework

(1998, 1999, 2000) in physical places such as clinics, university campuses, and libraries.

A rich area for studying information grounds is the spaces created by migrant communities such as in Thailand.

The Department of Employment of Thailand reported in 2017 that 14,830 Filipinos were working in Thailand in the areas of teaching, management, engineering, architecture, and business. Meanwhile, the Philippine Embassy recorded 17,921 FMTs, suggesting that around 4,000 Filipinos work in irregular sectors (Novio, 2022). They do not obtain valid work permits and immigration documentation, which excludes them from receiving social security benefits.

In Thailand, migrants are Filipinos who entered Thailand as tourists and extended their stay for more than 30 days (Sarausad & Archavanitkul, 2014). Sarausad & Archavanitkul defined the three categories of FMT: first, regular migrants are foreign workers with adequate legal documents and obtaining a working permit; second are irregular migrants who are foreign workers without a work permit; and third, are semi-regular migrants who have moved from regular to irregular employment or vice-versa because of transitions. The authors used multiple methods, such as surveys and interviews of Filipino migrants in several provinces in Thailand and collected data from social networking sites and related websites. The authors found slightly more regular migrants than irregular migrants in Thailand. Both regular and irregular migrants are teachers or workers in any teaching-related role.

Sarausad & Archavanitkul also noted that ASEAN members have less restrictive entry and exit requirements in ASEAN countries like Thailand. In usual cases, Filipinos can freely go and leave Thailand because both countries have strong diplomatic relations. However, the two countries have no official Bilateral Labor Agreement (BLA). A study by Novio (2018) confirmed that Filipinos in Thailand entered as tourists to find employment. Hence, it is difficult to track and differentiate a tourist from a migrant. According to the Thai Immigration Bureau report, in 2019, 16,103 Filipinos in Thailand had non-tourist visas (Statistics, 2019).¹

The most salient issue that has affected the Filipino migrant community in Thailand starting in 2020 was the COVID-19 pandemic. These are Filipinos with non-tourist visas or who have stayed in Thailand longer than 30 days and are considered migrants (Sarausad & Archavanitkul, 2014). Pan (2020) reported that 81% of 1,047 Filipinos working in Thailand were affected financially by COVID-19.

As for the government's sources of information, the Philippine government has created agencies and offices to serve Filipinos living overseas. These include the Philippine Embassies, the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA), the Philippine Overseas Employment Administration (POEA), and the Overseas Workers Welfare Administration (OWWA), with a common mandate to serve the needs of Filipino migrants abroad. In July 2020, for example, the Philippine Embassy in Thailand assisted 966 Filipinos to fly back home through the Philippine government's repatriation program (DFA Repatriates, 2020).

¹ The FMT population was based on the Thai Immigration Bureau's 2019 report on the number of Filipinos with non-tourist visas. Non-tourist visa holders have stayed in Thailand longer than 30 days and are considered migrants (Sarausad & Archavanitkul, 2014).

Past studies (World Health Organization, 2021; Wong et al., 2020; Huo et al., 2019) and my observation as an FMT showed the growing prevalence of online and social media in communicating information, especially for COVID-19-related information. However, even before the pandemic, studies on the information-seeking behavior of Filipino migrants worldwide revealed that the internet and social media are among the preferred sources of information and communication (Khoir et al., 2015; Sibal & Foo, 2016; Ahn & Chae, 2019; Bernadas & Jiang, 2019).

In Thailand, many FMTs use social media to seek information about COVID-19-related and the Philippine government's assistance, repatriation requirements, quarantine policies, and others. They seemingly preferred social media such as Facebook groups to directly send their inquiry to concerned government agencies because of the quick response from Facebook community members.

However, both categories of information sources – government and social media – have shortcomings and challenges. In Thailand, the needed information on COVID-19 from government agencies for non-speakers of the Thai language, including Filipino migrants, is not always accessible or timely, even during a health crisis when health information is critical. Studies in Singapore and Thailand indicated that Filipino migrants do not subscribe to the Philippine government's information services (Sibal & Foo, 2016; Novio, 2018). Further, a study reported that 34 percent of 138 Filipinos in Singapore were unfamiliar with the Philippines' e-government services, while 20 percent preferred face-to-face communication to online services (Sibal & Foo, 2016A).

Statement of the Problem

Given the context of the COVID-19 crisis and other pressing issues of migrant communities – with Filipino migrants in Thailand having choices of seeking information from government agencies or social media or both – and recognizing that these media have their benefits and challenges - the researcher wants to understand the 'information ground' of the migrants to access and exchange helpful information.

Hence, this study explores the particular spaces in which the migrants seek and exchange information in the diaspora in Thailand. This will help provide suggestions for communication strategies or policies of the Philippine government for Filipinos in the diaspora during crises or calamities or when facing difficult issues.

Research Questions

The major research question is how do Filipino migrants in Bangkok, Thailand (FMTs) construe and use 'information ground' for information seeking and sharing on topics and issues that are important to them.

Specifically, the study asks;

1. What places are considered 'information grounds' by the FMTs? Why?
2. What information is sought, shared, and used in these 'information grounds' by the FMTs? Why?
3. Who are the people and relationships involved in these 'information grounds' by the FMTs?
4. How can one strengthen the 'information ground' for FMTs in the diaspora?

Objectives of the Study

The study aims to explore the 'information ground' and how these are used by FMTs for topics and issues that are significant to them.

Specifically, the study aims to answer the following research objectives:

1. Describe the usual and preferred sources or places of information sharing among FMTs;
2. Describe what information is sought, shared, and used in these 'information grounds' by the FMTs.
3. Discuss who are the people and relationships involved in these 'information grounds' by the FMTs.
4. Discuss how can one strengthen the 'information ground' for FMTs in the diaspora.

Significance of the Study

This research not only contributes to the academic discourse on migration and information behavior but also offers practical recommendations for enhancing the information landscape for Filipino migrants in Bangkok.

By recognizing and leveraging the significance of information grounds, stakeholders can develop effective communication strategies and policies that support the diverse and dynamic experiences of migrant communities, ensuring that they have the necessary tools to thrive in their new environments, particularly during crises or calamities.

Finally, the study will provide recommendations on crisis communication policy for Filipino migrants to decision-makers in the Philippines and Thailand based on its findings.

As for theoretical contribution, the information ground theory draws upon "context" as a trigger to peoples' information behavior. Studies using the information ground theory were mostly done in Western countries. This study adopts the information grounds theory in the context of the Filipino diaspora in Southeast Asia, particularly in Thailand. The study's findings can provide new lens on how an information ground emerges for individuals migrating into unfamiliar spaces and social settings.

Scope and Limitations of the Study

The study focused on Filipinos presently based in Bangkok, Thailand. The term 'migrants' refers to non-tourist visa holders, or those who have stayed in Thailand for longer than 30 days (Sarausad & Archavanitkul, 2014). Hence, the results do not assume to reflect the information grounds of Filipino migrants in other countries.

Moreover, the study used non-probability sampling methods, and the findings may not represent the whole population of Filipinos in Bangkok, Thailand.

Chapter II

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

This chapter covers four sections aligned with the objectives of the study. The first section gives an overview of Filipino migrants and their issues in Thailand. The second section describes the communication sources open to migrants, such as government agencies and social media. The third section discusses the information-seeking behavior of FMTs and other nationalities before and during the COVID-19 pandemic to extend knowledge on how a particular phenomenon may influence information-seeking behavior. The fourth section reviews some studies using information ground theory and third spaces.

Filipino Migrants in Thailand and Their Issues

Sarausad and Archavanitkul (2014) studied the unregulated movement of Filipinos working in Thailand. Generally, migrants move to different countries to improve their financial and social status (Douglas et al., 2019).

Labor Issues and Job Missed Opportunities

Thailand became a land of opportunity for Filipino teachers and professionals when the country welcomed foreign teachers to teach English and other subjects in 2000 (Novio, 2019). The Philippines is highly proficient in English, while Thailand is among the countries with very low proficiency in English (EF English Proficiency Index, 2023). Hence, the workforce of Filipino teachers in Thailand benefits both countries. However, while English fluency is primarily a qualification to teach English or work in any industry, for that matter, a degree certificate is required to obtain a

work permit and work legally in Thailand (All about Work Permits | ThaiEmbassy.com, n.d.).

A study by Perez-Amurao and Sunanta (2020) revealed that Filipino teachers face racialized and gendered discrimination in English language education in Thailand. There is also a disparity in salary between other nationalities, particularly native English speakers from Western countries. Being non-native English speakers, Filipinos earn significantly less compared to native English speakers, regardless of performance or skills in teaching. In employment selection and treatment, Europeans or white-passing applicants are favored over Filipinos despite English being their second or third language.

Moreover, there are several jobs restricted to Thai nationals only that Filipinos can do, such as driving, hairdressing, clerical, or secretarial work, among others (Restricted Jobs for Foreigners in Thailand, n.d.). Some Filipinos irregularly work as nannies, but according to Thai laws, only Myanmar, Laos, and Cambodia citizens are eligible to work as domestic workers, as conferred in a memorandum of understanding between these countries and Thailand (PNA Ltd, 2020).

Filipinos have job opportunities in Thailand, but most are in the teaching or education sector. Obtaining a work permit to work legally as a teacher or in another profession is limited to those with degree certificates.

Immigration and Other Legal Issues

Overstaying in Thailand is illegal and can result in fines, detention, deportation, and bans from re-entering. Fines are 500 Baht per day, up to 20,000 Baht. Overstaying beyond 90 days incurs bans from 1 to 10 years. If caught before leaving, the consequences are harsher, including potential imprisonment and longer bans. Children under 14 are not fined but must still have valid visas (Legal Advisor, 2015).

To avoid overstaying fines and extend their stay in Thailand, foreigners conduct border runs, which involve crossing the land border to renew visas. Popular routes include Laos, Cambodia, and Malaysia. Myanmar is not recommended due to civil unrest. Border runs are feasible for short-term extensions but riskier for long-term residency (Thai Solutions, 2023).

In 2024, a Filipina who overstayed in Thailand for over four years was arrested by the Immigration Police. She faced legal consequences for violating immigration laws, including potential fines, deportation, and a ban on re-entry to Thailand (ASEAN NOW, 2024)

Filipinos are also affected by the civil unrest on the Thai-Myanmar border. Due to heavy fighting in Myanmar, Thais and Filipinos are being evacuated via China. The ongoing conflict in Myanmar has prompted authorities to coordinate the safe evacuation of their citizens (Reuters, 2023).

Involvement with Crimes and Violence

In 2023, six Filipinos were repatriated after being trafficked to Myanmar for fake jobs in a scam center. They were recruited through social media with promises of work in Thailand but ended up in Myawaddy, Myanmar, where they were forced to participate in love and cryptocurrency scams. They managed to escape to Thailand and were rescued by Philippine authorities. Upon returning home, the victims received financial, legal, medical, and psychological assistance (Philstar.com, 2023).

A similar case happened the following year, where 24 trafficked Filipinos were rescued in Myawaddy, Myanmar, by Philippine and Thai authorities. Supposed Chinese scam companies employed them, lured with promises of call center jobs (Novio, 2024).

A trend of scams involving Filipinos was highlighted when a Filipina working in Thailand was purportedly forced by her Chinese employer to engage in online scams after initially working as an online casino agent. She was reportedly locked in a building, physically abused, and threatened with paying a large sum to leave her job. The case has been referred to the Philippine Embassy in Thailand for further action (GMA Integrated News, 2023).

In another case, a Filipina and a Thai woman were arrested for allegedly running a fraudulent investment company in Bangkok. The company, named Filipino Cooperative Investment Loan, reportedly scammed over 700 people by promising high returns on investments but later cutting off contact. The operation involved

rotating investments of over 50 million baht per month, causing estimated damages of 116 million pesos (The Nation, 2020).

Reportedly, Filipinos were also involved in drug-related crimes. A Filipino couple was arrested in Bangkok for allegedly sending 10 kilograms of dried cannabis to the Philippines. They had overstayed their visas by nine years. The couple was accused of smuggling the cannabis, which was intercepted by Philippine customs. The cannabis has an estimated street value of 10 million baht in Manila. They will face legal action, deportation, and a 10-year immigration blacklist (Ngamkham, 2024).

The reputation of Filipino teachers in Thailand has come under scrutiny when a Filipino teacher in Thailand faced allegations of abuse at a school where he was working illegally on a tourist visa without a work permit. The teacher was reportedly involved in abusive practices towards students, leading to complaints and an investigation by authorities (Charoensuthipan, 2020). The situation also highlighted issues related to unregistered foreign workers in Thailand.

Another incident that went viral on the Internet and put the image of Filipinos in a negative light was the brawl in Bangkok between a group of about 20 Filipino transgender persons and two Thai transgender persons. The fight, which was allegedly instigated by the Filipino transgender persons, was recorded and shared online, leading to more Thai transgender persons mobilizing to the scene. The Filipinos were overpowered and suffered injuries. Police intervened, took those involved to the Lumpini station for questioning, and prevented further clashes by maintaining a strong presence in the area (Online Reporters, 2024). The issue

ended positively when the Filipino transgender persons chose not to press charges after one of the attackers apologized and paid for medical expenses. The situation was resolved amicably, with both parties seeking to maintain friendly relations between Filipinos and Thais (The Nation, 2024).

The issues of Filipinos in Thailand stem from their motivation to earn money; however, some had to resort to illegal activities to do so. More than legal consequences, these reported violations of the law negatively affect the perception of Filipinos by the Thai and international communities.

The COVID-19 Pandemic

A Facebook survey study conducted by PinoyThaiyo, a Filipino-run website, revealed that 843 of 1,047 participants responded that they were financially affected by the COVID-19 pandemic (Pan, 2020).

Being financially crippled due to the loss of jobs, almost a thousand FMT decided to go back home. However, due to commercial flight cancellations, this decision would call for government support to arrange chartered flights to the Philippines. Through the Philippine government's repatriation program, the Philippine Embassy in Thailand allowed 966 Filipinos to go back home in July 2020 (DFA Repatriates, 2020).

In a news feature article, Novio (2020) highlighted the situation of "Rey," an irregular FMT with a denied tourist visa extension. Rey lost his job when the hostel he worked at closed due to the pandemic. Rey could have chosen to go back to the

Philippines, but he did not have enough money to pay for his flight tickets. While Rey is supposedly eligible for the Philippine government's repatriation program, his undocumented status is making this difficult. Undocumented Filipinos like him will have to pass a lengthier process in the government to receive grants for flight tickets. Rey will be least prioritized behind other Filipinos who can afford their own airfare home.

Thailand's preventive measures against COVID-19 successfully controlled the spread of the virus. However, the closure of schools and business establishments affected Filipino migrants, especially those who work in irregular sectors and cannot receive social and health benefits from the Thai government.

A study by Grumo and Siriwato (2024) revealed that the COVID-19 pandemic significantly exacerbated wage issues for Filipino migrant teachers in Thailand, leading to severe financial and job insecurity. Many teachers experienced substantial salary reductions, with some receiving as little as 17-32 percent of their pay over several months. The pandemic also intensified the "no work, no pay" policy, leaving teachers financially unstable when unable to work. As economic hardships deepened, many teachers had to rely on donations and food packs for survival. Additionally, pressure from parents to reduce tuition fees further strained school finances, contributing to underpayment and job insecurity. Overall, the pandemic worsened existing wage issues and created new challenges, severely impacting the livelihoods of these educators.

Sources of Health Information During the COVID-19 Pandemic

Information sources and information seeking are activated during pandemics. Many sources of information, especially social media, have become vehicles for crisis and risk communication (Rasmussen & Ihlen, 2017).

Traditional Media

In the Philippines, Lau et al. (2020) studied the knowledge, attitude, and practices of COVID-19 among income-poor households. In partnership with International Care Ministries (ICM), the researchers conducted face-to-face interview surveys involving 2,224 respondents in rural, urban, and coastal settings during the early days of the COVID-19 outbreak. The results show that 97% of the respondents had heard of COVID-19. The primary sources of information are traditional media such as television and radio, 85.5% and 56.1%, respectively.

Social Media

Existing studies on information-seeking behavior during the COVID-19 pandemic share similar findings that the Internet and digital media play an important role in seeking COVID-19-related information. In recent years, health practitioners' use of online channels to communicate health information has become more prevalent. Its influence on patients is the same regardless of digital age gaps: digital natives and digital immigrants (Wong et al., 2019; Haluza et al., 2016).

Many published studies on Filipinos' information-seeking behavior focused on health information. A study of university students in Manila aged 18-28 reported that

they used the Internet to search for medical information because of its convenience (Banzon et al., 2020).

However, a study in the USA by Finney Rutten et al. (2019) proposed that while much health information can be found online, accessibility is still not inclusive. Other information seekers from a diverse population still need easy access online and rely on offline sources. Therefore, authorities should sustain efforts to enable easy access to online health information.

On another note, health information seekers and producers must also be mindful of what they consume and share online. In a study in Mexico, Cuan-Baltazar et al. (2020) investigated the misinformation of COVID-19 on the internet. They found that out of the 110 websites they evaluated, none got a high score regarding reliability and quality of written information based on Charnock et al. (1999) study's DISCERN- this instrument enables the user to judge the quality of written health and treatment information. The authors conducted the study in the earlier days of the outbreak. Therefore, "COVID-19" or "SARS-CoV-2" were not known terms then. The authors used the term "Wuhan coronavirus" when searching on Google.

Government

Published literature on risk and crisis communication also suggests that the government plays a huge role in shaping people's perceptions and actions regarding the COVID-19 pandemic.

According to Dreisbach & Mendoza-Dreisbach (2021), the government should formally employ multilingual communication materials in crisis prevention and awareness since globalization and mobility have paved the way for multilingual and multicultural societies to thrive.

The Qatar government used South and Southeast Asian languages, including Filipino, to communicate the COVID-19 awareness campaign to target groups such as blue-collar migrants (Ahmad & Hillman, 2020). According to the study, using multiple languages promotes acceptability and adaptability. Multilingual messages in print and social media were influential in spreading awareness. However, it was not enough to impose compliance on protective behaviors against COVID-19 due to the blue-collar workers' low literacy. The findings suggest that the content or medium in crisis and health communication is equally important as who delivers the message. The target groups will most likely listen to a member or individual with a social and cultural reputation, such as religious leaders and social media influencers.

Information Needs and Sources of Filipino Migrants During Crises

A study by Vilog and Ballesteros (2015) delved into the narratives of Filipino nurses situated within the conflict zones in Libya and covered their sources of information. Filipino nurses' information-seeking behavior in Libya during the post-2011 crisis was multifaceted. Initially, they relied on government advisories regarding safety and repatriation; however, many dismissed these communications as baseless, reflecting skepticism towards official sources. Peer networks among colleagues and fellow expatriates became crucial for sharing insights about the local environment and safety measures.

Vilog and Ballesteros further found that social media played a significant role, allowing nurses to connect with family and friends back home, exchanging experiences and gathering information about the situation in Libya and the Philippines. In addition, personal experiences and observations shaped their risk assessments, often leading to a sense of "unrealistic optimism" regarding their safety. Communication from health institutions provided updates on safety protocols, further influencing their perceptions and decisions about repatriation. Lastly, some nurses sought information from media reports to stay informed about the broader context of the conflict, which impacted their understanding of the risks associated with their work and living conditions (Vilog and Ballesteros, 2015).

A report by Tomacruz (2022) revealed that Filipino workers affected by the Russia-Ukraine conflict primarily need information on repatriation options, emergency contacts, and safety procedures. They require timely updates from the Philippine government, specifically from the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) and the Philippine Embassy in Poland, which oversees Ukrainian affairs. Moreover, these workers need guidance on evacuation routes, shelter locations, and the latest developments regarding the conflict. Access to communication with family and support networks is also crucial for their mental and emotional well-being.

Filipino migrants affected by the Israel-Hamas conflict were forced to return to the Philippines. Their information needs are employment opportunities, financial assistance, and reintegration support in the Philippines. They are concerned about joblessness and the loss of income after returning home. Additionally, they seek guidance on how to navigate the labor market, find new job placements, and access

any available government aid or programs designed to assist them during this transition period (Elemia, 2023)

In Japan, the Philippine Department of Migrant Workers (DMW) has activated a hotline to assist Filipinos affected by the magnitude 7.6 earthquake that struck Japan on January 1, 2024. The earthquake triggered tsunami warnings and waves along parts of Japan's coast, and Filipinos in Japan or their families can contact the DMW for support. The hotline provides assistance and information for the 290,000 Filipinos residing in Japan, with specific contact numbers for the DMW and the Philippine Embassy (Rivas, 2024).

Information-seeking Behavior Filipino Migrants

Singapore. Sibal and Foo (2016) studied the information-seeking behavior of 138 Filipino domestic workers in Singapore, challenging the assumption that low-skilled workers have minimal exposure to digital media and are "information poor." The study used Bates' berry-picking framework (1989) and Fisher's theory of information ground (Fisher & Naumer, 2006; Fisher, Durrance & Hinton, 2004 as cited by Sibal & Foo, 2016) to explore how the social background of these workers influences their online media usage and information-seeking behavior.

Through a survey of 138 domestic workers, the study found that most are educated (38 college graduates, 35 undergraduates, and 33 high school graduates), are between 30 to 40 years old, own smartphones, and use online media as their primary information source. Their top information needs include their family's welfare in the Philippines (126 out of 138) and job opportunities (100 out of 138). Only 61 respondents sought information on e-government services, citing a lack of

awareness and security concerns. The study concluded that most Filipino domestic workers in Singapore are digitally literate, especially those in the younger, educated demographic.

South Korea. Ahn and Chae (2019) examined the health-seeking information behavior of Filipino marriage-migrant women in South Korea, using a modified version of the Structural Influence Model (Kontos et al., 2007) that includes migrant status and length of residence as additional social determinants. Analyzing 190 completed questionnaires, they found that 35.8 percent of the respondents are high school graduates, 30.5 percent are college undergraduates, and 33.7 percent have a college degree or higher. The most common monthly household income ranged from US\$1,000 to \$1,999.

The study revealed that healthcare professionals are the primary source of health information, followed by family or friends, and then the Internet. Most respondents (90.5%) own smartphones, with 55.8% using them to seek health information, and 9.5% using health-related apps. The primary topics of interest include personal health, diet/nutrition, and physical activity. The authors concluded that education, health status, and smartphone ownership significantly influence health-promoting behaviors and recommend developing a user-friendly Internet-based health information source to support these behaviors.

Hong Kong. Bernadas and Jiang (2019) used the Comprehensive Model of Information Seeking (CMIS) to study the online health information-seeking behavior of Filipino domestic workers (FDWs) in Hong Kong. They aimed to determine

whether the trustworthiness and tailorability of online sources influence FDWs' online health-seeking behavior. Tailorability refers to the Internet's ability to provide health information specific to a user's current health condition.

The study involved 300 Filipino domestic workers who rated their online health-seeking behavior, trustworthiness of online information, and the Internet's tailorability on a five-point Likert scale. The results showed mean scores of 3.73 for trustworthiness (SD = 0.80), 3.99 for tailorability (SD = 0.90), and 3.05 for online health-seeking behavior (SD = 1.31). The findings confirmed that both the trustworthiness and tailorability of the Internet positively influence FDWs' online health-seeking behavior.

The demographics of the respondents were similar to those in studies on Filipino migrants in Singapore and South Korea, with most being college graduates between 30 and 40 years' old who are proficient in using the Internet for information-seeking.

Thailand. To the best of the researcher's knowledge, the studies tackling the information-seeking behavior of FMT, or FMT in general, are limited. Sarausad and Archavanitkul (2014) acknowledged that existing studies on labor migration in Southeast Asia focused on low-skilled migrant workers from Cambodia, Lao PDR, Myanmar, and Vietnam. However, a qualitative study about Filipino teachers' professional development in Thailand by Novio (2018) touched on the source preference of FMT. The study respondents shared that their preferred source of information regarding employment concerns is their friends who have already settled

in Thailand. They are not keen on seeking information from government bodies such as the Philippine Embassy or the Overseas Workers Welfare Administration (OWWA).

Information Ground and the Third Place in the Digital Age

Fisher and colleagues (2004) led studies using IG as the theoretical framework for understanding humans' information-seeking and sharing behavior.

One of the early studies of Fisher et al. (2004) investigated the use of need-based services by immigrants in New York City. The authors posed that immigrants face significant information and practical challenges when adapting to a new country due to language, cultural, and access differences. However, there has been limited research on their information behavior. The research focused on how immigrant customers utilize literacy and coping skills programs at the Queens Borough Public Library (QBPL). Through interviews and observations involving 45 program users, staff, and other stakeholders, the study identified a grand context comprising three subcontexts: the immigrant population in Queens, New York; the QBPL and its immigrant-focused services; and the contributions of QBPL staff. The findings suggested that successful engagement with QBPL's mission, programming, and staff can create a synergistic information ground that addresses diverse psychological, social, and practical needs among immigrants.

Fisher et al. (2005) investigated how individuals seek everyday information. They conducted a telephone survey involving 612 urban and rural residents in collaboration with the United Way of America. They employed a mixed-methods

approach, combining quantitative and qualitative content analysis of open-ended responses. The key findings revealed that strong ties and the Internet are people's primary information sources, and individuals value and critique their information sources' reliability. Notably, places of worship and the workplace emerged as common information grounds where people gather information. These findings suggest that individuals have specific information grounds, with the Internet playing an increasingly significant role, and open up possibilities for further research into different types of information grounds.

Another study by Fisher et al. (2007) investigated the everyday information behavior of college students, focusing on their "information grounds," which are social spaces where information is shared and exchanged. Conducted at a major research university, the research involved interviews with 729 students to explore the types of information they obtain, the characteristics of these information grounds, and what makes them conducive to information flow. The findings reveal that students value information grounds based on three main factors: information-related (47%), place-related (28%), and people-related (25%). Information quality, relevance, and abundance were the most significant factors influencing students' preferences for specific locations. Additionally, the study highlights the importance of ambient noise, membership size, and the diversity of people in shaping the information exchange experience. Overall, the research provides insights into how social interactions and environmental characteristics contribute to the construction and sharing of information among college students.

In recent years, other researchers have adopted IG as the theoretical framework for their studies. A study on domestic migrant workers in Israel by Bronstein (2017) delved into IG as a vehicle for social inclusion. The study focused on understanding the information behavior of migrants facing economic, geopolitical, and climate crises that have led to increased migratory movements and a lack of decent and sustainable work. The author discussed that many migrants experienced social exclusion due to limited access to relevant information sources. The study specifically explored the role of La Escuelita, a Hebrew night school for domestic migrant workers in Israel, as an information ground that helps these migrants combat social exclusion.

Bronstein (2017) employed a qualitative methodology involving three months of participant observation and in-depth interviews with eight students from the school. The findings indicated that La Escuelita serves as a platform for social inclusion by providing valuable everyday information within a supportive environment. Information flows in multiple directions among students and staff. Language barriers emerge as a significant factor contributing to social exclusion. Despite being information-poor concerning their integration into Israeli society, migrant workers at La Escuelita expressed a strong desire to learn Hebrew as a means to overcome their exclusion.

In social media, Talip et al. (2016) employed information grounds, digital ethnography, and interviews to explore Twitter as an online information ground. The study centered on IT professionals using Twitter to form communities of practice, an emerging area of Library and Information Science (LIS) research. Findings reveal

various information-sharing types, the role of information-sharing in professional contexts, and how Twitter influences communication and social engagement. Surprisingly, professionals use Twitter less for seeking or sharing information and more for connecting with like-minded individuals.

Counts and Fisher (2010) first applied IG theory online when they studied the impact of mobile social networking as an IG. They reported that mobile social networking as an IG bridged geographical boundaries between individuals or social groups.

Other studies using IG theory include Ahn & Chae's (2019) study on Filipino marriage-migrant women in South Korea, wherein they identified their respondents' IG as social media. IG exists beyond physical places in the digital age, wherein communication and social interaction extend to online platforms. The third place can also be a digital space.

Theoretical Framework of the Study

The study is guided by the Information Grounds Theory. The information grounds (IG) theory was introduced by Karen E. Fisher (nee Pettigrew), a Professor at the Information School and an Adjunct Professor in the Communication Department at the University of Washington. Her research interests include information behavior, digital inequality, social media, and how people access and use information in various contexts. (ISchool Directory, University of Washington, 2021).

Fisher conceived the concept of information grounds in 1999 from her study on how nurses, seniors, and others share human services or everyday information at community foot clinics (Pettigrew, 1999). With the assumption that the nurses provided the seniors with everyday information that the latter could not obtain elsewhere, she found that seniors were sources of information for the nurses themselves and shared information through exchanges with multiple persons while waiting for treatment.

She defined information grounds as a synergistic "environment temporarily created when people come together for a singular purpose but from whose behavior emerges a social atmosphere that fosters the spontaneous and serendipitous sharing of information" (Fisher et al., 2006).

Social Context and "Third Place"

According to Laszlo's (2017) article, A Beginner's Guide to Information Grounds, the concept of information grounds was shaped by the philosophy of social constructionism. As applied to information seeking, this perspective suggests that knowledge and reality categories are actively formed through social interactions within cultural contexts.

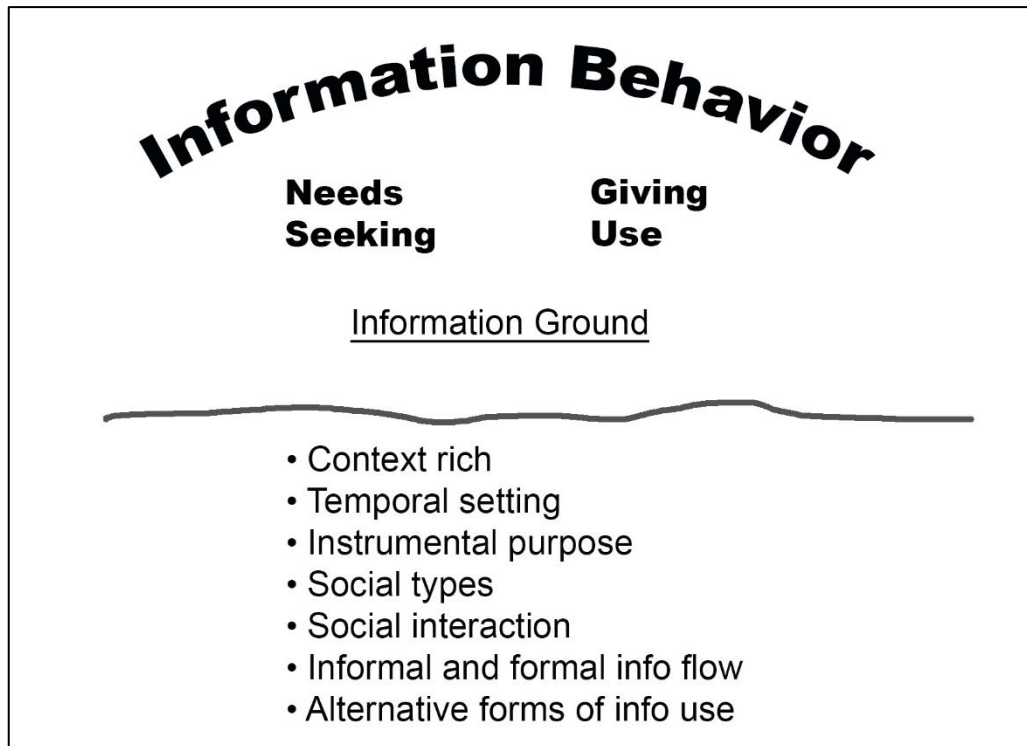
The theorist suggests that information behaviors are heavily influenced by social context. People's interactions, relationships, situations, and shared experiences shape their information needs and how they seek, use, and share information.

The concept of the "third place" was inspired by Oldenburg's (1999) *The Great Good Place: Cafes, Coffee Shops, Bookstores, Bars, Hair Salons, and other Hangouts at the Heart of the Community*. The term "third place" was introduced as where one is found when one is not home (first place) or at work (second place). It is with the assumption that information ground is created in a 'third place'.

Serendipity plays a key role in the context of IG. Individuals may stumble upon information they were not explicitly looking for, but it turns out to be relevant, interesting, or useful. The IG theory posits that people go to their "third place" for purposes other than acquiring information but receive it through casual conversation or simply overhearing other people's exchanges. For example, a passenger goes to a bus station to buy tickets but unexpectedly learns from another passenger and staff that the schedule for the bus going to his destination is delayed. The information grounds theory also aims to understand how individuals share or use their acquired information.

Figure 1.

Fisher's Information grounds theory (Fisher et al., 2004).



As seen in Figure 1, the theorist defined information behavior as "how people need, seek, give, and use information in different contexts." The information behavior directs to an information ground that possesses seven key concepts described by Fisher et al. (2004):

1. Context rich: Information grounds encompass multiple sub-contexts influenced by individuals' perspectives and physical factors, collectively contributing to a larger overarching context.
2. Temporal setting: Information grounds can arise anywhere and in different time settings as long as individuals are present.
3. Instrumental purpose: People gather at information grounds primarily for purposes other than information sharing.

4. Social types: Information grounds attract various social types, each playing distinct but essential roles in information flow.
5. Social interaction: Social interaction is a central activity on information grounds, leading to the incidental flow of information.
6. Information and formal info flow: Information and formal information sharing occur in multiple directions.
7. Alternative forms of info use: Information acquired at information grounds is used in diverse ways, benefiting individuals across physical, social, affective, and cognitive dimensions.

Conceptual Framework of the Study

The study is guided by the framework Fisher et al. (2007) developed on what constitutes the 'information ground' for 729 college students in a Western university. They used the IG theory from Fisher (writing as Pettigrew, 1990). The framework comprises place, people, and information or the people-place-information trichotomy (Figure 2). They also presented 15 factors grouped under these components. These are as follows:

Figure 2.

Information ground people-place-information trichotomy (adapted from Fisher et al., 2007).

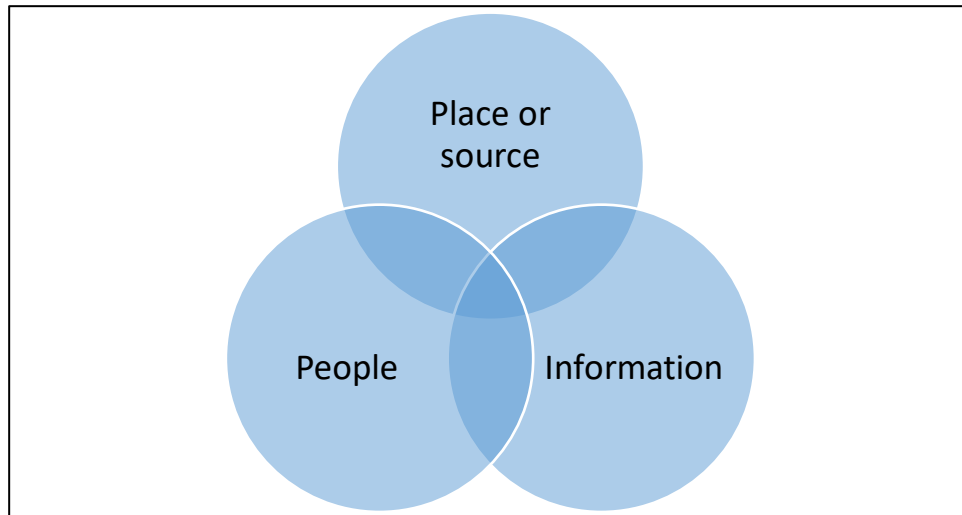


Table 1.

Components of the People-Place-Information Trichotomy (from Fisher et al., 2007)

COMPONENTS	FACTORS	REASON FOR INCLUSION
PLACE	Location and permanence	Important for how convenient it is to access and for how long can it be used
	Privacy	How open or close to hear or get information
	Focal activities	The reason(s) people go to an information ground not necessarily to get information but along the way, gets the information.
	Conviviality	Associated with atmosphere -good company and a festive mood fostering interaction among people
	Comforts	Environmental factors creating a relaxing climate for information exchange
INFORMATION	Topics	Topics they needed to know more about or addressed issues occurring locally, globally or in people's lives.

	Significance	Usefulness of obtained information
	Frequency discussed	How often particular topics occur.
	How created/shared	How needs are expressed or recognized, and information created and given
	Quality	The reliability and credibility of the information shared within the space.
PEOPLE	Membership size	The size of an information ground influences the way information is created and exchanged as it affects the degree of intimacy as well as degree of access to broad information types.
	Membership type	The level of accessibility and the criteria required for participation in an information ground.
	Familiarity	Have acquaintanceship or relations with members; homogeneity
	Actor role	Identity that participants assume and affect their role in information flow
	Motivation	Motivation aspect reflects the voluntary or compulsory reasons for going to a place.

The people-place-information trichotomy framework helps people understand how individuals perceive their IGs and the factors that establish these environments. This conceptual framework suggests that the characteristics of a place significantly influence how people interact and exchange information within that setting. It emphasizes that the social dynamics of the individuals involved, along with the context of the location, shape the types of information shared and the nature of those interactions. By examining these three components, we can gain insights into how information grounds emerge and function, particularly in diverse social settings.

The trichotomy was also able to provide a structured way to analyze and understand how these three elements (people-place-information) interact and influence each other in the context of FMTs' information behaviors. By organizing

findings into these categories, we can better identify the important factors that contribute to effective information sharing and can inform the design of environments that optimize these interactions. This framework helps in recognizing that the experience of information grounds is not solely dependent on one aspect (like the people or the place) but rather on the interplay between all three components.

Finally, this may be the first local study to use the framework in a non-Western setting, hence the exploratory nature of the study. It will be enlightening to know how applicable these concepts are in the culture of Filipino migrants in the diaspora in Thailand.

Operational Definition of Terms

Information grounds (IGs) – spaces/places where people come together and share information, often unintentionally, through casual interactions.

Filipino migrants in Bangkok, Thailand FMTs- Filipinos who have been living in Bangkok, Thailand for 30 days or more.

The following variables and terms were adopted from Fisher et al. (2007) in their people-place-information trichotomy framework.

COMPONENTS	FACTORS	DEFINITIONS
<p>PLACE</p> <p>the environment where the IGs of FMTs occur, characterized by its location, permanence, privacy, atmosphere, and comforts.</p>	<p>Location and permanence</p>	<p>the accessibility and stability of the IG, indicating how convenient it is for FMTs to reach and how long it can be utilized as a space for information exchange.</p>
	<p>Privacy</p>	<p>the degree of openness or seclusion in the IG, affecting how freely FMTs can share and receive information without external interference.</p>
	<p>Focal activities</p>	<p>the primary reasons or purposes for which FMTs gather in their IGs, not to seek information but can lead to casual information exchange.</p>
	<p>Conviviality</p>	<p>the atmosphere or vibe of the IG, characterized by a friendly and enjoyable environment that fosters social interaction and engagement among FMTs and other individuals.</p>
	<p>Comforts</p>	<p>the environmental factors that create a relaxing and inviting climate for information exchange, enhancing the overall experience of FMTs in the IGs.</p>
<p>INFORMATION</p> <p>the topics shared among the FMTs and other members in their IGs, including its relevance, trustworthiness, and usefulness to the their personal or professional lives.</p>	<p>Topics</p>	<p>the specific subjects or themes that are discussed and exchanged among FMTs in their IGs, shaping the nature of the information shared.</p>
	<p>Significance</p>	<p>the importance or relevance of the topics being discussed, influencing how they are perceived and valued by FMTs.</p>

	Frequency discussed	how often particular topics are brought up in conversations within an IG, affecting the familiarity and depth of knowledge among FMTs.
	How created/shared	the processes and methods through which information needs are expressed, recognized, and communicated among FMTs and other individuals in an IG.
	Quality	the reliability and credibility of the information shared within an IG, impacting FMTs' trust and the overall effectiveness of the information exchange.
PEOPLE the FMTs and other individuals who come together in an IG, including their relationships, roles, and the social dynamics that influence interactions within the information ground	Membership size	the number of individuals present in an IG, which influences the dynamics of information exchange and the intimacy of interactions.
	Membership type	the level of accessibility and the criteria required for participation in an IG, affecting who can engage in the information-sharing process.
	Familiarity	the degree of relationship FMTs have with other members in their IGs, impacting the comfort level and openness in sharing information.
	Actor role	the identity or position that FMTs assume within their IG, which can influence their contributions to and the flow of information.

	Motivation	the reasons, whether voluntary or compulsory, that drive FMTs to visit their IGs, shaping their engagement and interactions within the space.
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Chapter III

METHODOLOGY

This chapter covers the methods and procedures utilized to answer the research questions presented in this study. It describes the research design, locale and period, respondents, sampling, research instrument, data gathering, and data analysis employed.

Research Design

The research is quantitative and uses a survey design. This design was chosen because a survey allows for the collection of structured data that can effectively describe trends within the population under study while also providing a basis for analyzing the relationships among various variables involved in the research (Abu-Dalbouh, 2013).

Locale and Period of the Study

Bangkok, Thailand, is the locale of this study. Dubbed the "Land of Smiles," Thailand is a Southeast Asian country known for its flourishing tourism industry. Before the COVID-19 pandemic, Thailand's average international tourist arrivals were 35 million yearly (Manakitsomboon, 2021).

As part of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), member countries such as the Philippines can visit Thailand without a visa. While a popular tourist destination, Thailand has also been a place of work opportunity for Filipinos.

In 2019, the Thai Immigration Bureau reported that 16,103 Filipinos were working in Thailand (Statistics, 2019).

The study was conducted formally from July 16, 2024 to August 18, 2024. But as an FMT myself, I have firsthand knowledge of Filipino communities in Bangkok and their unique information needs. I myself is a member of various Thailand-based Filipino groups on Facebook and have witnessed the topics and issues they usually discuss or inquire about. Moreover, I regularly follow Thai and Philippines news on social media, which helped me contextualize the findings of this study and have a better understanding of the factors influencing the information behaviors of FMTs.

Figure 3.
Map of Bangkok, Thailand



Respondents and Sampling

Non-probability sampling techniques, specifically combined purposive and snowball sampling, were employed in this study. These methods allowed the researcher to target specific individuals or groups that are likely to provide rich and relevant information for the research objectives (Luborsky & Rubinstein, 1995).

Purposive sampling involves selecting participants based on specific criteria and choosing individuals knowledgeable about or experienced with a phenomenon of interest (Palinkas et al., 2015). Snowball sampling, on the other hand, includes asking participants to recruit future participants from among their acquaintances who meet the eligibility criteria (Berg, 2005).

The researcher selected participants based on specific criteria relevant to the research question. These criteria are:

1. Nationality is Filipino
2. Living in Bangkok, Thailand
3. For 30 days or more

The researcher coordinated with various Filipino community groups in Bangkok, Thailand, through family, friends, peers, and social media to find respondents who meet the criteria. The researcher invited them to join the study by posting on many Facebook groups with Filipino members and directly messaging acquaintances who were eligible to participate in the study. Moreover, the researcher met with friends and family in Bangkok about the study and asked for their

assistance in distributing the online survey form to other Filipino migrants in Bangkok, Thailand.

The target sample size for this study was a minimum of 100 Filipino migrants currently living in Bangkok, Thailand. This target number was anticipated to provide sufficient participants to gather meaningful data on the research topic while also being feasible to recruit within a reasonable timeframe and resources.

Research Instrument and Data Gathering

The researcher employed an online survey instrument (Appendix B) created using Qualtrics XM Platform™. The survey was written in English with an option for respondents to change the language to Filipino.

The questionnaire consisted of multiple-choice questions, with an option to type their answer if it is not in the choices. A few items required a certain number of selections to be valid. All items in the questionnaire required responses; otherwise, the survey would not proceed to the following page. This also ensured that all survey forms would be included and not invalidated.

The online survey first described what information ground was with some examples. They were then asked to select the top places they identified as their information grounds. They could also type a place that was outside the selection. They were also asked for their primary purpose in using these information grounds and how frequently they visited them.

Based on the people-place-information trichotomy by Fisher et al. (2007) (Figure 2), the subsequent sections of the questionnaire were arranged by Place, Information, and People, respectively. The questions in each section were based on the factors or variables for each part of the trichotomy.

Place - asked about the physical characteristics of their identified information ground, such as the location and permanence, privacy, interactions with other people present, atmosphere, and comforts.

Information- this focused on the types of information commonly shared and exchanged, such as the topics, the frequency with which these topics were mentioned, the sources of this information, how trustworthy the respondents perceived them, and how information was received or shared. This section also asked respondents how useful was this information to their personal or professional life.

People- this inquired about the number of people involved in their information ground, the level of accessibility to their group, their familiarity with other members, their relationship with them, their role in the group, the diversity of people they interacted with, and their motivation for visiting their information grounds.

The anonymous link for the online survey was first distributed on July 16, 2024 and 101 completed responses were collected on August 18, 2024. Incomplete responses were excluded from the analysis to obtain cleaner data and provide a more accurate presentation.

Data Analysis

Qualtrics XM online survey software was used to create the questionnaire to be deployed online, collect the responses, and analyze the collected data for this study. ExpertReview, a Qualtrics feature, assessed the quality of the collected data before analysis. It offers suggestions for cleaning the data to ensure high-quality analysis. The feature also provides error messages during analysis, such as when respondents finished the survey abnormally fast, bots were detected, responses were duplicated, data entered were sensitive, texts were ambiguous, and other issues cropped up.

ExpertReview initially graded the response quality of the survey at 97 percent. The text entry 'work' as one of the answers to the question "What are the main reasons you go to your information ground? (Except obtaining information)" was flagged as 'ambiguous text,' hence the imperfect score. However, 'work' is understood as 'I go to one of my information grounds to work (employment)'. Therefore, these responses were accepted and included in the analysis. The response quality of the survey was changed to 100 percent. Other than the minor ambiguous text, the responses to the survey were free from bots, speeders, duplicate responses, and other issues.

The data gathered were analyzed using descriptive analysis, such as frequencies and percentages. Descriptive analysis focuses on summarizing and describing the characteristics of the sample itself rather than making inferences about the entire population (Swatzell & Jennings, 2007). This type of analysis aligns

well with the limitations of non-probability sampling, where generalization to the broader population is less feasible.

No statistical analysis can be applied as the sample is not randomly chosen. Only complete responses were included in the data analysis. All the responses were anonymous, so tracking and following up with the respondents for an incomplete survey was impossible.

Data were analyzed using the advanced statistical tool Stats IQ integrated into the Qualtrics platform. This tool automates the process of running statistical tests and visualizing results using bar graphs and tables, ensuring the accuracy and reliability of our analysis. Each question item (variable) was selected, and the 'Describe' function of Stats IQ was applied to reveal the number of total respondents, answers to each selection, and percentages. The 'Report' feature of Qualtrics was utilized to create visualizations such as bar graphs and tables that can be exported to image files.

Research Ethics and Data Management

As the respondents were migrants, the researcher had to be careful to minimize the discomfort or risks that they may face by asking for their informed consent, ensuring their anonymity, assuring confidentiality, and giving them option to discontinue participation at any time.

First, the researcher introduced the research and provided an overview of the study and its purpose in the first part of the questionnaire. Also explained were what is information ground theory and what is information ground. This way the researcher

and the respondents had a common understanding of what IG meant and how would answer the rest of the questionnaire.

Before the respondents would sign the informed consent form (Appendix B) in the first page, the respondents were also informed of what was expected of them and that they could opt out if at some point if they felt any discomfort of any kind.

They were told that it would take about 7 minutes to answer the survey. They were also assured that they would remain anonymous, that all the data would remain confidential, and that the data and results would only be used for research. The respondents could choose whether they would consent to participate in the study or not. The rest of the questionnaire was shown only to consenting participants.

As for data management, the online data were inputted in a password-protected laptop computer with a secure backup system to ensure the data remain safe and shared and disposed properly. The data were handled only by the researcher and shared only with the adviser. These would be deleted after data analysis and final approval of the thesis.

Further, the analyzed results would possibly be presented in a conference or published as a journal article, but the anonymity of the respondents would be respected.

Chapter IV

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter presents the results and discussion of the study, which investigated how Filipino migrants in Bangkok, Thailand (FMTs) construe and utilize information grounds (IG). The research aimed to identify the places considered IG by FMTs; the types of information they seek, share, and use within these spaces; and the people-place-information involved in these exchanges. Consequently, the study explored ways to strengthen these IGs for the FMT diaspora in Thailand, especially for significant issues.

Demographic Profile of the Respondents

The results were extracted from the 101 FMTs who participated in the study and their profile is presented in Table 2.

The ages vary highly from the youth to the geriatric ones. Almost half of the respondents (48.5%) are in the 30-39 age group, followed by ages 40-49, (14%), 50-59 (12%), and 20-29 (16%). A few respondents (5.9%) from the 60-69 group also participated in the study. The youngest was 19 years old and the oldest was 70 years old. This shows that in the diaspora in Thailand, most of the FMTs are at the prime of their lives.

A study on Filipino domestic workers in Singapore (Sibal & Foo, 2016) also showed that many respondents were between 30 and 40 years old. Filipino marriage-migrant women in South Korea were also in their late 20s to early 40s,

reflecting a trend of younger, educated migrants seeking better opportunities abroad. (Anh & Chae, 2019)

The genders that the respondents identified with are predominantly female (56.4%) and male (40.6%). The almost equal representation of the genders (including non-binaries) could reveal better what concerns the migrant groups. A limitation of the study, however, is that data were not disaggregated according to the genders, age, or other demographic characteristics.

As for educational backgrounds, majority of the respondents (68.3%) hold bachelor's degrees, and some (19.8%) have master's degrees or doctorate degrees (3%). The rest of the respondents are high school diploma holders. Again, the FMTs are quite well educated.

In other studies, about Filipino migrants in various countries, the demographics often reveal common characteristics. For instance, research on Filipino domestic workers in Singapore (Sibal & Foo, 2016) indicated that the majority are educated, with a significant number holding college degrees or having completed higher education. Many respondents were between 30 and 40 years old.

Similarly, studies on Filipino marriage-migrant women in South Korea (Anh & Chae, 2019) found that many of the respondents were also educated, with many having completed high school or higher education. The demographic profile often includes individuals in their late 20s to early 40s, reflecting a trend of younger, educated migrants seeking better opportunities abroad.

The respondents' marital status is almost even between single (53.5%) and married (41.6%).

Many respondents (37%) have been staying in Bangkok, Thailand, for ten years or more, which makes them quite familiar already with the culture of the Thai and possibly familiar with the Filipino community. A quarter (25%) of the respondents also answered 7-9 years while 13 percent answered 4-6 years. But there are also new 'migrants' (20%) who have stayed for 1-3 years or less than a year (6%). The wide latitude of number of years show a good representation of the migrants and their experiences in Thailand.

Majority of the respondents work in the public sector or education field (58%), followed by a wide margin in healthcare or social services (21%). A few are students (8.9%) and work in hospitality, tourism, or leisure services (6.9%).

Some respondents are already retired (3%). Two respondents mentioned consulting and international development.

Table 2.

Demographics of the Respondents

Characteristics	Count <i>n</i> = 101	Percentage
Age		
19 and under	3	3.0
20-29	16	15.8
30-39	49	48.5
40-49	14	13.9
60-69	6	5.9
70 above	1	1.0

50-59	12	11.9
Gender		
Male	41	40.6
Female	57	56.4
Non-binary / third gender	1	1.0
Prefer not to say	2	2.0
Educational attainment		
High school diploma	8	7.9
Bachelor's degree	69	68.3
Master's degree	20	19.8
Doctorate	3	3.0
Professional degree (e.g., MD, JD)	1	1.0
Marital status		
Single	54	53.5
Married	42	41.6
Widowed	4	4.0
Domestic partnership	1	1.0
Length of stay in Bangkok, Thailand		
Less than 1 year	6	5.9
1-3 years	20	19.8
4-6 years	13	12.9
7-9 years	25	24.8
10 and more years	37	36.6
Field of work		
Public sector or education	58	57.4
Healthcare or social services	21	21.8
Student	9	8.9
Hospitality, Tourism, or Leisure Services	7	6.9
Retired	3	3.0
International development	1	1.0
Consulting	1	1.0
Unemployed	1	1.0

In summary, the respondents are relatively young at 30-39 years old, are predominantly female, and highly educated. They have lived in Bangkok for over a decade. They mainly work in education, public sectors, and healthcare.

Information Grounds of FMTs

Looking at the overall results (Table 3 and Figure 4), apparently, majority (91%) of the FMTs are using online spaces compared to the traditional physical spaces (range of 1-59%).

Online Spaces

Specifically, the participants used the social media (Facebook, Twitter, Reddit, etc.) (66%) and video-sharing platforms (25%) to share or exchange information. These results show the increasing use of online and social media or virtual spaces as information ground. This has evolved from the original definition of IG as physical space where people come together and engage in discussions such as community centers, clinics, and coffee shops, among others.

This may be related to their profile of being younger, educated, and having lived in Bangkok for some years that have attuned them to technological changes. The use of digital platforms is becoming a common theme across studies on the information behavior of Filipino migrants abroad, such as in Singapore (Sibal & Foo, 2016) and South Korea (Ahn & Chae, 2019). This study notes that Filipino migrants utilize social media and online forums to enhance their information access, paralleling Ahn and Chae's findings on the use of digital resources for health information and Sibal and Foo's observations regarding online information-seeking behaviors.

Physical Spaces

It is interesting that alongside the rise of social media, traditional physical spaces like churches, shopping malls, convenience stores, and coffee shops are also significant IGs for respondents. This trend highlights the importance of face-to-face interactions that foster community and trust, complementing the convenience of digital platforms. Churches serve as supportive environments for sharing experiences, while shopping malls and convenience stores become informal gathering spots for information exchange. Coffee shops encourage socialization in a relaxed setting. This blend of digital and physical spaces illustrates how FMTs navigate their new environments, emphasizing the human need for connection and community.

Fisher et al.'s (2007) study about college students' IGs identified informal environments such as cafes and libraries as key locations where students gather to share and access information, highlighting the importance of social interaction in these spaces. Similarly, this study identified community-centric spaces—such as workplaces, churches, and schools—as preferred information grounds. However, in the digital era, online spaces such as social media are emerging new IGs, as revealed in this study.

FMTs and other Filipinos in the diaspora may prefer IGs where shared language (Filipino languages such as Bisaya, Kapampangan, Ilocano, etc.) and cultural practices help create a familiar, trust-filled space for exchanging critical information. Gatherings like church services and Filipino community events are becoming hubs for discussing job opportunities, visa advice, and adaptation tips, all

grounded in shared cultural identity. These interactions contribute in adapting to life in Thailand while also fostering community belonging among Filipino migrants.

The IGs of FMTs are unique culturally because of their shared Filipino identity, language, and cultural practices. These create a strong foundation for information sharing, especially within their unique environment in Thailand. In other migrant communities, such as in Hong Kong, social areas such as Statue Square, become informal community centers for socializing and cultural expression (Peralta-Catipon, 2009).

Table 3.

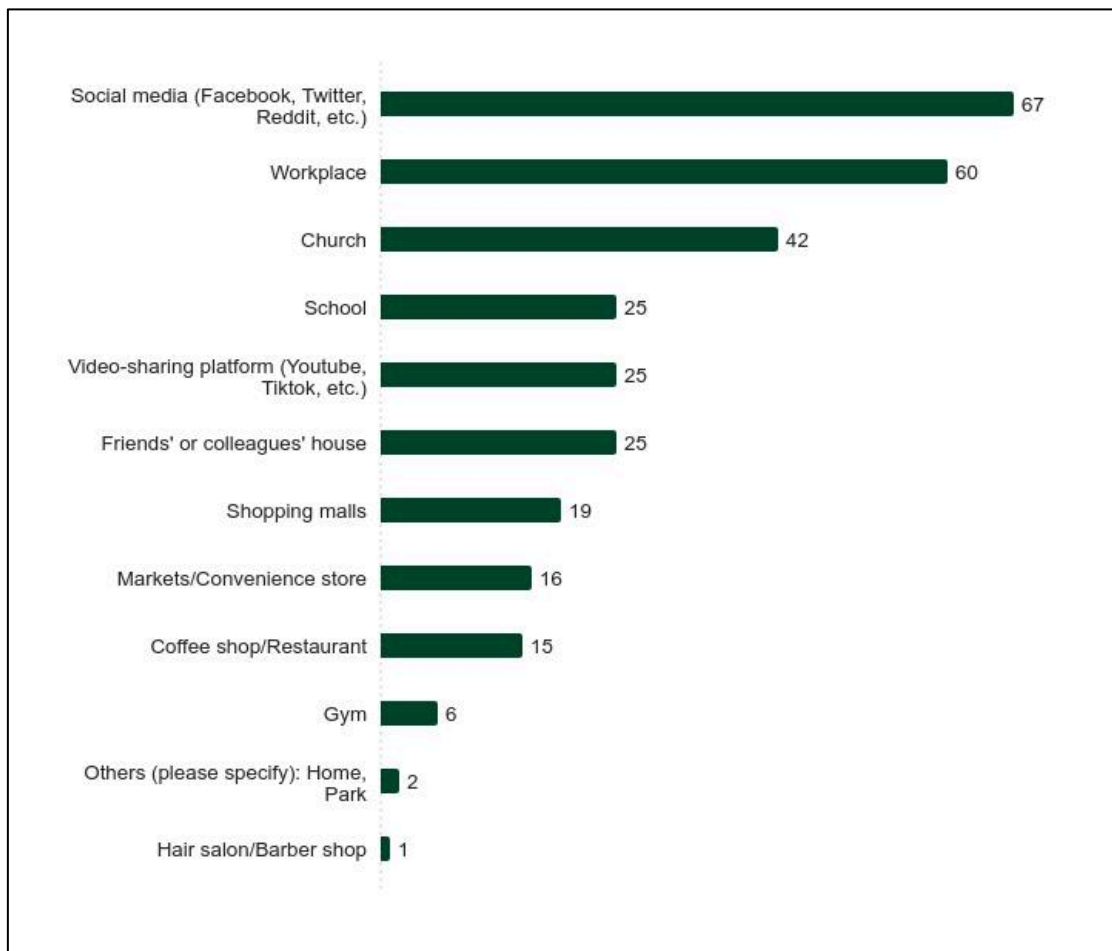
Information Grounds of FMTs

Information Grounds	Count of Responses <i>n</i>=101	Percentage
Online space		
Social media (Facebook, Twitter, Reddit, etc.)	67	66
Video-sharing platform (Youtube, Tiktok, etc.)	25	25
	92	91
Physical space		
Workplace	60	59
Church	42	42
School	25	25
Friends' or colleagues' house	25	25
Shopping malls	19	19
Markets/Convenience store	16	16
Coffee shop/Restaurant	15	15
Gym	6	6
Others (please specify): Home, park	2	2
Hair salon/Barber shop	1	1

Note: Multiple responses

Figure 4.

Physical and virtual places that Filipino Migrants in Bangkok, Thailand selected as their information grounds.



Frequency of Visiting Information Ground

Almost all respondents (69.3%) visit their IGs often (most days of the week), while others (22.7%) indicated sometimes (at least once a week). One respondent specified that they go to their IGs after work (Table 4 and 5 and Figures 5 and 6).

FMTs visit social media and the workplace often. Interestingly, the church is among the IGs visited most days of the week, although it was anticipated that it would receive the answer 'Sometimes (at least once a week)' because it is generally known that people go to church only on Sundays.

This result may be attributed to the fact that churches provide more than just Sunday services; they offer activities like prayer meetings, Bible studies, and community outreach throughout the week. These gatherings allow Filipino migrants to connect, share information, and support each other, fostering a strong sense of community. Beyond being a place of worship, churches serve as social hubs where migrants can build relationships, seek advice, and discuss important issues in a supportive setting.

Churches can also function as information centers, offering updates on community resources, legal help, and health services, making them essential stops for staying informed. Additionally, many visit churches for personal prayer and reflection, seeking comfort and stability in a foreign country. Overall, churches play a crucial role in the lives of Filipino migrants, providing social, emotional, and informational support.

A study by Klaasen (2024) highlights that church plays a vital role for migrants by serving as a welcoming community that fosters a sense of belonging and identity formation. It empowers migrants to exercise their activities, contributing their skills and experiences within their rather newly adopted community.

Table 4.

Frequency of Visiting IGs

Frequency	Count <i>n</i>=101	Percentage
Often (most days of the week)	70	69.3
Sometimes (at least once a week)	23	22.8
Rarely (at least once a month)	7	6.9
Others (please specify): After work	1	1.0

Figure 5.

Frequency of visiting IGs

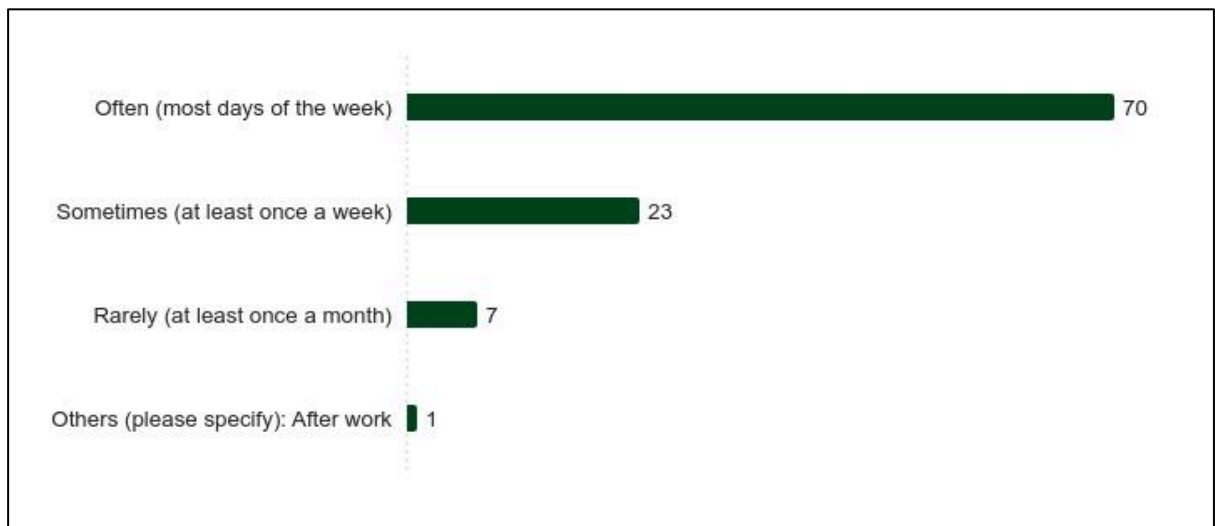


Table 5.

The IGs and Frequency of Visits

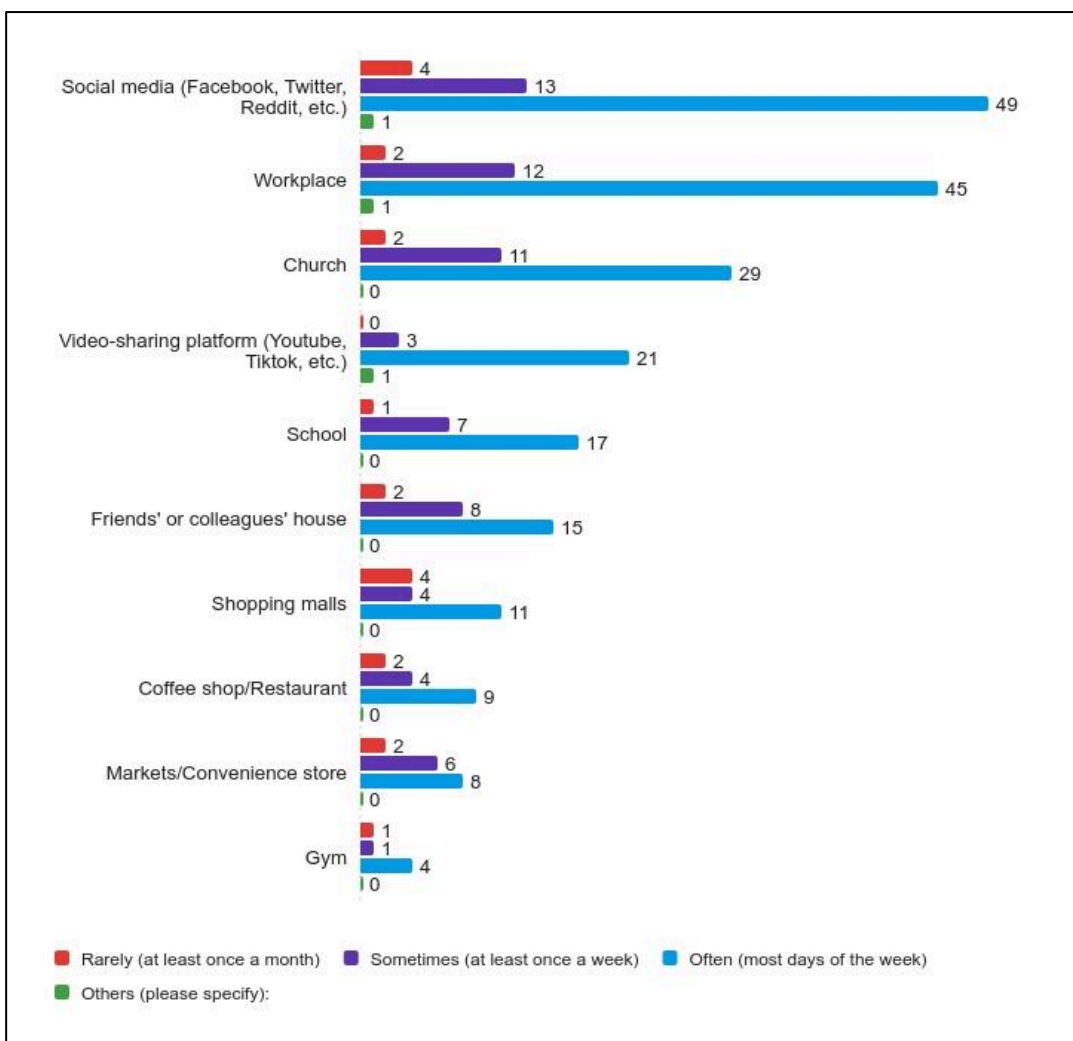
Information Grounds	Rarely (at least once a month)	Sometimes (at least once a week)	Often (most days of the week)
Social media (Facebook, Twitter, Reddit, etc.)	4	13	49
Workplace	2	12	45
Church	2	11	29
School	1	7	17
Video-sharing platform (Youtube, Tiktok, etc.)	0	3	21
Friends' or colleagues' house	2	8	15

Shopping malls	4	4	11
Markets/Convenience store	2	6	8
Gym	1	1	4
Coffee shop/Restaurant	2	4	9
Others (please specify): Home, park	1	0	1
Hair salon/Barber shop	0	0	1

Note: Multiple responses

Figure 6.

The information grounds of FMTs and the frequency of visits



Factors Influencing Preferences for IGs

To understand how FMTs construe and utilize their IGs, we drew upon Fisher et al.'s (2007) people-place-information trichotomy and tailored the questions according to the 15 characteristics of these three components. The following results revealed the factors influencing FMTs' preferences for their IGs.

Place-related Factors

Location and permanence. Table 6 and Figure 7 show that majority (64.4%) of the respondents rated the location of their IGs as very convenient and permanent.

The workplace, church, friend's or colleague's house, and school all have permanence in structure and location, being selected as very convenient and permanent. Interestingly, social media is the IG that received the highest count for this rating, showing that the perception of permanence and location is not bound to physical spaces, but exceeds to digital platforms.

Unlike physical spaces, online platforms like Facebook and Twitter allow FMTs to access information anytime, from anywhere, without geographic or time constraints. Content remains available online, enabling users to revisit discussions and updates as needed. Social media also fosters strong social networks, helping FMTs stay connected with friends, family, and fellow migrants, while quickly sharing important updates on community events and news. This blend of convenience, digital permanence, and community support makes social media an important IG for FMTs.

In a study involving Filipino migrants in Ireland, Komito (2011) revealed that Filipino migrants use social media to maintain low-level, continuous awareness of friends and family across borders by allowing passive monitoring through shared content (voice, video, and text). Unlike earlier Internet tools, social media creates shared experiences that extend beyond direct communication.

Table 6.

Ratings of the Location and Permanence of IGs

Rating	Count <i>n</i> =101	Percentage
Very convenient location and permanent	65	64.4
Semi- convenient location and permanent	32	31.7
Not convenient location and permanent	2	2.0
Not sure	2	2.0

Figure 7.

Ratings of the location and permanence of IGs

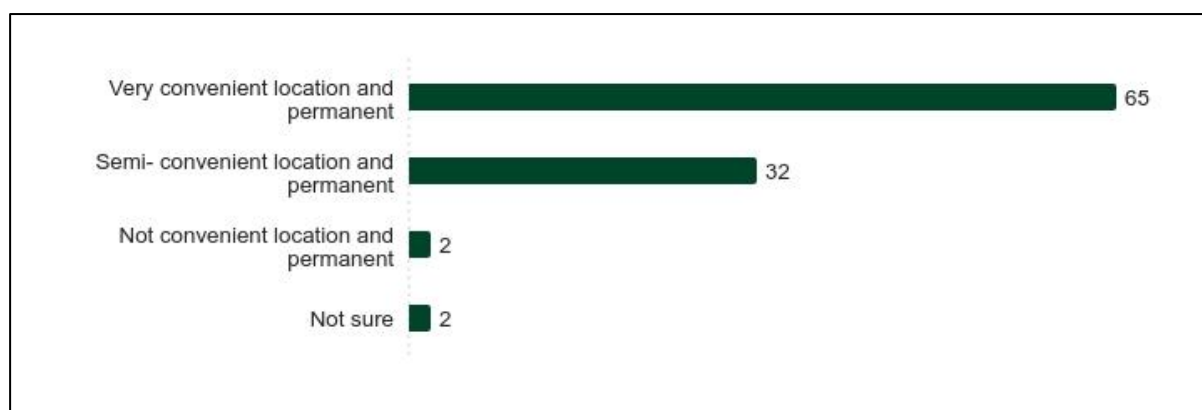


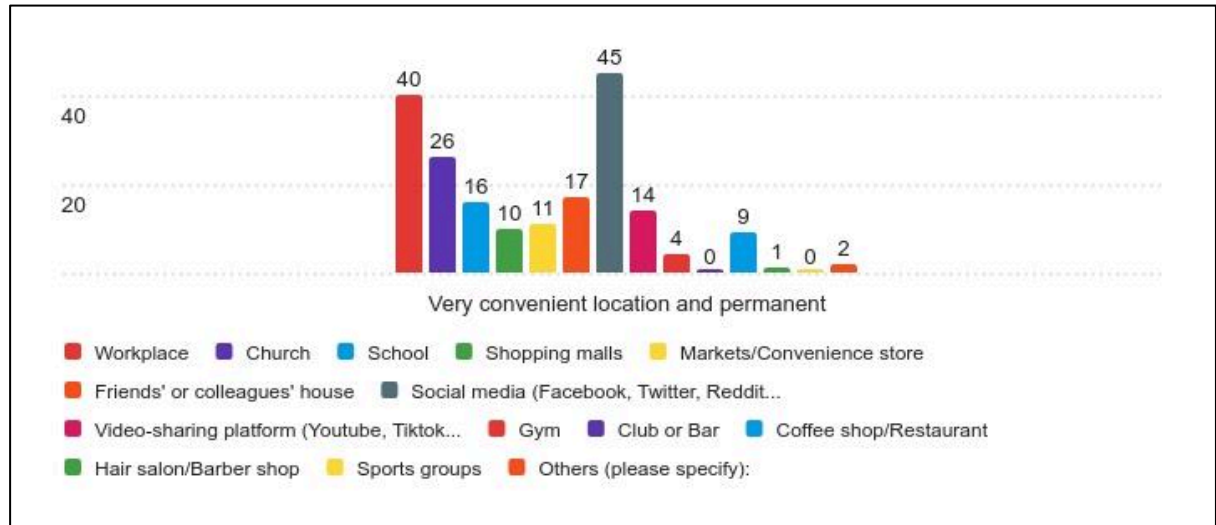
Table 7.*The IGs and their Location and Permanence Ratings*

Information Grounds	Very convenient location and permanent	Semi- convenient location and permanent	Not convenient location and permanent	Not sure
Social media (Facebook, Twitter, Reddit, etc.)	45	22	0	0
Workplace	40	17	1	2
Church	26	15	0	1
Friends' or colleagues' house	17	8	0	0
School	16	8	1	0
Video-sharing platform (Youtube, Tiktok, etc.)	14	10	1	0
Markets/Convenience store	11	2	1	2
Shopping malls	10	8	1	0
Coffee shop/Restaurant	9	5	0	1
Gym	4	1	1	0
Others (please specify): Home, park	2	0	0	0
Hair salon/Barber shop	1	0	0	0

Note: Multiple responses

Figure 8.

Very convenient location and permanent IGs



Privacy. Many respondents (39.6%) are neutral on their perception of the level of privacy in their preferred IGs. Some respondents (21.8%) indicated it is somewhat open, and others (18.8%) answered somewhat private. Interestingly, only 5.9 percent of the respondents think their IG is very private (Tables 8 and Figures 9).

Social media, the workplace, and the church emerged as the IGs, mainly open to the public. No membership is required to access them.

However, social media is also the top selection for IGs that require membership and invitation. This highlights the dual role of social media as both a public and semi-private information ground. There are those private groups in Facebook that require invitation from current members or admins to be able to participate.

The requirement for membership or invitation in these contexts can enhance privacy and foster a sense of belonging among members, making it appealing for individuals who wish to engage in more focused discussions or share personal experiences without the scrutiny of a wider audience.

Table 8.

Perception of Privacy in IGs

Perceived privacy	Count <i>n</i> =101	Percentage
Neutral	40	39.6
Somewhat open	22	21.8
Somewhat private	19	18.8
Very open	14	13.9
Very private	6	5.9

Figure 9.

Perception of privacy in IGs

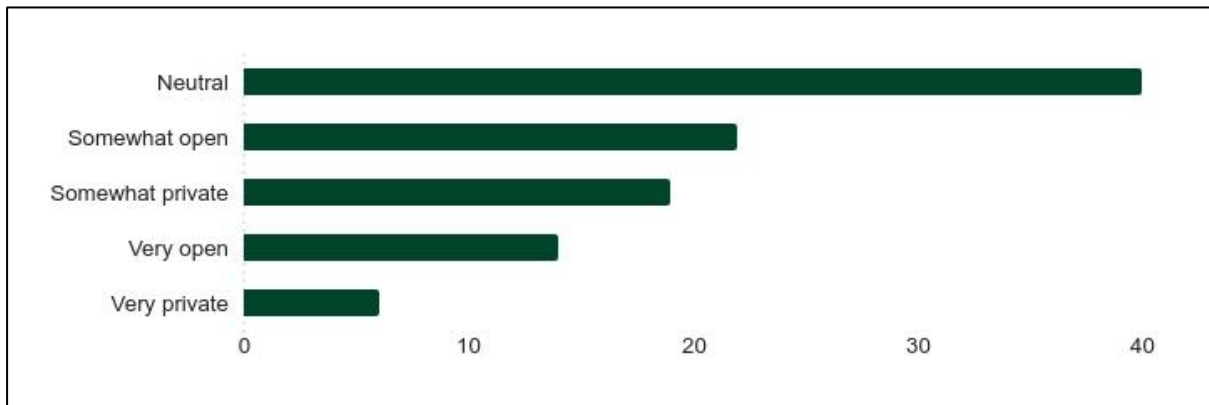


Table 9.

The IGs and their Level of Privacy

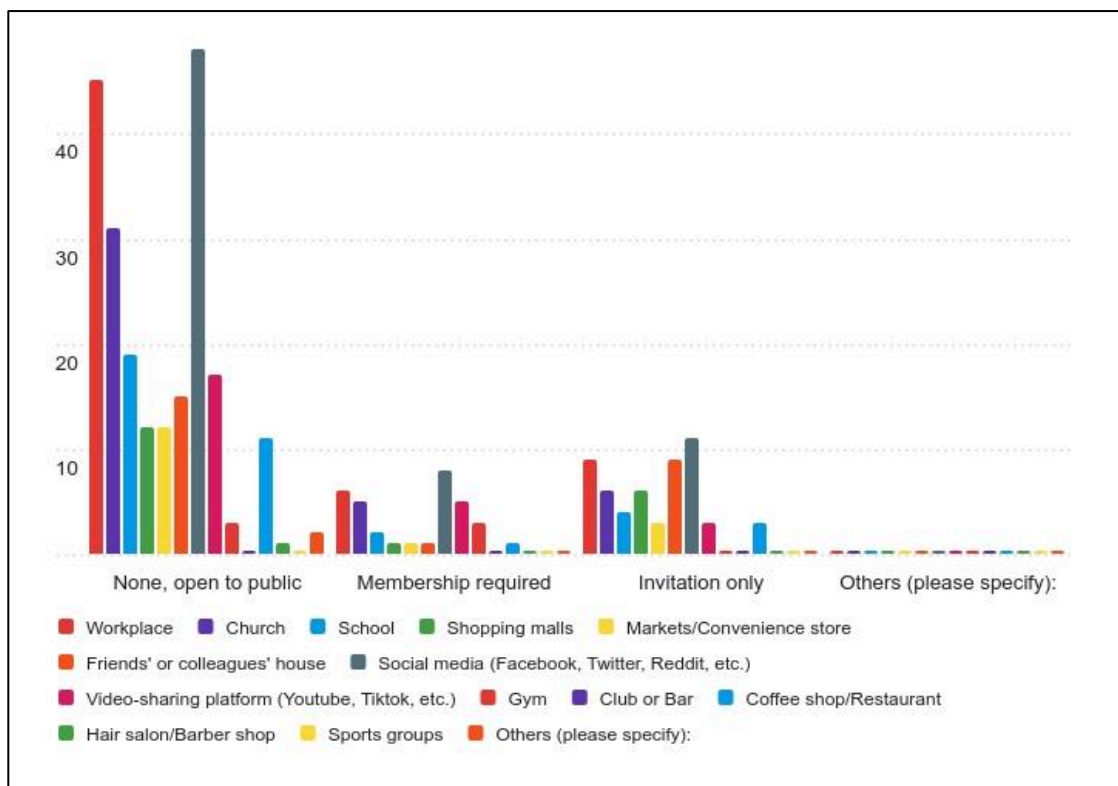
Information Grounds	None, open to public	Membership required	Invitation only
Social media (Facebook, Twitter, Reddit, etc.)	48	8	11
Workplace	45	6	9
Church	31	5	6
School	19	2	4

Video-sharing platform (Youtube, Tiktok, etc.)	17	5	3
Friends' or colleagues' house	15	1	9
Shopping malls	12	1	6
Markets/Convenience store	12	1	3
Coffee shop/Restaurant	11	1	3
Gym	3	3	0
Hair salon/Barber shop	1	0	0
Club or Bar	0	0	0

Note: Multiple responses

Figure 10.

The IGs of FMTs and the level of privacy



Focal activities. The primary reasons majority of the respondents visit their IG other than to obtain information are to socialize or make friends (61.4%) and for entertainment or leisure (55.4%) (Table 10 and 11 and Figures 11 and 12).

The top main reasons for FMTs who work in the public sector and health services to visit their IGs are both to socialize and for entertainment and leisure purposes. Meanwhile, the students seek to socialize and make friends at their IGs.

Many respondents also answered that they go to their IG as personal interest or hobby (41.6%) and to practice religion (36.5%). Those who work in the hospitality industry go to their IGs for personal interests or hobbies.

These focal activities highlight that Filipinos in the diaspora find religious practices essential for building community and spiritual support. These gatherings provide comfort, reinforce cultural identity, and create a safe space to share experiences and connect with others.

Socializing and making friends are key to combating isolation and fostering a sense of belonging. Building a support network within the diaspora helps Filipinos navigate life abroad, share resources, and offer emotional support, which is vital for mental health and resilience.

Leisure activities, such as entertainment and recreation, or even the use of social media, allow Filipinos to relax and enjoy life.

Pursuing hobbies and personal interests enhances well-being, provides a sense of purpose, and creates opportunities to connect with like-minded individuals. These activities help Filipinos maintain their identity while adapting to life in a new environment.

One of the challenges that Filipinos in the diaspora face is the culture shock and homesickness. As an FMT myself, one of my coping strategies is to connect with fellow Filipinos by joining Filipino community groups and engaging in hobbies, like running or gaming, to foster belongingness. In relation to this topic, a study in Taiwan by (Hamto et al., 2024) found most popular leisure activities of Filipino migrants were to use social media and visit church and relatives. Similar to this study, the results highlighted the importance of socialization and entertainment for Filipino migrants in the diaspora.

Table 10.

Main Reasons FMTs go to their Information Grounds

Main reasons	Frequency (n=101)	Percentage
To socialize, make friends	62	61.4
For entertainment or leisure	56	55.4
Personal interest or hobby	42	41.6
Practice religion	37	36.6
To buy food or eat	36	35.6
Workout/exercise	14	13.9
Others (to work, to teach, to connect with family, help with house work)	10	9.9

Note: Multiple responses

Figure 11.

The main reasons FMTs go to their information grounds

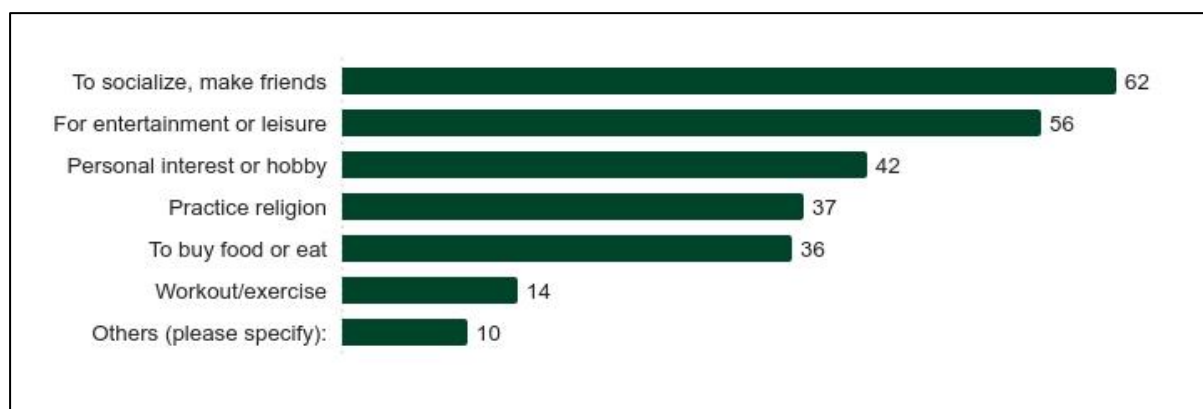


Table 11.

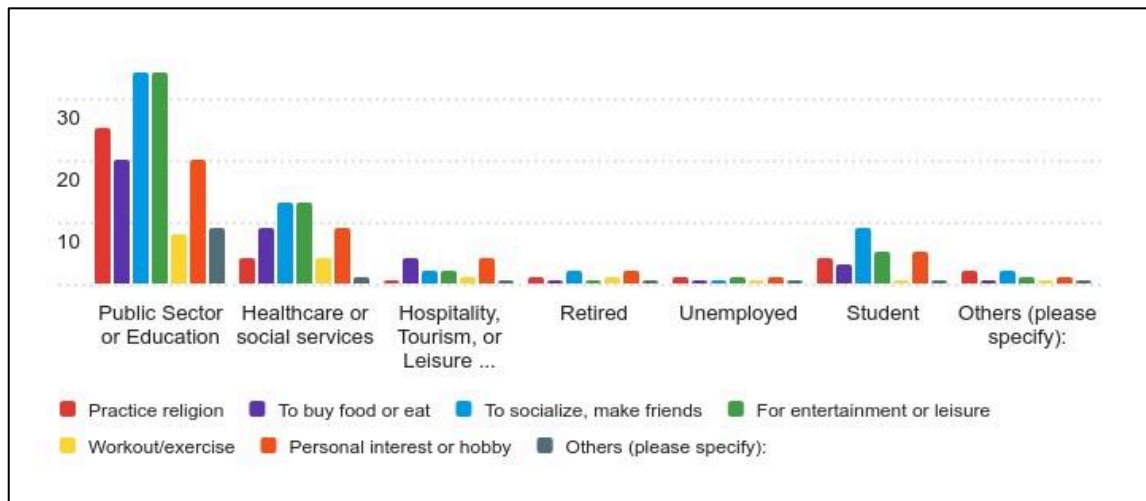
Main Reasons for Visiting IGs According to Field of Work

Field of work	Practice religion	To buy food or eat	To socialize, make friends	For entertainment or leisure	Workout/exercise	Personal interest or hobby	Others (please specify):
Public sector or education	25	20	34	34	8	20	9
Healthcare or social services	4	9	13	13	4	9	1
Hospitality, tourism, or leisure services	0	4	2	2	1	4	0
Retired	1	0	2	0	1	2	0
Unemployed	1	0	0	1	0	1	0
Student	4	3	9	5	0	5	0
Others (please specify):	2	0	2	1	0	1	0

Note: Multiple responses

Figure 12.

The main reasons for visiting IGs according to field of work



Conviviality and atmosphere. Majority (52.5%) of the respondents described their interactions with others at their IGs as friendly; ‘extremely good’ (24.8%); and somewhat good (53.5%).

FMTs found their interactions at their IGs to be friendly because they share similar experiences as Filipino migrants, which fosters a sense of camaraderie. The welcoming atmosphere encourages open communication, and cultural values of community and hospitality enhance these friendly exchanges. It is common for Filipinos to greet each other “*kabayan*” when they realize they are from the same country. However, while they appreciate the friendly interactions, factors such as occasional discomfort, varying levels of privacy, and language barrier (cannot understand regional languages such as Kapampangan or Bisaya), may prevent them from rating the environment as “very good”. Hence many described the atmosphere only “somewhat good”. Personally, as an introvert, I may look so quiet or

unapproachable in a Filipino gathering, which can be perceived by others as unfriendly.

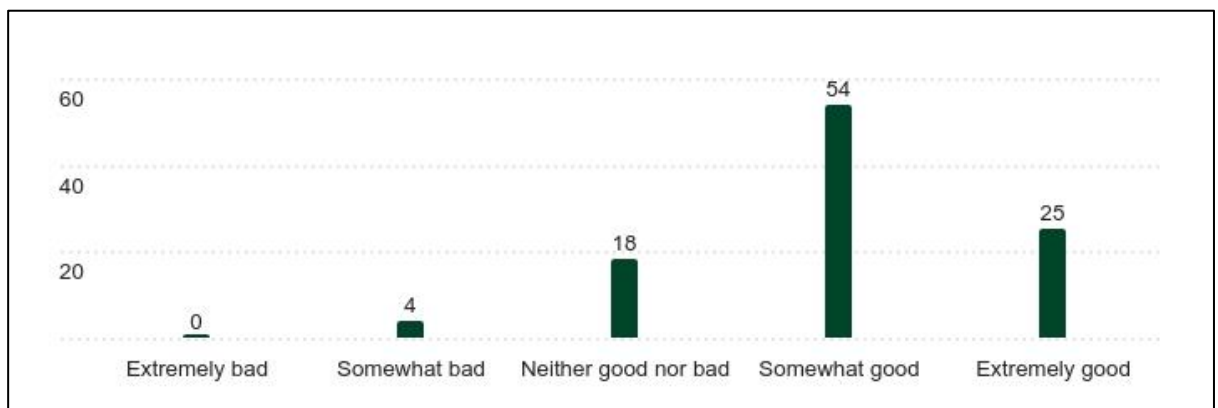
Table 12.

Conviviality and Atmosphere Rating

Conviviality and Atmosphere	Count (n=101)	Percentage
Somewhat bad	4	4.0
Neither good nor bad	18	17.8
Somewhat good	54	53.5
Extremely good	25	24.8

Figure 13.

Conviviality and atmosphere rating



Comforts. Comfortable lighting and atmosphere, very comfortable physical arrangements, and cozy and homey were the top descriptions of the respondents on the environment of their IGs, as they were selected 52, 40, and 34 times, respectively. The respondents chose the description ‘haven away from home and work’ only six times.

These external factors enhance the overall comfort of FMTs in an IG. A well-lit and inviting atmosphere promotes relaxation and encourages social interaction,

while comfortable physical arrangements, such as cozy seating and spacious layouts, facilitate prolonged engagement and foster a sense of belonging.

On another note, FMTs described their IGs as comfortable because these spaces provide not only physical comforts but other members in their IGs may give emotional support, familiarity, and a sense of community. These are crucial for migrants feeling isolated in a new environment. The comfortable atmosphere and social interactions in the IG foster a sense of belonging and security, leading them to perceive their IGs as a second home that enhances their overall well-being and facilitates meaningful connections.

In my experience, FMTs often live with family members, such as parents, children, siblings, spouses, relatives, or even close friends. Visiting their IGs with family or close friends present creates a “homey” environment where they can engage in discussions about topics that may be difficult to address in the presence of others. This intimate setting fosters open communication and strengthens their bonds, allowing for more meaningful exchanges. I consider the place of my mother and sister who are also FMTs as one of my IGs and see it to be my second home.

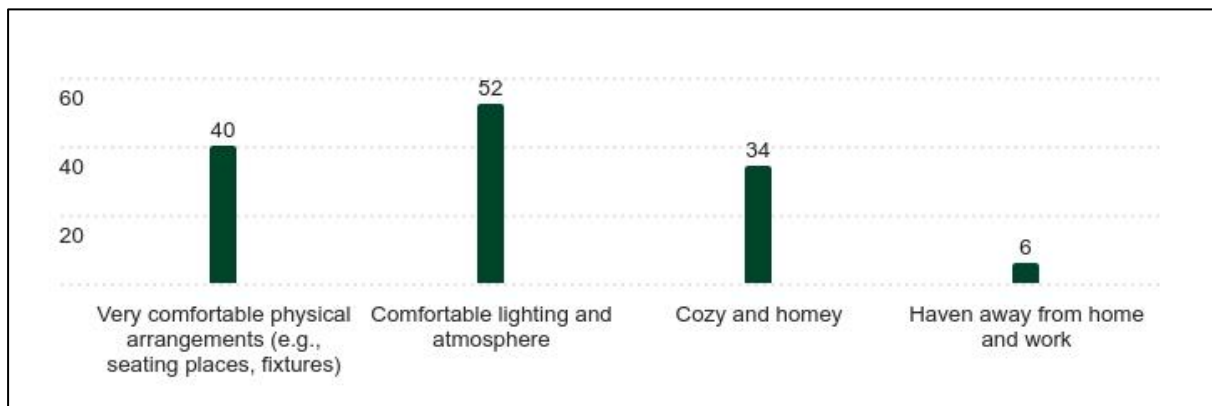
Table 13.

Comforts in IG

Comforts	Frequency (n=101)	Percentage
Comfortable lighting and atmosphere	52	51.5
Very comfortable physical arrangements (e.g., seating places, fixtures)	40	39.6
Cozy and homey	34	33.7
Haven away from home and work	6	5.9

Figure 14.

How FMTs describe the environment in their IGs



Place-related factors are really important for FMTs for a few key reasons. First off, accessibility matters a lot; they prefer information grounds that are easy to get to because it helps them gather and share information more effectively.

Familiar spots like church or workplaces create a sense of belonging and security, especially for those who might feel isolated in a new country. The overall atmosphere or vibe also matters; welcoming and inclusive spaces foster open communication and trust, making it easier for them to create a network, share personal experiences, and ask for help. Finally, the characteristics of these places play a huge role in how well they exchange information, receive emotional support, and build community, all of which are important for their well-being and integration into Thai society.

In summary, place-related factors such as accessibility, comfort, and community-building, or a friendly environment influence the FMTs in identifying their IGs. Locations like workplaces, churches, and social media are valued for their convenience and permanence. Privacy perceptions vary, with social media serving

both public and semi-private roles through group memberships. These IGs support key activities like socializing, entertainment, and religious practices, helping migrants combat isolation, maintain cultural identity, and foster emotional support. Welcoming atmospheres and shared experiences create camaraderie, while comfortable, home-like settings enhance relaxation and belonging, hence making IGs vital for integration and well-being.

Information-related Factors

Topics. The top six topics that half or majority of the respondents typically share or receive at their IGs are professional or work-related (88.1%), personal issues such as family news or personal updates (84.2%), news in the Philippines (68.3%), immigration-related such as work visa and permit (55.4%), global news (53.5%), and academics (50.5%).

Topics about health-related issues such as COVID-19 was still quite high in their agenda as it was mentioned by 49.5%. News in Thailand was also mentioned by almost half (42.6%). A few others mentioned religious topics or God's words, mental health-related issues, the food culture of a country, and cooking lessons.

Professional or work-related issues are the predominant topic for FMTs, as many migrate to Thailand seeking better job opportunities, particularly in teaching and professional sectors. Discussions often revolve around job openings, workplace experiences, salary negotiations, and career advancement. FMTs share advice on navigating the job market, understanding labor rights, and dealing with workplace

challenges. This focus on professional matters is crucial for their financial stability and overall success in a foreign environment.

Personal issues are also the most talked about topic because personal updates and family news are important for FMTs, as maintaining connections with loved ones back home is vital for emotional well-being. Conversations often include sharing life events, family milestones, and personal challenges. FMTs discuss how to manage relationships across distances, cope with homesickness, and support family members in the Philippines. These topics highlight the importance of social support and the emotional ties that bind migrants to their families, even when separated by geography.

Staying informed about current events in their home country is essential for FMTs, hence, news in the Philippines is their top 3 topic. They discuss political developments, economic changes, cultural events, natural disasters, and social issues affecting the Philippines. It is during a typhoon or elections when the engagement of Filipinos in social media, including those in the diaspora is most active. This connection to home helps FMTs maintain their cultural identity and stay engaged with the realities of life in the Philippines. It also allows them to share insights and perspectives with fellow migrants, fostering a sense of community and shared experience.

Immigration-related topics are critical for FMTs, particularly concerning work visas, permits, and legal status. Many migrants face challenges related to their immigration status, and discussions often focus on navigating the complexities of

visa applications, renewals, and compliance with local laws. FMTs seek information on their rights and responsibilities as migrants, as well as strategies for addressing potential legal issues.

News about FMTs being involved in overstaying their visas (ASEAN NOW, 2024) and the Thai-Myanmar border conflict (Reuters, 2023) were shared around the FMTs social media space. Being an FMT myself, I observed that inquiries on immigration-related issues such as cross-border runs, extension of visa, filing of 90-day report, among others, are common conversations in Facebook groups. These published news and personal observations, however, are secondary sources and were not captured in this study. This is a limitation of this study that can be further explored by future studies that will investigate specific 'controversial' issues in the IG using qualitative measures. The present study only explored the IGs of FMT and not yet the specific issues.

FMTs are also interested in global events and trends that may impact their lives and communities. Discussions may include international politics, economic developments, and significant global issues such as climate change or health crises. This awareness of global affairs helps FMTs contextualize their experiences in Thailand and understand the broader implications of events that may affect their home country or their status as migrants.

Education is a significant concern for many FMTs, especially those with children or those pursuing further studies themselves. Conversations often revolve around academic resources, study tips, and educational opportunities available in

Thailand or remotely such as open universities. FMTs discuss the challenges of adapting to different educational systems and the importance of academic success for their families. This focus on academics reflects the aspirations of FMTs for personal and familial growth, emphasizing the value they place on education as a pathway to better opportunities.

Table 14.

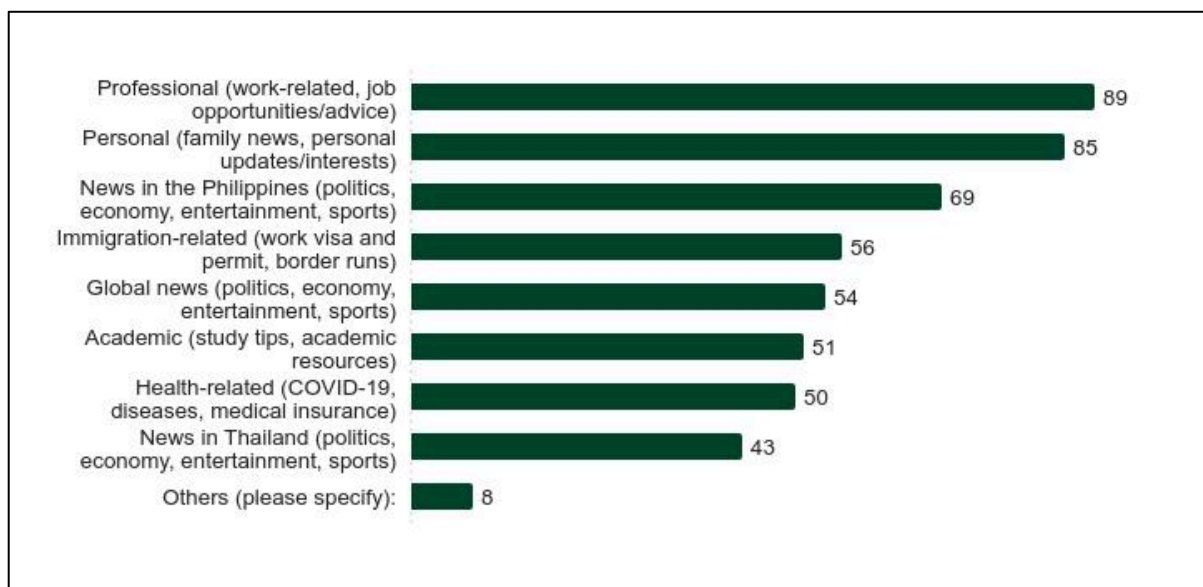
Topics Discussed in IGs

Topics	Count <i>n</i> =101	Percentage
Professional (work-related, job opportunities/advice)	89	88.1
Personal (family news, personal updates/interests)	85	84.2
News in the Philippines (politics, economy, entertainment, sports)	69	68.3
Immigration-related (work visa and permit, border runs)	56	55.4
Global news (politics, economy, entertainment, sports)	54	53.5
Academic (study tips, academic resources)	51	50.5
Health-related (COVID-19, diseases, medical insurance)	50	49.5
News in Thailand (politics, economy, entertainment, sports)	43	42.6
Others (please specify):	8	7.9

Note: Multiple responses

Figure 15.

The usual topics of FMTs at their IGs



The relationship between the FMTs' age and the topics they talk about in their IGs is shown in Table 15 and Figure 16.

Interests and informational needs vary across life stages. Majority of FMTs belonging to the 30-39 age group talk frequently about personal updates, professional or work matters, and news in the Philippines. This aligns with their focus on careers, family, and staying connected to home.

The youngest group, 19 and under, is mainly interested in academics, health-related topics, and professions or job opportunities. This reflects their concerns with education and personal welfare.

Finally, the older group, aged 60-69, is most interested in news in Thailand and the Philippines and health-related issues, showing their concerns about their well-being and that of their families. Understanding these age-based preferences can help tailor information and support services to better meet the diverse needs of the Filipinos in the diaspora.

Table 15.

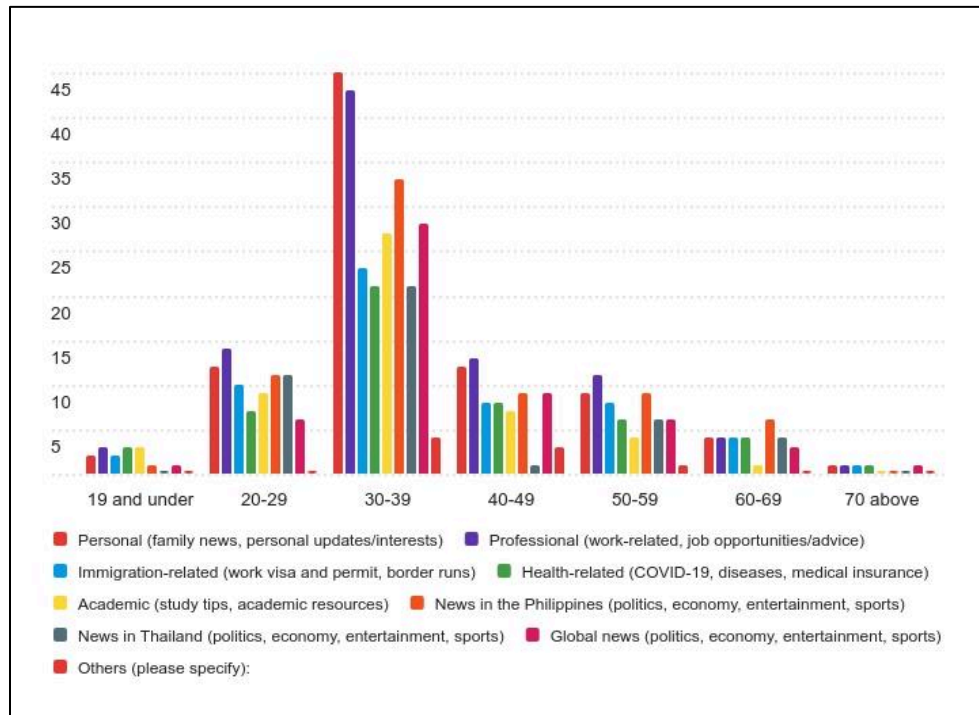
Topics of Interest of FMTs According to Age Group

Age group	Personal	Professional	Immigration-related	Health-related	Academic	News in the Philippines	News in Thailand	Global news	Others (please specify):
19 and under	2	3	2	4	3	1	0	1	0
20-29	12	14	10	7	9	11	11	6	0
30-39	45	43	23	32	27	33	21	28	4
40-49	12	13	8	8	7	9	1	9	3
50-59	9	11	8	6	4	9	6	6	1
60-69	4	4	4	4	1	6	4	3	0
70 above	1	1	2	1	0	0	0	1	0

Note: Multiple responses

Figure 16.

Topics of interest of FMTs according to age group



Frequency. Majority of the respondents (44.6%) revealed that the topics they are interested discussed most of the time or are ‘always’ discussed (4%). Hence, it can be said many of them are able to share information important to them personally and professionally.

However, it must be noted that many still feel that their issues are only discussed sometimes or half of the time, which means that there is still room to improve their IGs.

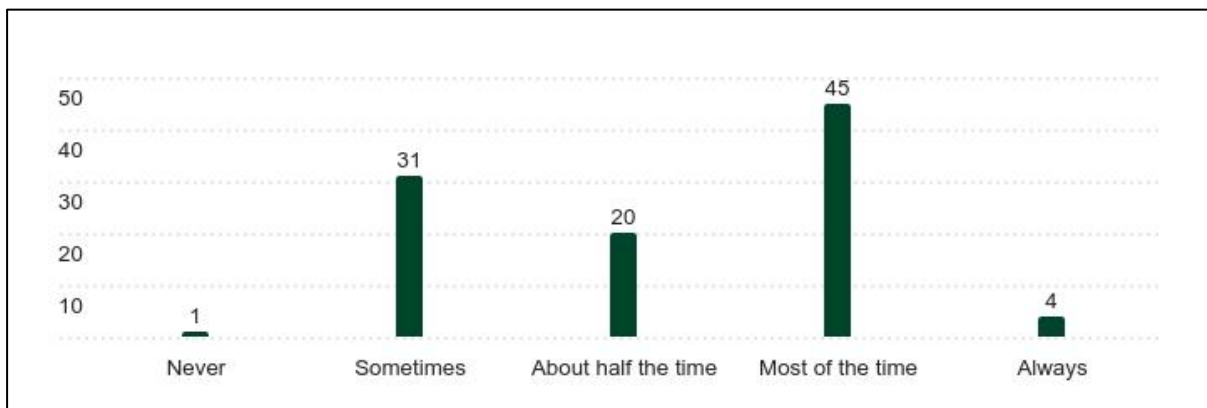
Table 16.

Frequency of Desired Topics Being Discussed

Frequency	Count (n=101)	Percentage
Never	1	1.0
Sometimes	31	30.7
About half the time	20	19.8
Most of the time	45	44.6
Always	4	4.0

Figure 17.

Frequency of desired topics being discussed



How information is created/shared. Information is shown to be shared in physical and spaces virtual.

For physical spaces, many of them mention face-to-face conversations (73.3%) and group discussions (49.5%). Some mention written messages (21.8%).

Face-to-face interactions are the primary method for information sharing among FMTs. These conversations enable immediate feedback and emotional connections, enhancing understanding through non-verbal cues. FMTs often meet in community centers, homes, or social events to discuss personal and professional

topics, fostering a supportive community where experiences and assistance are shared.

Group discussions are another important avenue for FMTs to exchange information, typically occurring in organized settings like community meetings or workshops. These discussions promote the sharing of diverse perspectives and collective problem-solving, helping migrants tackle common challenges such as job navigation and immigration policies.

Although less frequent than verbal communication, written messages still contribute to information sharing. These include notes, bulletins, and newsletters that provide updates on relevant issues and resources. Written communication allows for broader dissemination of information and serves as a reference for individuals to revisit as needed.

For virtual spaces, they use digital communication, such as calls and chats (71.3%) and online forums (35.6%).

Digital communication, including calls and chats via platforms like Line and Facebook Messenger, are key methods for FMTs to share information. This approach facilitates quick and convenient exchanges, helping FMTs maintain connections with family and friends both in Thailand and in the Philippines. It is particularly effective for sharing timely updates and allows for real-time communication across geographical barriers.

On the other hand, online forums and social media groups serve as important platforms for FMTs to engage in discussions, seek advice, and share resources. These virtual spaces enable migrants to connect with a broader community, exchange experiences, and access information that may not be readily available in their physical surroundings.

Table 17.

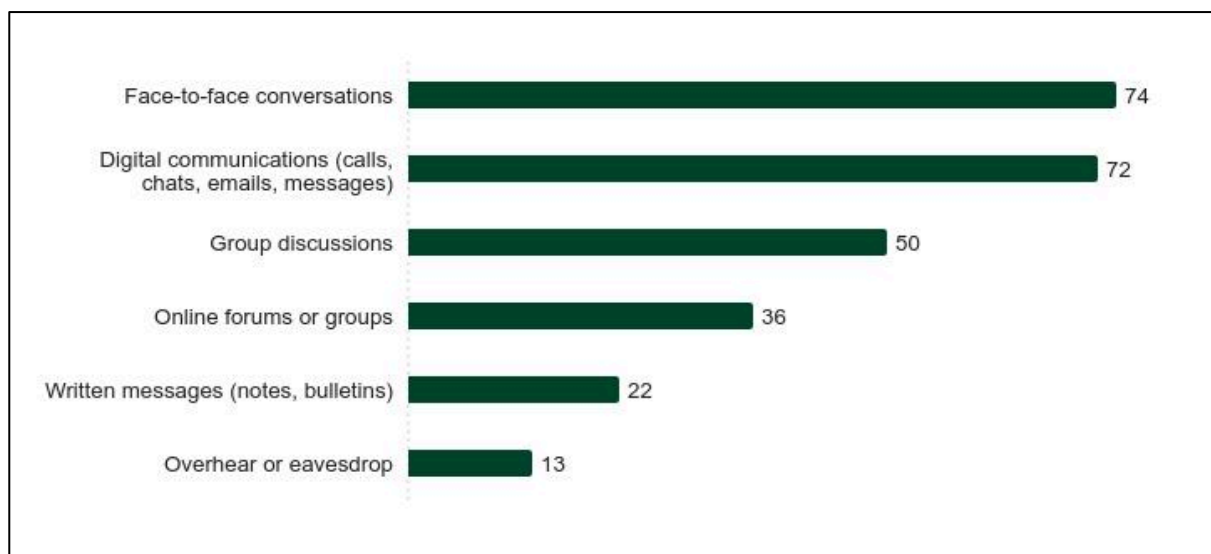
Communication Channels in IGs

Communication channels	Count n=101	Percentage
<i>Physical space</i>		
Face-to-face conversations	74	73.3
Group discussions	50	49.5
Written messages (notes, bulletins)	22	21.8
Overhear or eavesdrop	13	12.9
<i>Virtual space</i>		
Digital communications (calls, chats, emails, messages)	72	71.3
Online forums or groups	36	35.6

Note: Multiple responses

Figure 18.

How information is exchanged in IGs



Significance. As to the significance of the information they shared in their IGs, overall, majority (93%) considered these to be useful. But the degrees varied. While many considered this information to be ‘extremely’ and ‘very useful’ (46.5%), an almost equal number considered these information as ‘moderately useful’ (45.5%) (Table 18 and Figure 19).

While FMTs visit their IGs very frequently, they consider the information to be only ‘moderately useful’ because their visits are driven more by the social connections these spaces offer rather than just for the information available. FMTs seek community, emotional support, and a sense of belonging, which they find at workplaces, churches, and on social media, leading to regular visits.

The information exchanged in these settings is often informal and based on personal experiences, which helps build community, However, these may lack the accuracy or detail needed for critical situations. Further, language barriers, cultural differences, and varying digital skills can also limit FMTs' ability to fully benefit from the information, making it feel less useful for their specific needs. This gap can lead to a perception of only moderate usefulness, pushing FMTs to continue searching for other reliable sources of support. Moreover, some information in IGs is gathered through eavesdropping or overhearing and that may not necessarily relevant to their lives in general.

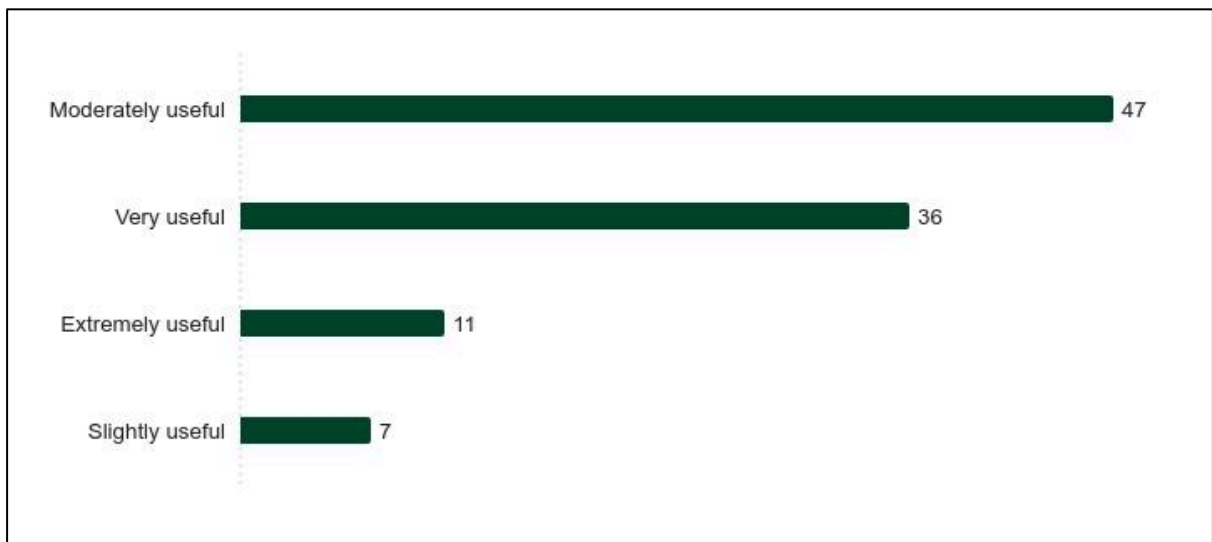
Table 18.

Significance or Usefulness of Information Shared in IGs

Usefulness	Count	Percentage
Moderately useful	47	46.5
Very useful	36	35.6
Extremely useful	11	10.9
Slightly useful	7	6.9

Figure 19.

Significance or usefulness of information obtained in IGs



Quality. As discussed earlier, the respondents mentioned both virtual and physical spaces as sources of information. The sources of information of FMTs within their IGs can be categorized based on their nature (digital vs. physical) and formality (formal vs. informal). The respondents were asked to rate the trustworthiness of these sources of information. Results are shown in Table 19 and Figure 20.

The digital sources are also informal digital sources including social media platforms like Facebook and Twitter. While 42.6% considered them to be ‘very’ and

trustworthy, there were also 37.6% who were unsure or neutral. This indicates that while FMTs has a level of confidence in the reliability of information shared within their social networks, they also expressed uncertainty or neutrality about the trustworthiness of these digital sources. This is because many FMTs are cautious or skeptical about the information found on social media, likely due to concerns over misinformation and the lack of content verification.

While not specified in the results, the formal digital sources may include government websites and official portals, such as Thai immigration services, online news platforms with credible reporting, and educational institutions' websites that offer valuable resources. However, a limitation of this study is that the researcher did not ask the respondents to specify the online media they were specifically subscribing to or using. This would have given more basis and depth for discussion. A study that will explore this idea is recommended.

As for the preferred physical sources, they can also be considered informal as they take place in everyday settings like workplaces, churches, local markets, and community hubs, rather than through official channels. Many (47%) regarded the face-to-face casual conversations with colleagues in the workplace and friends and peers in church, local markets or community hubs as 'very' and trustworthy, emphasizing the role of personal connections and direct communication in building community support.

Almost a quarter of them (24.7%) also consider staff or employees as 'Very' or trustworthy. This indicates that while informal conversations are highly valued,

there is also trust in individuals with authority or responsibility within these environments.

Table 19.

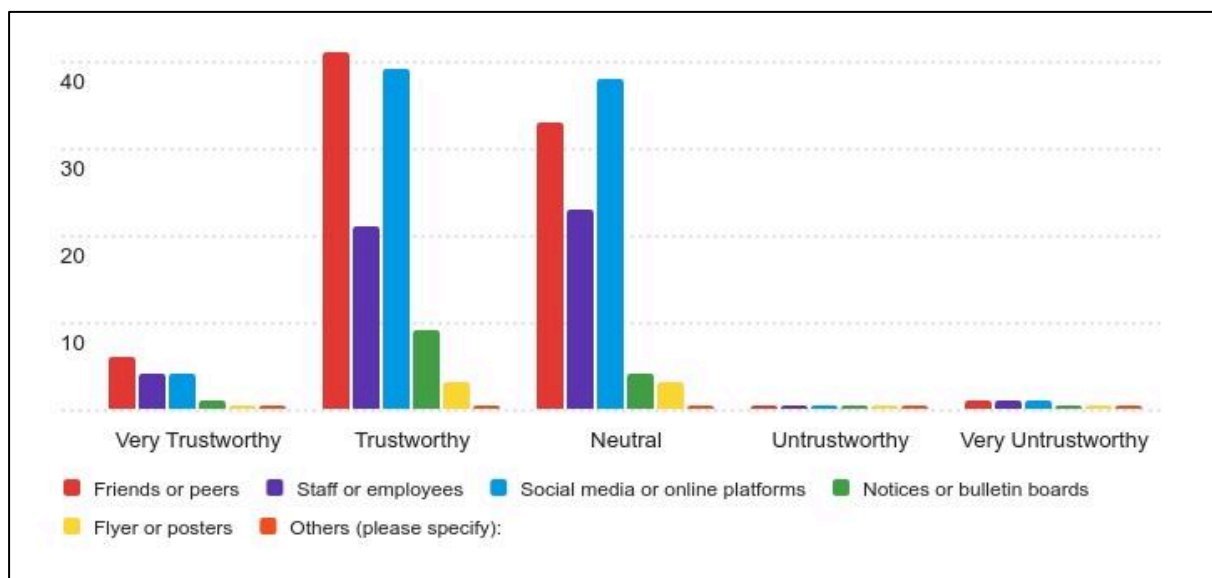
Sources of Information in IGs and their Trustworthiness

Sources of information	Very Trustworthy	Trustworthy	Neutral	Untrustworthy	Very Untrustworthy
Virtual					
Social media or online platforms	4	39	38	0	1
Physical					
Friends or peers	6	41	33	0	1
Staff or employees	4	21	23	0	1
Notices or bulletin boards	1	9	4	0	0
Flyer or posters	0	3	3	0	0

Note: Multiple responses

Figure 20.

Sources of information in IGs and their trustworthiness



In summary, there is a balance between virtual and physical spaces and the blend of formal and informal channels, used by the respondents, reflecting the

diverse ways FMTs access and share information. The results regarding trustworthiness indicate that while a significant portion of FMTs find informal sources, such as friends and peers, to be highly trustworthy, there is also a notable reliance on staff or employees, highlighting a dual trust in both personal connections and authoritative figures for information. Understanding these sources and their perceived trustworthiness is relevant for developing targeted communication strategies and support networks that cater to the specific needs of Filipinos in the diaspora.

People-related Factors

Membership size. The typical size of the group FMTs interact with at their IG is mostly five people or less (44.6%). For some respondents (25.7%), it is 6-10 people. The other groups are 21-30 people (11.9%) and 11-20 people (10.9%). Only 6.9% of respondents answered more than 30 people for their group size.

The respondents who answered more than 30 people as their membership size also selected workplaces (6), social media (5), churches (2), schools (1), markets (2), video-sharing platforms (2), coffee shops (2), and hair salons (1) as their IGs. Suggesting that they interact with a large group of people within these spaces.

FMTs prefer IGs with fewer than five people because of the intimacy and trust that smaller groups provide, allowing for more meaningful and focused interactions. This setting reduces social anxiety, promotes efficient communication, and encourages participation, making it easier for individuals to share personal

experiences and relevant information. In addition, smaller groups often consist of participants with shared backgrounds, enhancing the relevance of discussions and creating a supportive environment.

According to Fisher et al. (2007), smaller groups are more effective for information exchange due to their ability to foster intimacy and trust, encouraging open and meaningful communication. They enable focused, in-depth discussions and quick sharing of diverse insights without the distractions or competition for attention found in larger groups. Additionally, smaller groups promote equitable participation, strengthen community bonds, and enhance collaboration, creating a supportive environment that motivates members to share information freely.

In physical IGs, face-to-face interactions enhance intimacy and trust through non-verbal cues, promoting open discussions. These settings encourage active engagement and equitable participation, leading to richer conversations. The quality of information exchanged is improved, allowing for in-depth discussions and real-time clarifications. Regular interactions foster stronger community bonds as familiarity and trust grow. Additionally, the reduced competition for attention in smaller groups ensures balanced participation, allowing all voices to be heard.

As shown in Table 20 and Figure 21, workplace, church, school, and coffee shop/restaurant have five people or less members. It indicates that information exchange in these physical IGs is significantly enhanced because of the factors mentioned.

In digital IGs, intimacy can be fostered, but the lack of physical presence may limit trust and lead to misunderstandings due to absent non-verbal cues.

Engagement can be facilitated through chat and video features, yet some IG members may hesitate to contribute, resulting in uneven participation. The quality of information exchanged can suffer from technical issues and distractions, disrupting conversations despite the potential for in-depth discussions. While these groups can include diverse members, the transient nature of online interactions may impede the formation of deep relationships. Additionally, although digital spaces can minimize competition for attention, technological distractions can hinder focus and overall engagement.

As shown in Table 20 and Figure 21, social media is the IG that has the highest membership size of five people or less, suggesting that while these digital spaces can accommodate larger groups, the dynamics of interaction may still reflect the challenges of maintaining intimacy and trust.

Overall, while smaller groups are effective for information exchange in both digital and physical spaces, the nature of interactions, engagement levels, and community dynamics differ significantly. Physical spaces tend to promote deeper connections and richer discussions, while digital spaces offer greater accessibility and diversity but may face challenges in building trust and maintaining engagement.

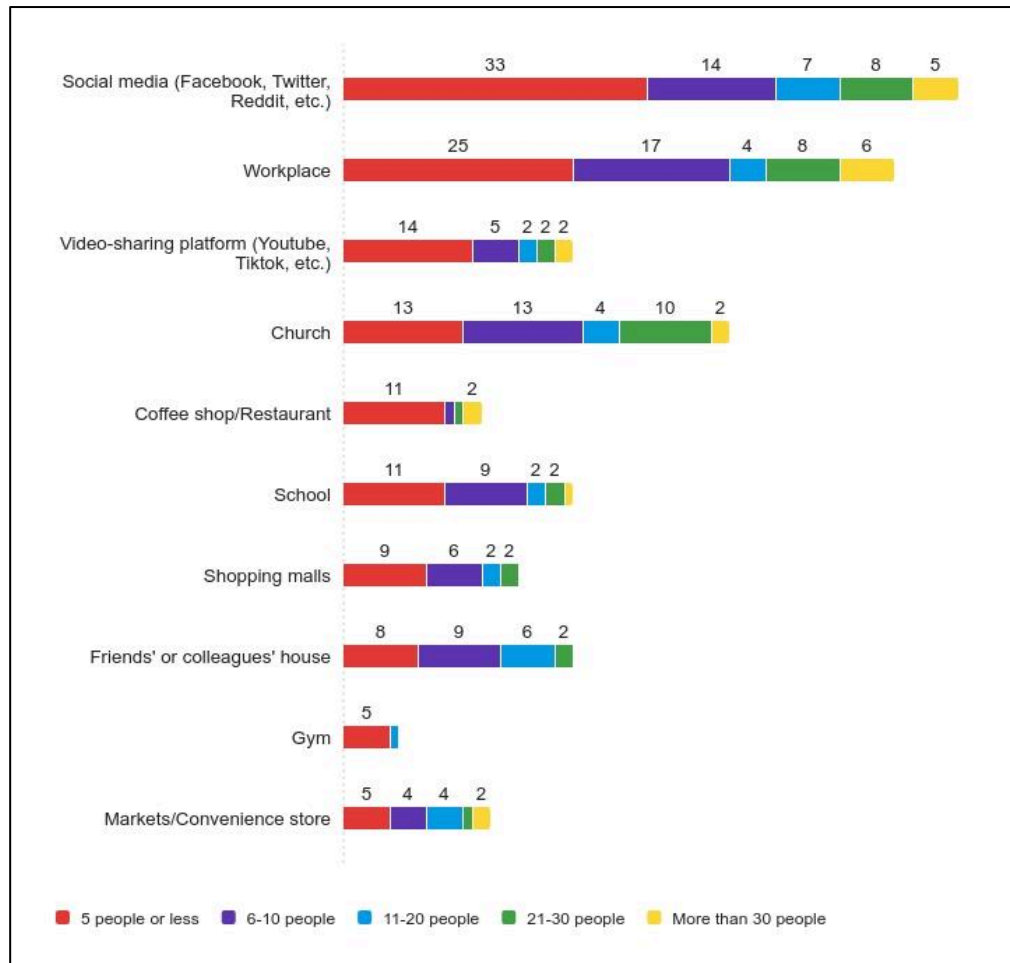
Table 20.*IGs and Membership Size*

Information Grounds	5 people or less	6-10 people	11-20 people	21-30 people	More than 30 people
<i>Virtual</i>					
Social media (Facebook, Twitter, Reddit, etc.)	33	14	7	8	5
Video-sharing platform (Youtube, Tiktok, etc.)	14	5	2	2	2
<i>Physical</i>					
Workplace	25	17	4	8	6
Church	13	13	4	10	2
School	11	9	2	2	1
Coffee shop/Restaurant	11	1	0	1	2
Shopping malls	9	6	2	2	0
Friends' or colleagues' house	8	9	6	2	0
Markets/Convenience store	5	4	4	1	2
Gym	5	0	1	0	0
Others: Home, park	1	0	1	0	0
Hair salon/barber shop	0	0	0	0	1

Note: Multiple responses

Figure 21.

IGs and membership size



Membership type. Most respondents (71.3%) indicate that their IG does not require membership or that its accessibility is open to the public. Some respondents (17.8%) say that membership is invitation-only, and the rest (10.9%) say that membership is required at their IGs.

The high percentage of respondents indicating that their IGs are open to the public suggests a preference for accessible and inclusive environments. This openness facilitates a broader exchange of ideas and information, allowing individuals to connect with a diverse range of perspectives. It can enhance

community cohesion and support networks, as more people can participate and contribute. However, the downside may include challenges related to privacy and the potential for misinformation, as the lack of membership requirements can lead to less control over the quality of interactions and the information shared.

The presence of invitation-only and membership-required IGs indicates a desire for more controlled and secure environments. These settings can foster deeper relationships and trust among members, as individuals may feel more comfortable sharing personal experiences and sensitive information. Closer groups can also enhance the relevance of discussions, as members often share similar backgrounds or interests. However, this exclusivity may limit the diversity of viewpoints and reduce the overall reach of the information shared, potentially isolating members from broader community resources and support.

The balance between openness and closeness in IGs reflects a trade-off between inclusivity and intimacy. Open IGs promote broader participation and diverse interactions, while closed IGs enhance trust and focused discussions. Understanding these dynamics is crucial for developing effective communication strategies that cater to the varying needs of individuals within the community.

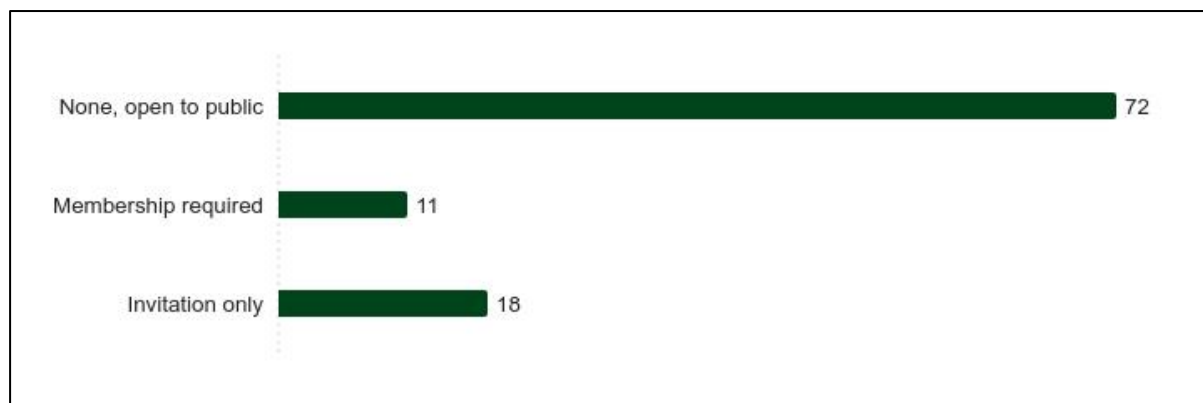
Table 21.

Membership Type

Membership required	Count <i>n</i>=101	Percentage
None, open to public	72	71.3
Membership required	11	10.9
Invitation only	18	17.8

Figure 22.

Membership type



Familiarity. Almost half of respondents (39.6%) have been going to their IGs for over five years, the longest among the IGs. The answers 1-3 years and six months or less have almost the same percentage, 18.8% and 17.8%, respectively. The others (14.9%) have been going to their IGs for 3-5 years.

For FMTs who have attended for six months or less, familiarity is relatively low, with 36.4% reporting they are not familiar at all, and 66.7% indicating they are only slightly familiar. Similarly, respondents attending for 6 months to 1 year also show low levels of familiarity, with 27.3% not familiar at all and 16.7% slightly familiar.

Familiarity increases significantly among those who have been attending for 1–3 years, with the majority describing themselves as moderately (20%), very (28.1%), or extremely familiar (16.7%). This trend continues for respondents attending for 3–5 years, where a notable 33.3 percent report being extremely familiar, while only 9.1 percent remain not familiar at all.

The highest levels of familiarity are observed among respondents who have attended for over 5 years, with 59.4 percent describing themselves as very familiar and 50 percent as extremely familiar.

There are also many FMTs (35%) who have been visiting their IGs for the longest time reported. Nevertheless, they are only moderately familiar with other members because of the nature of their interactions, which often prioritize information exchange over personal relationship building. If the primary purpose of these visits is to seek or share specific information, the conversations may remain transactional, limiting opportunities for deeper connections. In addition, the diverse membership within IGs can lead to frequent encounters with new individuals, preventing the establishment of strong, lasting relationships.

Cultural norms may also play a role, as FMTs might maintain a level of professionalism or distance in their interactions, which can hinder familiarity. Furthermore, time constraints due to work or family responsibilities may limit the amount of time spent in IGs, reducing the chances for meaningful engagement. Overall, these factors contribute to a situation where long-term visitors feel moderately familiar with others, reflecting the dynamics of their social interactions within these IGs.

The results reveal a clear positive correlation between the duration of attendance at an IG and the level of familiarity with its members, emphasizing that longer engagement fosters stronger social connections. Longer durations of attendance enable FMTs to establish trust, navigate group dynamics, and form

meaningful relationships. Conversely, shorter durations leave insufficient time for such processes to occur, explaining the lower familiarity levels among newer participants. This highlights the importance of consistency and sustained engagement in fostering social bonds and meaningful connections within IGs.

On the other hand, while longer attendance at IGs generally fosters greater familiarity among members, certain factors—such as the transactional nature of interactions, diverse membership, cultural norms, and time constraints—can limit the development of deeper connections. Even among those who have been part of these IGs for over five years, moderate familiarity can persist, highlighting the complexity of social dynamics in these spaces. This suggests that familiarity is not solely determined by the length of time spent in a group but also by the quality and purpose of interactions, as well as external influences like work and cultural expectations.

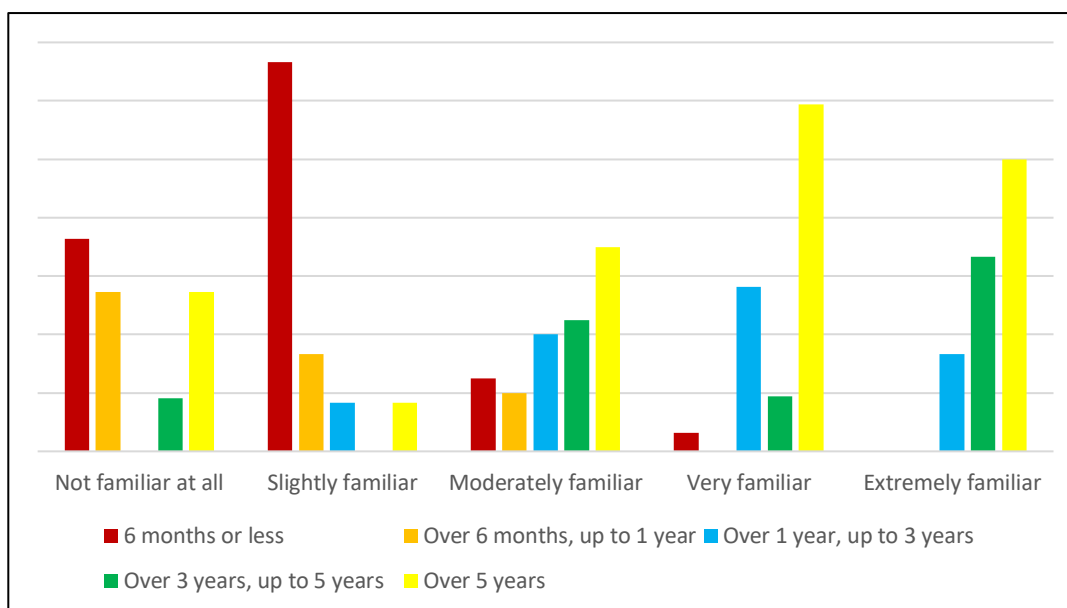
Table 22.

Length of Time Visiting IGs and Familiarity with other Members

	Not familiar at all	Slightly familiar	Moderately familiar	Very familiar	Extremely familiar
6 months or less	36.4	66.7	12.5	3.1	0.0
Over 6 months, up to 1 year	27.3	16.7	10.0	0.0	0.0
Over 1 year, up to 3 years	0.0	8.3	20.0	28.1	16.7
Over 3 years, up to 5 years	9.1	0.0	22.5	9.4	33.3
Over 5 years	27.3	8.3	35.0	59.4	50.0

Figure 23.

Length of time visiting IGs and familiarity with others



In terms of diversity of members in IGs, most respondents (77.2%) revealed that the people they interact with regarding nationality, background, interests, or roles are somewhat diverse. Others (15.8%) indicated that the people at their IGs are very diverse, while a few (6.9%) responded that they are not.

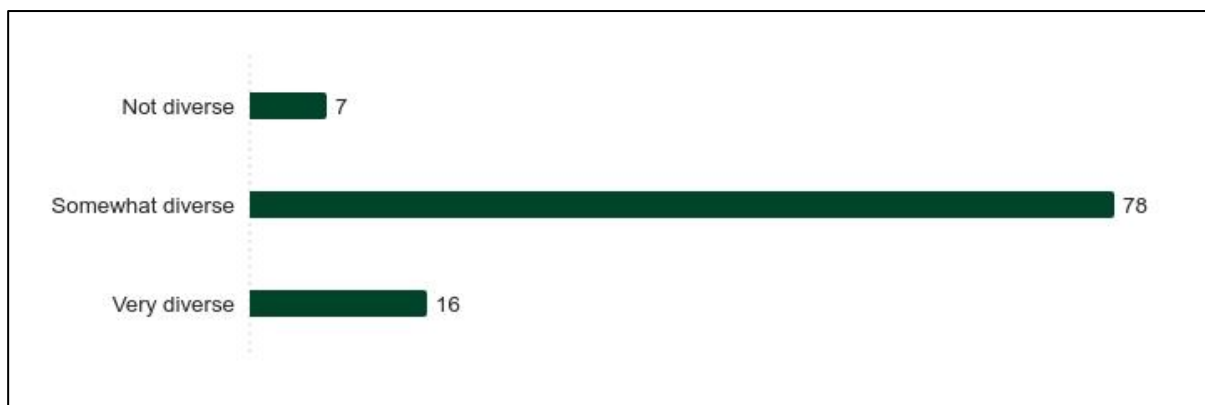
Table 23.

Diversity of IG Members

Diversity	Count <i>n</i> =101	Percentage
Not diverse	7	6.9
Somewhat diverse	78	77.2
Very diverse	16	15.8

Figure 24.

Diversity of IG members



Actor role. The respondents primarily act as information seekers (57.4%). As mentioned in other studies, migrants seek information for several key reasons. They often face unfamiliar customs and social structures in their new countries, and accessing reliable information helps them adapt to these changes and establish stability in their lives (Wang et al., 2020). During emergencies or significant issues, having timely and accurate information is crucial for ensuring safety and making informed decisions (Zalivanskiy & Samokhvalova, 2020). Information is also vital for navigating legal processes, accessing healthcare, and connecting with support systems, which are essential for migrants' well-being (Suksai, 2020). Additionally, information helps migrants connect with fellow expatriates and local communities, facilitating social integration and support networks. Understanding local customs, laws, and social norms is important for migrants to successfully integrate and avoid potential pitfalls in their new environment (Wang et al., 2020).

Majority are also observers (56.4%) at their IGs. This may be influenced by several factors. Many prefer cautious engagement, opting to observe rather than participate in unfamiliar settings to understand group dynamics. Observers often

focus on absorbing information and learning from others' experiences, viewing this as a more effective way to gather relevant insights. Cultural norms valuing humility and restraint may also contribute to their reserved roles. Additionally, a lack of confidence in their ability to contribute meaningfully, especially in the presence of more knowledgeable individuals, can lead to a preference for passive learning. Personality traits, such as being introverted, may also play a significant role, as introverted individuals may feel more comfortable observing rather than actively engaging in discussions. Social dynamics within the IGs, where dominant voices may overshadow less vocal participants, further encourage this tendency to observe. Overall, adopting the role of an observer allows FMTs to strategically navigate their IGs, gradually building understanding and confidence, especially for those who are newcomers in their IGs.

Less but increasingly, many respondents (45.5%) are assuming the roles of being information providers at their IG, especially for those who have been in Bangkok for some time. This shift may be attributed to their growing familiarity with the local context and norms and the information needs of newer FMTs. As they establish themselves within the community, these individuals often feel more confident in sharing their knowledge and experiences, which can be helpful for others navigating similar challenges. Additionally, their desire to contribute to the well-being of fellow migrants fosters a sense of community and support, encouraging them to take on more active roles. Being information providers not only enhances their own integration but also strengthens the IGs as resources for information and assistance.

The other roles that the respondents typically identify themselves with at their IG are employee/staff (30.7%), member (25.7%), customer (13.9%), and lastly, resident (8.9%). Interestingly, one respondent specified their role as 'friend'.

The roles people take on—whether as mentors, friends, or sources of information—help share valuable insights about living in Bangkok, including job opportunities, legal issues, and health resources. Overall, these people factors create a supportive environment that empowers FMTs to thrive and boosts their resilience and adaptability.

Motivation. Majority (75.2%) named social interaction as their top motivation in visiting their IGs. This was followed by personal interest (65.3%), and professional development (54.5%). A few respondents (11.9%) answered compulsory requirements as their motivation (Table 23 and Figure 24).

The top motivation of FMTs is similar to Fisher et al.'s (2007) study, which identified social interaction as the primary motivation for visiting information grounds. Both studies emphasize how these spaces foster connections among individuals. The findings reflect a pattern in the motivations for utilizing information grounds across different populations and eras.

To further discuss, people-related factors are significant for FMTs because they really affect how well information is shared and social support is given within their communities. The relationships and interactions among individuals build trust and familiarity, which is essential for Filipinos in the diaspora who might feel isolated

in a new place. These social connections offer emotional support, helping them deal with challenges like homesickness and adjusting to a different culture. Having peers with similar experiences creates a strong sense of belonging, which is crucial for mental well-being.

Table 24.

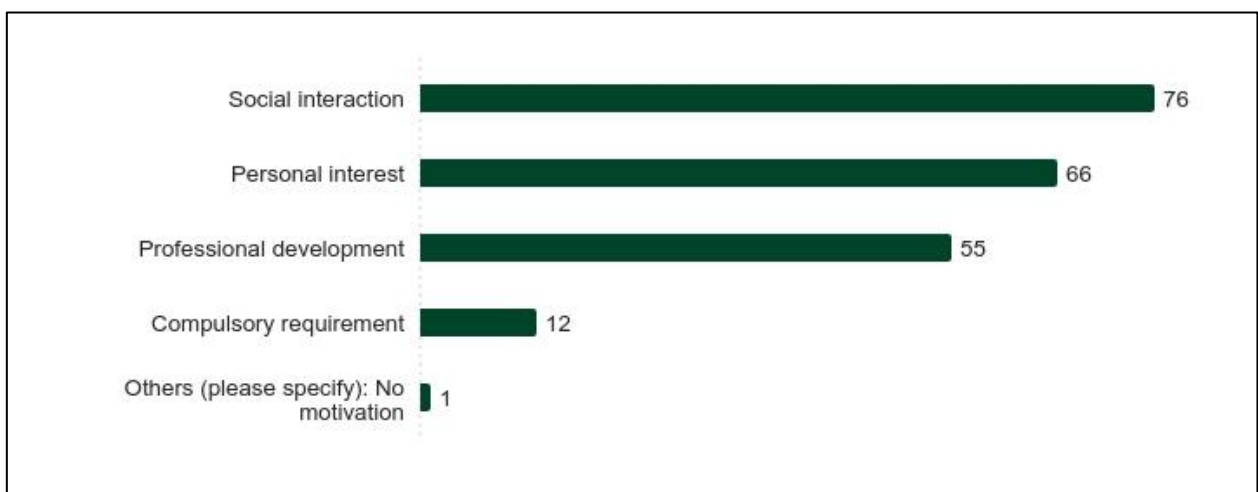
Primary Reasons FMTs Visit their IGs

Motivation	Count n=101	Percentage
Social interaction	76	75.2
Personal interest	66	65.3
Professional development	55	54.5
Compulsory requirement	12	11.9
Others (please specify): No motivation	1	1.0

Note: Multiple responses

Figure 25.

The primary reasons FMTs visit their IGs



In summary, FMTs predominantly favor smaller group interactions as these settings enhance intimacy, trust, and meaningful communication, while larger groups can reduce engagement. FMTs use social media and physical spaces like

workplaces and churches, favoring environments that encourage closer interactions. Familiarity with group members increases with longer attendance, indicating that sustained engagement builds stronger social connections, but newer members often feel less familiar due to limited time for relationship development. Many FMTs adopt the role of observer, often due to cautious engagement, cultural norms, introversion, and social dynamics that favor dominant voices. Lastly, FMTs are primarily motivated by social interaction, personal interest, and professional development, with these motivations being more effectively realized in smaller, intimate settings that promote open communication.

Chapter V

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

The study explored the information grounds of Filipino migrants in Bangkok (FMTs) and how they used these. The study was guided by the Information Ground Theory and adopted Fisher et al.'s (2007) people-place-information trichotomy as an analytical framework to understand how FMTs construe and utilize their information grounds (IGs). The study determined the characteristics of places they considered significant for information exchange, the types of information they sought and shared, and the social dynamics involved in these interactions. By understanding the factors influencing their choices for an IG, the study aims to provide insights that could help strengthen these IGs for the FMTs and other Filipinos in the diaspora, particularly during times of crisis or significant challenges, thereby enhancing their access to relevant information.

The quantitative study used a survey design. Purposive and snowball sampling were used to recruit the 101 eligible respondents who met the criteria as follows: 1) Filipino and 2) living in Bangkok, Thailand for 30 days or more. Data were collected through an online survey using Qualtrics. Data were then analyzed descriptively using frequencies and percentages and visualized using Qualtrics Stats IQ and Reports. Ethical measures to ensure informed consent, anonymity, and confidentiality were followed in the research process.

The results of this study are captured in the following research highlights.

Demographic Profile of FMTs

The demographic profile of the respondents shows a diverse mix, with a significant concentration in the 30-39 age group, which comprises nearly half of the sample. Most respondents identify as female, and a large majority hold at least a bachelor's degree, with many also possessing advanced degrees. Marital status is split relatively evenly between single and married individuals. In terms of residency, most have lived in Bangkok for a decade or more, highlighting their established presence in the city.

Professionally, the respondents are predominantly employed in the public sector or education, with healthcare and social services also well-represented. There is also a smaller representation of students, those in hospitality or tourism, and retirees. A few respondents work in specialized fields like consulting or international development, while one is currently unemployed. This demographic snapshot reflects a well-educated, professionally diverse, and settled group living in Bangkok.

The Information Grounds of FMTs

FMTs significantly preferred online spaces as their IG (91%) utilizing digital platforms such as social media (66%) and video-sharing sites (25%). This trend indicates a shift from traditional physical spaces, which were previously considered key information grounds, to virtual environments that cater to the needs of younger, educated migrants who have adapted to technological advancements.

Despite the dominance of online interactions, traditional physical spaces such as churches, shopping malls, and coffee shops remain important for fostering

community and trust. Churches, in particular, serve as vital social hubs where migrants engage in various activities beyond Sunday services, such as facilitating information sharing and support among community members. The study highlighted the blend of digital and physical spaces in the lives of Filipino migrants, emphasizing the human need for connection and community in both realms.

Overall, the findings aligned with previous research on Filipino migrants in other countries, showing a consistent pattern of utilizing digital resources for information access while still valuing face-to-face interactions in community-centric environments.

Place-related Factors of the IGs

Place-related factors play an important role in shaping the experiences of FMTs in their IGs. Key aspects include the preference for convenient and permanent locations such as workplaces, churches, and schools, as well as the accessibility of social media. Privacy perceptions among respondents vary, with many expressing neutrality regarding the privacy of their IGs, reflecting a blend of public and semi-private interactions.

Socializing and entertainment emerged as primary motivations for visiting IGs, which were essential for building community and alleviating feelings of isolation. The friendly atmosphere within these spaces fostered camaraderie and open communication, contributing to a sense of belonging. Additionally, the comfortable environments, characterized by cozy arrangements and inviting settings, enhanced

relaxation and provided crucial emotional support for migrants as they navigate life in a new country.

Overall, the place-related factors indicated that FMTs valued convenience, stability, and a comfortable atmosphere in their IGs.

Information-related Factors of the IGs

The information-related factors emphasized the importance of both physical and virtual spaces for FMTs in navigating their IGs, with face-to-face interactions being the primary method for sharing information. Physical settings included community centers, homes, and social events. Digital settings encompassed digital communications, such as calls and chats via platforms like Line and Facebook Messenger, as well as online forums and social media groups that facilitate discussions and resource sharing.

The top six topics that FMTs discussed were work-related issues, personal updates, news from the Philippines, immigration-related concerns, global news, and academic discussions. While most participants found the information shared in these IGs moderately to very useful, there was a recognition that discussions on these issues occurred only sometimes, indicating a need for improvement.

Overall, the findings revealed a mix of formal and informal communication channels, showcasing the diverse ways that FMTs access and share information. The trust placed in both personal connections and authoritative figures highlight the

need to understand these dynamics for developing effective communication strategies and support networks for Filipinos in the diaspora.

People-related Factors of the IGs

The people-related factors revealed that FMTs mostly interact within small groups of five people or fewer at their IGs because these groups foster intimacy, reduce social anxiety, and promote meaningful interactions. Majority of FMTs identified themselves as observers because of a combination of cultural influences, personal traits, and social dynamics. Some FMTs took the role of information providers who share knowledge and experiences, which are helpful for newer FMTs.

Familiarity with group members increased with the duration of attendance at IGs, with long-term attendees reporting higher familiarity levels. However, many still experienced only moderate familiarity due to factors such as the transactional nature of interactions and cultural norms that may hinder deeper connections. The primary motivation for FMTs visiting their IGs were social interaction, personal interest, and professional development. These motivations suggest their aim to build relationships and combat isolation, pursue their interests for personal fulfillment, and enhance their skills and career prospects, highlighting the importance of community, personal growth, and career advancement in their experiences as Filipinos in the diaspora.

Conclusion

The information grounds of FMTs in Bangkok, Thailand encompass both physical and increasingly virtual spaces where they seek, share, and utilize information. Such finding enhances the initial discussions on the information ground theory whereby physical spaces used to be the predominant IG.

In a generation where social media and online platforms have become part of our everyday lives, an information ground goes beyond physical places. As people communicate and exchange information online, a "third place" can be Facebook, Twitter, or other social media platforms.

The FMTs primarily use both physical and digital spaces for information exchange, with social media, workplaces, and community centers emerging as significant IGs. These environments not only provide access to work-related and personal information but also foster social connections that are essential for emotional support and community cohesion.

Moreover, the study highlights the importance of convenience, permanence, and social dynamics in shaping the interactions within these IGs. The established presence of FMTs in Bangkok, many of whom have lived there for over a decade, contribute to a sense of belonging and stability, further enhancing their ability to share and receive information effectively.

The IGs of FMTs in Bangkok are not merely spaces for information exchange; they are vital lifelines that support the community's resilience and adaptability in a

foreign context. By recognizing and strengthening these IGs, stakeholders can develop targeted strategies that address the unique challenges faced by Filipino migrants. This understanding emphasizes the need for policies that enhance communication and support networks, ensuring that FMTs can thrive in their diaspora while maintaining their cultural identity and connections.

Implications and Recommendations

For Online IG

While online sources allow quick information acquisition, social media can be prone to misinformation and contradicting opinions, furthermore to confusion, and unverified and inaccurate information. For example, these can deter users' trust in online health information and cause health mismanagement. While users are considered digitally literate, cognition on COVID-19 information or health literacy does not reflect digital literacy. In addition, the prevalence of misinformation on social media poses risks, as FMTs may encounter false information about job opportunities or legal rights, resulting to poor decision-making.

Moreover, online interactions can lack the depth of face-to-face communication, leading to superficial relationships that do not foster trust. Over-reliance on online platforms may weaken traditional physical spaces for information sharing, diminishing community ties. Lastly, cultural misunderstandings can arise in online discussions, leading to conflicts or feelings of alienation. Addressing these challenges is crucial for enhancing information sharing among FMTs.

For Physical IGs

Physical IGs, such as churches, community centers, and social gathering spots, remain crucial for fostering face-to-face interactions among FMTs. These environments provide opportunities for deeper connections and trust-building, which are essential for effective information exchange. However, some migrants may feel isolated or disconnected in these settings.

Accessibility is a significant issue, as not all migrants can easily travel to these locations, limiting their participation. Additionally, some physical spaces may not be welcoming or inclusive, leading to feelings of alienation, especially for newcomers.

Moreover, physical IGs may lack diverse perspectives, leading to echo chambers where only certain viewpoints are shared. Lastly, power dynamics in these spaces can result in dominant voices overshadowing quieter individuals, hindering equal participation in discussions. Addressing these challenges is crucial for enhancing effective information sharing among FMTs.

The following recommendations are categorized by Place, Information, and People factors, and encompass the aspects and needs for more effective online and physical IGs.

Recommendations for Place

The implications for place suggest that enhancing both online and physical IGs can significantly improve the overall well-being and adaptability of FMTs in their new environment. Recognizing the importance of convenience, accessibility, and

cultural relevance in these spaces is essential for developing effective strategies that cater to the unique needs of this community.

1. Enhance online community platforms: Develop and promote dedicated online platforms or forums specifically for FMTs that facilitate information sharing on job opportunities, legal advice, and cultural events. These platforms should be user-friendly and accessible, allowing for real-time communication and interaction among community members.

2. Organize regular community events: Host regular physical gatherings, such as cultural festivals, workshops, and support groups, in community centers or churches. These events can serve as vital IGs where FMTs can connect, share experiences, and access important information in a supportive environment.

3. Leverage social media for information dissemination: Utilize popular social media channels (e.g., Facebook, Messenger, Line) to disseminate critical information relevant to FMTs, such as updates on immigration policies, job fairs, and community resources. Creating dedicated pages or groups can help streamline communication and foster a sense of community.

4. Establish partnerships with local organizations: Collaborate with local NGOs, government agencies, and educational institutions to create resource hubs that provide FMTs with access to information and support services. These partnerships can enhance the visibility of available resources and ensure that FMTs are informed about their rights and opportunities.

5. Implement training programs for digital literacy: Offer training sessions focused on digital literacy and online safety to empower FMTs in effectively utilizing online IGs. These programs can help migrants navigate digital platforms, access information, and engage in online communities more confidently and safely.

Recommendations for Information

The ability to access relevant, timely, and culturally appropriate information is crucial for FMTs as they navigate their new environment. The implications for information suggest that enhancing the quality and accessibility of information within both physical and online IGs can significantly improve the migrants' ability to make informed decisions, maintain their cultural ties, and foster community resilience.

1. Create culturally relevant information resources: Develop and distribute information materials that are culturally relevant and available in both English and Filipino languages. These resources should cover essential topics such as legal rights, healthcare access, job opportunities, and community services, ensuring that FMTs can easily understand and utilize the information.

2. Establish information hubs in physical spaces: Set up information hubs in key physical IGs, such as community centers, churches, and workplaces, where FMTs can access printed materials, brochures, and digital resources. These hubs should be staffed with knowledgeable individuals who can provide guidance and answer questions related to the information provided.

3. Utilize mobile applications for information access: Develop a mobile application specifically designed for FMTs that aggregates relevant information, resources, and community events. The app should feature user-friendly navigation, notifications for important updates, and a forum for users to ask questions and share experiences.

4. Conduct information workshops and seminars: Organize regular workshops and seminars in both physical and online formats to educate FMTs on various topics, such as financial literacy, health services, and legal rights. These sessions can empower migrants with the knowledge they need to navigate their environment effectively and make informed decisions.

5. Implement feedback mechanisms for continuous improvement: Establish feedback mechanisms, such as surveys or focus groups, to gather input from FMTs regarding the effectiveness and relevance of the information provided in both online and physical IGs. This feedback can be used to continuously improve the quality of information and ensure it meets the evolving needs of the community.

Recommendations for People

The interactions among individuals in physical and online spaces are crucial for building trust, fostering community ties, and facilitating the exchange of vital information. The implications for people suggest that strengthening these social connections can enhance the overall support network for FMTs, enabling them to better navigate challenges and access resources in their new environment.

Recognizing the role of interpersonal relationships in information sharing is essential for developing effective strategies that cater to the unique needs of this community.

1. Foster peer mentorship programs: Establish peer mentorship programs that connect newly arrived FMTs with more experienced migrants. These mentorship relationships can provide guidance, support, and valuable information about navigating life in Bangkok, helping newcomers feel more integrated and less isolated.

2. Encourage community building activities: Organize community-building activities, such as cultural events, sports tournaments, and social gatherings, that encourage interaction among FMTs. These activities can strengthen relationships, promote trust, and create a sense of belonging, which are essential for effective information sharing.

3. Create online support groups: Develop online support groups on social media platforms where FMTs can share experiences, ask questions, and provide assistance to one another. These groups can serve as safe spaces for discussion and information exchange, fostering a sense of community among members.

4. Facilitate networking opportunities: Host networking events that bring together FMTs, local organizations, and potential employers. These events can help migrants build professional connections, access job opportunities, and share information about their experiences in the workforce.

5. Promote cultural exchange initiatives: Implement cultural exchange initiatives that allow FMTs to share their traditions and experiences with the local community. This can enhance mutual understanding and respect, creating a more inclusive environment that encourages information sharing across cultural boundaries.

Recommendations for Further Studies

1. Conduct comparative research on the IGs of Filipinos in the diaspora across different countries or cities to understand how cultural and social factors influence their information-seeking behaviors.

2. Longitudinal studies could also provide insights into how these behaviors evolve over time, particularly during significant events such as crises or economic changes.

3. Explore the role of technology in shaping information exchange among migrants, as well as conducting in-depth qualitative research, could uncover nuanced perspectives on their experiences and challenges.

4. Moreover, interdisciplinary approaches that integrate insights from communication studies, sociology, and public health could enrich the understanding of the complex dynamics at play in migrant information behavior.

5. Investigate the effectiveness of existing communication strategies and policies during crises. This would be valuable in providing feedback for policymakers

to better address the information needs of migrant communities. These avenues for further research can significantly contribute to enhancing the support systems for FMTs and other diaspora populations.

6. Further study the IGs of FMTs to capture insights, lived experiences, and stories that encompass their confidence in the use of social media to discuss immigration issues, cross-border stories, “visa runs”, overstaying, and other related controversial topics. This research, potentially in-depth qualitative study, should consider the context of potential online activities monitoring by the Thai government, exploring how such surveillance may impact their willingness to engage in open discussions online.

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APPENDIX A

Call for Respondents Poster

The poster was posted on numerous Facebook groups of Filipino migrants in Thailand. The poster was also shared in messaging applications such as Messenger and Line along with the survey link.

CALL FOR RESPONDENTS!

**Space and Exchanges:
Information Ground of
Selected Filipino Migrants
in Bangkok, Thailand**

If you...

- Are a Filipino
- Living in Bangkok, Thailand
- For 30 days or more

then you are qualified to participate in our study!

Please access the questionnaire via the link provided in the post or scan the QR code.

For more info, message or email me at obtacusalme@up.edu.ph



APPENDIX B

Informed Consent Form and Questionnaire

The following pages are the informed consent form and questionnaire created using Qualtrics. The survey link was distributed and snowballed to respondents via social media and messaging applications such as Messenger and Line.

Space and Exchanges: Information Ground of Selected Filipino Migrants in Bangkok, Thailand

Start of Block: Introduction

The language can be changed to Tagalog by clicking the language button on the top-right side

(Ang lenggwage ay maaaring baguhin sa Tagalog sa pamamagitan ng pagpindot sa 'Language button' sa kanang bahagi sa itaas)

Thank you for your interest in answering this survey. I am Mr. Oiko Tacusalme, a Master of Development Communication student at the University of the Philippines, Open University.

My research aims to identify the "information ground" of selected Filipino migrants in Bangkok, Thailand. An **information ground** is a social setting, physical or online, where people share or receive everyday information while engaging in a primary activity. These settings are places that individuals visit for specific reasons, such as getting a haircut (physical) or watching a video (online), but end up sharing information because other people are present, leading to spontaneous conversations and information exchange.

By completing this survey, you are helping me achieve the objectives of my study, one of which will provide recommendations on how to strengthen the 'information ground' for Filipino migrants in the diaspora. This survey will take around 7 minutes or less.

Please be assured that you are answering this survey anonymously, and the data collected will be used for research purposes only. I can be contacted at obtacusalme@up.edu.ph for inquiries regarding this study.

By completing and submitting the survey, you indicate that you have read and understood the information provided above, and you agree to participate in this study.

Do you wish to participate in this study?

- Yes, I am consenting to participate
- No, I am NOT consenting to participate

End of Block: Introduction

Start of Block: Demographics

What is your age?

- 19 and under
 - 20-29
 - 30-39
 - 40-49
 - 50-59
 - 60-69
 - 70 above
-

To which gender identity do you most identify?

- Male
 - Female
 - Non-binary / third gender
 - Prefer not to say
-

What is your highest educational attainment?

- High school diploma
 - Bachelor's degree
 - Master's degree
 - Doctorate
 - Professional degree (e.g., MD, JD)
 - Other's (please specify):
-

What is your marital status?

- Single
 - Married
 - Widowed
 - Divorced/Separated
 - Domestic partnership
-

How long have you been staying in Bangkok, Thailand?

- Less than 1 year
 - 1-3 years
 - 4-6 years
 - 7-9 years
 - 10 and more years
-

Which field of work do you belong in?

- Public Sector or Education
- Healthcare or social services
- Hospitality, Tourism, or Leisure Services
- Retired
- Unemployed
- Student
- Others (please specify):

End of Block: Demographics

Start of Block: Information Ground



An **information ground** is a place, either physical or online, that you go to for a specific reason such as to buy food (physical) or browse photos of cats (online) but end up sharing or receiving information that you most need as a Filipino living in another country because of social interactions of the people present.

What is/are the most common information ground/s for you? Please check the top 3 in the list.

- Workplace
- Church
- School
- Shopping malls
- Markets/Convenience store
- Friends' or colleagues' house
- Social media (Facebook, Twitter, Reddit, etc.)
- Video-sharing platform (Youtube, Tiktok, etc.)
- Gym
- Club or Bar
- Coffee shop/Restaurant
- Hair salon/Barber shop
- Sports groups
- Others (please specify):

What are the main reasons you go to your information ground? (Except obtaining information)

- Practice religion
 - To buy food or eat
 - To socialize, make friends
 - For entertainment or leisure
 - Workout/exercise
 - Personal interest or hobby
 - Others (please specify):

-

How often do you visit your information ground?

- Rarely (at least once a month)
- Sometimes (at least once a week)
- Often (most days of the week)
- Others (please specify):

End of Block: Information Ground

Start of Block: Place

How would you rate the location and permanence of your information ground?

- Very convenient location and permanent
- Semi- convenient location and permanent
- Not convenient location and permanent
- Not sure

How do you perceive the level of privacy in your preferred information ground?

- Very open
 - Somewhat open
 - Neutral
 - Somewhat private
 - Very private
-

How would you describe your interactions with others at this place?

- Unfriendly
 - Neutral
 - Friendly
-

How would you rate the conviviality (atmosphere) of your preferred information ground?

- Extremely bad
 - Somewhat bad
 - Neither good nor bad
 - Somewhat good
 - Extremely good
-

How would you describe the environment (e.g., seating, lighting, temperature, noise) in your choice of an information ground? Check all that applies.

- Very comfortable physical arrangements (e.g., seating places, fixtures)
 - Comfortable lighting and atmosphere
 - Cozy and homey
 - Haven away from home and work
 - Others (please specify):
-

End of Block: Place

Start of Block: Information



What topics do you typically share or receive at your preferred information ground? (Select top 5 topics)

- Personal (family news, personal updates/interests)
 - Professional (work-related, job opportunities/advice)
 - Immigration-related (work visa and permit, border runs)
 - Health-related (COVID-19, diseases, medical insurance)
 - Academic (study tips, academic resources)
 - News in the Philippines (politics, economy, entertainment, sports)
 - News in Thailand (politics, economy, entertainment, sports)
 - Global news (politics, economy, entertainment, sports)
 - Others (please specify):
-

How frequently are the topics you are interested in discussed at your information ground?

- Never
 - Sometimes
 - About half the time
 - Most of the time
 - Always
-

What are the main sources of information at your information ground? (Select all that apply)

- Friends or peers
 - Staff or employees
 - Social media or online platforms
 - Notices or bulletin boards
 - Flyer or posters
 - Others (please specify):
-

How trustworthy do you consider the sources of information at your information ground?

- Very Untrustworthy
- Untrustworthy
- Neutral
- Trustworthy
- Very Trustworthy

How do you usually share or receive information at your information ground? (Select all that apply)

- Face-to-face conversations
 - Group discussions
 - Digital communications (calls, chats, emails, messages)
 - Written messages (notes, bulletins)
 - Online forums or groups
 - Overhear or eavesdrop
 - Others (please specify):
-

How useful is the information you obtain from your information ground to your personal or professional life?

- Not at all useful
- Slightly useful
- Moderately useful
- Very useful
- Extremely useful

End of Block: Information

Start of Block: People

What is the typical size of the group you interact with at your information ground?

- 5 people or less
 - 6-10 people
 - 11-20 people
 - 21-30 people
 - More than 30 people
-

What type of membership does your information ground require?

- None, open to public
 - Membership required
 - Invitation only
 - Others (please specify):
-

How long have you been going to your information ground?

- 6 months or less
 - Over 6 months, up to 1 year
 - Over 1 year, up to 3 years
 - Over 3 years, up to 5 years
 - Over 5 years
-

How familiar are you with the other members at your information ground?

- Not familiar at all
 - Slightly familiar
 - Moderately familiar
 - Very familiar
 - Extremely familiar
-

Who do you usually interact with at this place? (Select all that apply)

- Friends
 - Family
 - Colleagues
 - Acquaintances
 - Staff/Employee
 - Strangers
 - Others (please specify)
-

What role do you typically assume at your information ground? (Select all that apply)

- Information seeker
 - Information provider
 - Observer
 - Customer
 - Resident
 - Employee/Staff
 - Member
 - Others (please specify):
-

How diverse are the people you interact with in terms of nationality, background, interests, or roles?

- Not diverse
 - Somewhat diverse
 - Very diverse
-

What motivates you to visit your information ground? (Select all that apply)

- Personal interest
 - Professional development
 - Social interaction
 - Compulsory requirement
 - Others (please specify):
-

End of Block: People
