



**UNIVERSITY OF THE PHILIPPINES
OPEN UNIVERSITY**

MASTER OF DEVELOPMENT COMMUNICATION

ALEIA ESPAÑOL GARCIA

**COMMUNICATION AND REDEFINING HOME AND IDENTITY:
AUTOETHNOGRAPHY OF A FILIPINO THIRD CULTURE KID BELONGING TO A
RETURNEE OFW FAMILY FROM THE KINGDOM OF SAUDI ARABIA**

Thesis Adviser:

SERLIE BARROGA-JAMIAS, PhD
Faculty of Information and Communication Studies

03 May 2024

Permission of the classification of this academic work access is subject to the provisions of applicable laws, the provisions of the UP IPR policy and any contractual obligations:

Invention (I)	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	or	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Publication (P)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	or	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Confidential (C)	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	or	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Free (F)	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	or	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No

Student's signature:

Thesis adviser signature:

University Permission Page

COMMUNICATION AND REDEFINING HOME AND IDENTITY: AUTOETHNOGRAPHY OF A FILIPINO THIRD CULTURE KID BELONGING TO A RETURNEE OFW FAMILY FROM THE KINGDOM OF SAUDI ARABIA

“I hereby grant the University of the Philippines a non-exclusive, worldwide, royalty-free license to reproduce, publish and publicly distribute copies of this Academic Work in whatever form subject to the provisions of applicable laws, the provisions of the UP IPR policy and any contractual obligations, as well as more specific permission marking on the Title Page.”

“I specifically allow the University to:

Specifically, I grant the following rights to the University:

- a. Upload a copy of the work in the theses database of the college/school/institute/department and in any other databases available on the public internet*
- b. Publish the work in the college/school/institute/department journal, both in print and electronic or digital format and online; and*
- c. Give open access to the work, thus allowing “fair use” of the work in accordance with the provision of the Intellectual Property Code of the Philippines (Republic Act No. 8293), especially for teaching, scholarly and research purposes.*

ALEIA ESPAÑOL GARCIA, 03 May 2024

Acceptance Page:

This paper prepared by **ALEIA E. GARCIA** with the title: **COMMUNICATION AND REDEFINING HOME AND IDENTITY: AUTOETHNOGRAPHY OF A FILIPINO THIRD CULTURE KID BELONGING TO A RETURNEE OFW FAMILY FROM THE KINGDOM OF SAUDI ARABIA** 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.

SERLIE BARROGA-JAMIAS, PhD
Chair, Thesis Committee

11 July 2024

(Date)

BENJAMINA PAULA G. FLOR, PhD
Member, Thesis Committee

(Date)

JOANE V. SERRANO, PhD
Member, Thesis Committee

(Date)

DIEGO S. MARANAN, PhD

Dean

Faculty of Information and Communication Studies

Day Month Year

(Date)

Biographical Sketch

Aleia Garcia is a filmmaker and a college instructor. She graduated with a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree in Digital Cinema at Mapua University and is currently finishing her Master of Development Communication at the University of the Philippines Open University.

Acknowledgement

First and foremost, I would like to thank God for giving me hope and perseverance, as well as for surrounding me with people who helped make this happen:

To my friends, both in Saudi Arabia and in the Philippines, you know who you are. Thank you for believing in me.

To my mentors, thank you for teaching me to be better and stronger. I will never forget how you taught me with kindness and integrity. I promise to do the same for the next generation.

To my thesis adviser, Dr. Serlie Barroga-Jamias, thank you for being so understanding throughout the whole process. My research journey was less overwhelming because you patiently guided me every step of the way.

Thank you to my panel members, Dr. Benjamina Paula G. Flor and Dr. Joane Serrano, for providing valuable insights that shaped my research. Thank you for recognizing the importance of my research in the field of Development Communication.

To my MDC classmates, thank you for your encouragement, support, and most of all, for your friendship. I am so grateful to have met all of you.

Finally, I want to thank my family for their unwavering support. I am beyond grateful for your love, acceptance, and encouragement. Thank you for always understanding my shortcomings and believing in the value of telling our complex yet beautiful story as a family. Thank you for allowing me to fulfill my dreams in life, Dad and Mom. Because of you, my home is easier to define.

Dedication

I dedicate this work to all third culture kids, especially TCKs from OFW families worldwide. May we strive to build a beautiful concept of home and share it with others, making the world a better place where everyone is accepted and embraced, regardless of differences.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Title Page	i.
University Permission Page	ii
Acceptance Page	iii
Biographical Sketch	iv
Acknowledgment	v
Dedication	vi
Table of Contents	vii
List of Tables	ix
List of Figures	x
ABSTRACT	xii
CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION	1
Background of the Study	1
Statement of the Problem	7
Significance of the Study	8
Scope and Limitations of the Study	8
CHAPTER II: REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE	10
The Filipino Migration: Third Culture Experience	10
Children of OFWs as Third Culture Kids	15
Role of Communication in the Third Culture Experience	21
Redefining Cultural Identity and Home	26
Theoretical Underpinning	29
CHAPTER III: METHODOLOGY	32
Autoethnography	32
Participant of the Study and Sampling	37
Research Instrument and Data Gathering	38
Data Analysis	44
Ethical Considerations	45

CHAPTER IV: RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS	47
Chronology of Personal Experiences as a TCK	47
Moving to Saudi Arabia	48
Living in Saudi Arabia	53
Alternating Saudi Arabia and the Philippines as our Home	66
Leaving Saudi Arabia	69
Living in the Philippines	71
Settling in the Philippines	81
Communication Experiences in my Journey as a TCK	88
Communication's Role in (Re)producing TCK...	109
CHAPTER V: SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS	121
Summary	121
My Journey and Communication Experiences...	123
Communication Experiences	126
(Re)creating Cultural Identity and Home...	128
Conclusion	130
Implications and Recommendations	132
REFERENCES	136
APPENDICES	159

List of Tables

TABLE	TITLE	PAGE
1	Summary of my communication experiences...	104
2	Summary of the cultural components that have...	120

List of Figures

FIGURE	TITLE	PAGE
1	The Third Culture Model	16
2	Screen capture of family photos and videos...	40
3	Screen capture of family photos and videos from...	40
4	Diaries	42
5	Screen Capture of soft copies of my Diaries...	43
6	Screen Capture of the folder of my Diary...	43
7	A Chronology of my Personal Experiences...	48
8	Passport Photos	49
9	Screen Capture of an Email Exchange...	50
10	Family house in Saudi Arabia	52
11	Iqama Family Photo	53
12	Family Photo	54
13	School Photo	56
14	Second School	57
15	School Facilities Collage	58
16	Arabic Exam	59
17	Friendly gathering at the Food Court	60
18	Graduation Photo	60
19	Church Family Photo	61
20	Christmas with other OFW families	62
21	Photo Collage of Birthdays	63
22	Park with the Family	64
23	Me at the Red Sea	64
24	Friendly Gatherings	65
25	Exploring Manila with the Family	66
26	Yahoo! Chat	67
27	Email Exchange	67
28	My Facebook and Yahoo! accounts circa 2010	68

29	Personal diary entry (April 2013)	70
30	Personal diary entry (2013)	70
31	Family photo at the Airport	71
32	Personal diary entry (May 2013)	72
33	Cinematography class	73
34	Personal diary entry (July 2013)	74
35	Personal diary entry (August 2013)	75
36	Personal diary entry (September 2013)	76
37	Personal diary entry (October 2013)	77
38	Me at the Luneta Park	79
39	Screen capture of an email exchange...	80
40	Personal diary entry (July 2014)	80
41	PICC Graduation	82
42	Screen capture of an email exchange...	82
43	Family reunited in the Philippines	83
44	Our Family Room	84
45	Screen capture from my film...	85
46	Poem written in my diary (September 2022)	86
47	Communication embedded in my journey...	102
48	Effects of communication embedded in my...	103
49	Socio-cultural factors embedded...	126

ABSTRACT

This study explores how communication has been interwoven in my third culture experiences as a member of an OFW family living in Saudi Arabia, and how these communication experiences allowed me to (re)shape my concept of home and identity as a third culture kid now residing in the Philippines. I used socio-cultural tradition as a theoretical lens and autoethnography as a methodology to create a chronology of my experiences based on personal memory data and artifacts.

As a Filipino TCK, redefining home and identity through communication experiences is a continuous arduous process of preserving one's own culture, adapting to new cultural shifts and situations, and maintaining meaningful relationships. This requires having a good support system, consistent practice of the home culture, and embracing the host culture.

Communication, whether verbal, nonverbal, in person, or online, plays an important role in shaping my concept of home and identity as a TCK. While there are many communication difficulties and challenges, communication must be consistent in whatever shape it takes to maintain one's pursuit of home and identity.

KEYWORDS: Third culture kids, returnee OFW family, OFW, Filipino migration, autoethnography

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Background of the Study

Communication is the exchange of verbal and nonverbal messages between the sender and the receiver (Munodawfa, 2018). It is a way of expressing, interacting, and sharing (Genç, 2017). Understanding the emotion and intention underlying the information conveyed is key for effective communication (Robinson, 2024).

For Overseas Filipino Workers and their families, communication is important to maintain a sense of connection and belongingness. When they go to a foreign country to work, they must make numerous emotional, physical, and cultural adjustments. A lot of the literature of these adjustments focus on the individual expatriate employee (Sterle et al., 2018).

However, relocating the entire family to the destination country is another challenge to deal with because living abroad appears to be about more than just relocation, but also acculturation. Berry (2005) defines acculturation as the process by which the people adjust to living in a new cultural situation. It occurs when individuals or groups embrace the host country's culture to varied degrees and interact with the host country's community while retaining their native culture (Berry, 1997).

Migration, therefore creates third culture kids. Third culture kids (TCKs) is a term coined by sociologist Ruth Hill Useem, characterizing children who spend their childhood years in places that are not their parent's homeland (Mayberry, 2016). The transient nature of third culture kids is what separates them from other groups that experience migration and/or separation (Jones et al., 2022).

Children who relocated and grew up overseas because of their Overseas Filipino Worker (OFW) parents are considered third culture kids and may feel dispersed at times as they strive to balance several sets of cultures in the place that they are in and while parents consider their children's needs when it comes to relocation, career and financial implications still take priority (Brown & Orthner, 1990).

The sense of belongingness is challenged by the instability of the place as migrant children feel like they are always in a state of transition and there is a sense of transience. According to Mclachlan (2007), third culture kids may feel they can relate to many people from different roots yet also feel excluded from any particular culture, therefore missing a clear sense of belongingness.

A sense of belongingness probably means most to children of OFWs as they gain numerous homes and identities when they relocate with their OFW parents to different countries and experience different cultures. Home is a source of personal identity (Carinali et al., 2022) and plays a key role in one's well-being (Gattino et al., 2013).

Others might describe belonging as the ability to connect culturally, socially, and physically and can feel a sense of home through shared similar experiences (Donohue, 2022). Others, like TCKs, struggle to determine where they genuinely belong, because they constantly feel like their home is being reproduced over and over again (Lijadi & Van Schalkwyk, 2017).

When children of OFWs living abroad maintain a consistent emotional connection to their original roots and Filipino traditional values while adapting to the host country's culture and way of life, they may experience a sense of void. Defining home is a complex matter that cannot just be answered in one sitting.

Third culture kids can cope with this adversity by always leaning on their families. Family members and things that remind them of their loved ones can create a sense of continuity, effectively replacing the physical concept of home (Jones et al., 2022).

TCKs' way of expressing, interacting, and sharing are always shifting based on their environment. These communication experiences then reshape their cultural identity and home as culture and communication cannot be separated and its relationship stems from our daily experiences and interactions (Rabiah, 2018).

Jance (2022) emphasizes the necessity of secure communication channels as this affects the quality of messages transmitted and processed.

To cope up with the pressures and the unstable nature that third culture kids (TCKs), families tend to grow closer together in order to build a reliable and solid support system. Mclachlan (2007) further suggests that family members will need to depend on each other to meet their emotional, social, and spiritual needs. Parents, like OFW parents, play a significant role in dealing with separation and the consistent transition in the environmental, emotional, and physical context (Mclachlan, 2007) by talking to their children and explaining their family situation.

Returning to the original home entail so many difficulties for children who grew up outside of it. Their retired parents who are considered returnee OFWs may feel disoriented and overwhelmed as they adjust to their new life, and those who have had negative job experiences may view retirement differently. Those with better jobs may feel like nobody after retirement (Osborne, 2012), and families who grew up abroad may lose their sense of belonging, which is an important aspect of developing one's cultural identity (de Waal & Born, 2021). The temporary employment also affects

Filipino TCKs as they feel like they are not Filipino enough when they return to their home country.

Because of the ephemeral nature of TCKs' home, as well as the consistent shift in their communication experiences with others who belong to various cultural backgrounds, their communication abilities and adjustments also continuously evolve. Consistent communication in whatever form it may be, helps people, particularly Filipino third culture kids who come from OFW families, maintain a sense of home, but because they also move around so much, it causes alienation and disorientation.

It is important to understand how TCKs' communication experiences shape their cultural identity and home and how these experiences can make them effective communicators and citizens of the global society.

My Experiences as a Filipino Third Culture Kid

As part of an OFW family who migrated from the Philippines to Saudi Arabia in 2005, this enabled me to live in several 'homes' and experience various versions of myself. Growing up in Saudi Arabia in large household of nine children was a huge step for all of us. The oldest was thirteen, while the youngest was a year old.

Being part of an OFW family is quite complex as I tried to balance my cultural identities by adapting to the foreign culture while maintaining my origin Filipino culture. We came home every summer every year to the Philippines, communicated with relatives back home consistently, and spoke in our mother tongue at home and with fellow Filipinos abroad. We alternated our home between Saudi Arabia and the Philippines.

In 2013, at age 16, I returned to the Philippines to pursue college and finish my degree in Film. This pivotal point in my life arose when I realized I had returned to my

home country, the land where I was born, and yet felt confused and disoriented. How is that possible?

Nonetheless, I moved on and concentrated on my studies. For my undergraduate thesis, I made a film made out of personal home movies from my childhood home in Saudi Arabia, which I initially named Yanbu (2015) but then renamed Spring by the Sea (2019). I tackled the grief of leaving my childhood home as well as the complexities of belonging to a large OFW family of nine children in the film. I was looking back at my family's history and retold it through film, utilizing personal home recordings taken by my father and my own recent material. I was bidding goodbye to the place that I used to call home.

As the child of an OFW father and having grown up in a foreign country while maintaining an emotional, cultural and physical connection to my origin country, my sense of belonging was severely tested when I left for college and returned to the Philippines. This constant feeling of being everywhere and nowhere at the same time and the constant search for a sense of belonging meant that I would have to make meaning of my surroundings.

The rest of my family remained in the Middle East and I lived with my older brothers who returned to the Philippines before I did.

In 2017, my father retired at the age of 60, and my entire family returned to the Philippines for good. As a retired OFW, my father has experienced various obstacles as he adjusts to the rapid changes in the family and in his life. These changes, and how he handled them, had an effect on all of us as his children, who are also going through the same transition. The socio-cultural impacts of a returnee OFW encounter numerous problems, including unemployment, a stark difference between home and abroad, discrimination, and a decline in social status. Yu (2015) highlights the

importance of having a realistic perspective when comparing the differences abroad and at home.

As part of a returnee OFW family, I was put to the test as I adjust to the Filipino culture and my new surroundings. Because we were starting again as a family unit in this familiar yet unfamiliar setting, I felt like I was rebuilding my sense of home. As someone who belongs to a returnee OFW family, it becomes overwhelming for me since I struggle to belong anywhere. Because of this, I have always been fascinated by my concept of home and how I locate my sense of belonging in the world, redefining it over and over again as time goes by.

As a child of OFW parents and a third culture kid, it may be difficult for me to find my place in everything because my childhood memories are dispersed and constantly moving, alternating Yanbu, Saudi Arabia, and the Philippines as my home, but the universal quest for belongingness that I share with other people, especially with children of OFWs, teaches me that I am not alone in this journey.

The rationale for this study arose from an effort to comprehend the impact of that period in my life as a Filipino third culture kid. Growing up in Saudi Arabia, considering it as my home as part of an OFW family, and then returning to my native home, the Philippines, resulted in a variety of lived experiences and transformations.

Looking at redefining my concept of home and identity through the lens of communication, this study proposes that our identities as third culture kids and our process of redefining our concepts of home are dynamic through our communicative interaction with the people around us, as well as our socio-cultural experiences, which evolve over time as the environment or idealization of the homeland changes.

Writing about my personal experiences as part of a returnee OFW family and as a third culture kid can provide illuminating notions into how OFW families act, think,

and function. According to Adam and Manning (2015), researchers who focus on families think about family structures and interactions. But they rarely write about their own families, though, and the autoethnography technique challenges them and gives a new perspective on studying families or conducting family research.

There is a lot of literature focusing on the experiences of third culture kids, in fact, TCKs are among the most researched among cross-cultural kids (De Waal et al., 2020), but there is not much research on the experiences of Filipino third culture kids whose family relocated to a foreign country and returned to their home country. There are also only few studies that have examined the relationship of communication on the identity and sense of belonging of third culture kids from OFW families.

Hence, the role of communication in redefining home and identity in my life as a Filipino third culture kid belonging to a returnee OFW family from Saudi Arabia returning to the Philippines, using autoethnography as a method, is the interest of this research.

Statement of the Problem

This study explores how communication has been interwoven in my third culture experiences as a member of an OFW family who lived in Saudi Arabia and how these communication experiences allowed me to (re)shape my concept of home and identity as a third culture kid, who now lives in the Philippines.

Specifically, this research aimed to answer the following:

1. How is my journey as a Filipino third culture kid growing up in Saudi Arabia and as member of a returnee OFW family in the Philippines?
2. How did communication embed in my journey as a Filipino third culture kid growing up in Saudi Arabia and as a member of a returnee OFW family in the Philippines?

3. How did communication (re)create my cultural identity, as well as concept of home as a Filipino third culture kid growing up in Saudi Arabia and as a member of a returnee OFW family in the Philippines?

Significance of the Study

This autoethnographic account of my journey as a Filipino third culture kid will provide another voice to the OFW diasporic narratives and shed some insights into how to mainstream Filipino third culture kids, particularly those who belong to OFW families, without much alienation and dissent.

Knowing that there are other third culture kids and children of OFWs out there who experienced the same situation can also provide comfort and assurance because they would feel that they are not alone in this journey. Identifying and learning about this phenomenon normalizes their lived experiences (Donohue, 2022).

This study highlights the vital role of communication in the experiences of third culture kids, particularly Filipino TCKs from OFW families, and how it shapes their cultural identity and concept of home. Furthermore, this study contributes to the literature on TCKs navigating migration and the ephemeral nature of their home.

Scope and Limitations of the Study

This study employs the autoethnography method and centers on my personal experiences. Because of the approach used, recall data and memories are restricted to the depth of my memory as the researcher and subject, so data collection may be subjected to limitations. It is also crucial to highlight that because this is an autoethnographic study that focuses on my personal experiences as a third culture kid up to the present, the study's findings are might change over time.

Autoethnography fosters discussion and connects with the facets of a certain moment in time, as it does not always provide solutions or conclusions to problems, but rather acknowledges and humanizes experiences (Ellis & Bochner, 2000).

As reflected in the literature review, numerous studies have been done on children of OFWs and third culture kids, and concerns have been raised concerning their experiences in terms of their sense of home and identity. So far, however, there has been little coverage on children of OFWs as third culture kids, and using autoethnography as a research method to elucidate these valuable experiences could help readers, particularly other children of OFWs or children from OFW families, and TCKs feel more included and heard.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

The reviewed literature is discussed and divided into four key sections that correspond to the research questions of the study. The first section covers the phenomena of third culture experience as a result of Filipino migration, specifically being a part of an OFW family. The second section discusses children of OFW parents as third culture kids after moving to another country due to their parents' work, as well as how TCKs' significant role in the global market and community. The third section delves into the vital role of communication in the third culture experience. The fourth section discusses how TCKs' communication experiences (re)shape their notions of home and identity, thus redefining it.

The Filipino Migration: Third Culture Experience

Working abroad to provide for families is a means for many migrant workers to withstand the apparently difficulties of life. Migration is not a new phenomenon (Andes, 2013) and is described by the late economist Galbraith (1979) as the “oldest action against poverty.” Overseas employment has lifted at least 850,000 families out of poverty in the past 10 years (Hasnan, 2019), and it helps the entire country by lowering poverty rates. Working abroad is prevalent in certain East Asian countries, including the Philippines (Janson, 2014), and Filipino expats are called Overseas Filipino Workers.

Overseas Filipino Workers are Filipino migrant workers who are praised for their courage in providing a better future for their families by going abroad (Perlez, 2002) and serve their homeland by contributing to the Philippine economy through their

remittances (Sanchez, 2022). They are labeled “modern-day heroes” (Uy-Tioco, 2007). According to the Philippine Statistics Authority (2022), there are around 1.96 million Overseas Filipino Workers working abroad as of 2022. Poverty and lack of opportunities in their home countries are listed as the main reasons why OFWs take the risk in working abroad (Camendan et al., 2022).

In the Philippines, working abroad has become less uncommon over time. For instance, educational and vocational institutions are offered courses or vocations that are likely to land them a job abroad and there are also domestic worker training centers (Almendral, 2018). According to a recent Social Weather Stations (2023) survey, one in every five adult Filipinos, or 17% of adult Filipinos, also wish to live in a different country. In other words, Filipinos do not only wish to work abroad but to also live abroad.

Many Overseas Filipino Workers are fortunate to be able to relocate to their destination countries with their families. I use the term “fortunate” since many Overseas Filipino Workers who are the heads of their families are unable to do so for a variety of reasons. Lack of important documents for their children or families (Marcus et al., 2023), a scarcity of work or visitor visas, concerns about their children's safety and education, and the well-being of the left-behind guardian all prevent them from bringing their families abroad (Bălțătescu et al., 2023). Migrant workers who are parents are also concerned for their children's safety in their destination country (UNICEF, 2020), and the costs of their children's schooling in the destination country cause them to leave their children in the care of a guardian, who is usually the mother of a close relative (Artico, 2003).

In the Philippines, children left behind by their migrant parents are referred to as anak ng OFW or a child of an OFW (Abenir, 2019), and these children experience a

negative impact on their well-being because their primary guardian is not present (Botezat and Pfeiffer, 2014).

Children left behind in the Philippines, particularly those living in poorer rural regions, are more likely to take over household tasks while their parents work abroad (Lam & Yeoh, 2019). According to Papa (2014), left-behind children's responsibilities at home are also subjected to gender with daughters doing more house and care work, while sons are assumed to do strength-related work like agriculture and maintenance.

Left-behind children are regarded as having to bear the costs of migration (Asis, 2006), and to cope with the difficulties they face, they seek support from friends and family, engage in various hobbies and interests, and even seek professional help (Unay & Villosino, 2023). Their emotional resilience is also strengthened as they mentally prepare for their OFW parents' departure overseas after vacation (Pinzon, 2021).

According to the study by Unay and Villosino (2023), children or young pupils with OFW parents do not want to work overseas since they are worried about the sadness that comes with it. However, findings may vary and change over time since children who hold opposing views on working abroad are willing to work overseas to aid their families, which is their consistent goal.

Migrant workers also go through negative experiences when they work abroad like homesickness (Tolley, 2020) which gives them a strong desire to return home (Ferrara, 2022) and frequently experience despair and anxiety (Thurber & Walton, 2012). Apart from homesickness, Overseas Filipino Workers face racial prejudice because they are an ethnic minority (Wallace et al., 2016), as well as marginalization, exploitation, and maltreatment (Green & Ayalon, 2016).

Overseas Filipino Workers also experience hardships in being surrounded by people of different views while being the sole source of financial support for their families, which can be detrimental to their mental health (Atos et al., 2022). In addition to mental health issues, Overseas Filipino Workers suffer from noncommunicable diseases such as diabetes and hypertension, as well as other chronic ailments. Secondary insomnia is also common as a result of stress and exhaustion (Hall et al., 2019).

An overall trend has also been observed in current female migrants in a study by Lutz (2008) which portrays migrant women's objectives to working abroad as paradoxical, concluding that women migrants leave their homes to be supported and well-provided for, and not to make a new home elsewhere. Morokvasic (1994) regards this occurrence as ambiguous. In other words, parents are frequently forced to choose between staying with their children and migrating to better care for them (UNICEF, 2020) but because they leave, the home feels empty for their left-behind families.

Migration is a process that involves several phases that affect individuals and families over time and this process may not be favorable to everyone (Virupaksha et al., 2014). There are mixed feelings and pros and cons to consider when deciding whether or not to bring their families to their destination countries; however, because of the importance of being present in the parent-child relationship, many OFW parents consider bringing their families with them. I previously used the term "fortunate" to describe OFWs who can bring their families with them, and this is because of a deeper purpose which is about the importance of preserving the family structure. According to Suárez-Orozco et al. (2011) and Alunan-Melgar and Borromeo (2002), children who are left-behind by their OFW parents develop emotional estrangement with their parents working abroad.

Furthermore, the geographical separation between migrant parents and their left-behind children deviates from the ideal family structure (Jampaklay & Vapattanawong, 2013), making it difficult for both parents and children to cope. The family structure, as previously addressed in the literature study, is clearly vital in both the parent and the child.

The decision to bring their family with them transforms their children, particularly those in their early childhood years, into third culture kids. The third culture experience that children of OFWs acquired from the critical transition of leaving their homeland and relocating to a foreign country makes it seem inevitable because the decision was made primarily by their parents and was pushed by the negative consequences of separation caused by migration. Filipino migration simply has costs (Martinez, 2022).

Much of the literature on Filipino migration focuses on the struggle of Overseas Filipino Workers and their relationship with their left-behind children, which will always be educational, interesting, and enlightening. However, there seems to be insufficient data regarding children of OFWs who were not left behind but instead relocated with their parents abroad and faced a challenging transition and shifting of homes.

With my autoethnographic research of writing about my personal experiences and understanding how they affect my identity and sense of home, I intend to provide an additional, relevant, and honest viewpoint on what it is like to be a child of an OFW parent and a member of an OFW family who moved outside of their home country.

Children of OFWs as Third Culture Kids

Dr. Ruth Hill Useem coined the term “third culture kid” in 1973. Third culture kids are defined as children of expatriates who live in a culture other than their country of nationality for a significant part of their childhood (Jones et al., 2022).

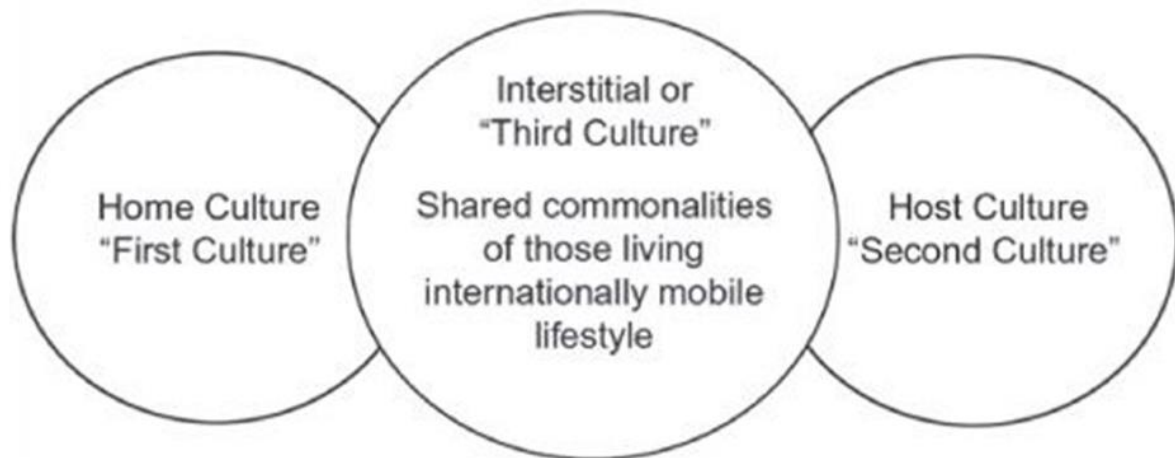
The first culture is known as the legal culture, and it focuses on the country that provides legal and native recognition. The second culture emphasizes geographic culture, which is the physical place where children have lived and are emotionally connected to, whether they have citizenship or not. The third culture is referred to as relational because it emphasizes the common experience of children in places where the first and second cultures do not fully coincide.

Other scholars have also devised names to characterize children who grew up in countries other than their own or who moved frequently. In the 1980s, researcher Norma McCaig, who is a TCK herself, coined the term "global nomad" to describe children who spent a substantial portion of their developing years in one or more countries due to a parent's employment (McCaig, 1994).

Furthermore, Ruth E. Van Reken developed the Third Culture model in 1987, defining the first culture as the child's home culture, the second culture as the child's host culture(s), and the third culture as something that exists between and among the child's other cultures (Rose-Wainstock, 2022).

Figure 1.

The Third Culture mode by Ruth Van Reken (1996)



Useem's definition of third culture kids emphasized on children whose parents had relocated abroad for work-related reasons. To broaden the definition and include other groups that may not be as privileged as those in Useem's definition, Pollock et al. (2010) developed another model in which TCKs exist as one subset within a larger group of Cross-Cultural Kids (CCKs). CCKs are people who lived in or interacted with two or more other cultures for a significant period during their developmental years. Pollock et al. (2010) developed a model that includes domestic TCKs, refugee children, immigrants, minorities, and others.

Filipino children who relocated and grew up overseas because of their Overseas Filipino Worker (OFW) parents are considered third culture kids because they strived to balance several sets of cultures in the place that they are in. Third culture kids, who are children of OFWs, consistently feel as if they are experiencing a new world where they try hard to navigate in. Children of OFWs who reside with their OFW parents/family overseas are also assumed to return to their origin countries due

to the transient nature of the employment of their OFW parents. Aside from adapting to foreign sociocultural experiences, the nomadic nature of children of OFWs'

homes makes them third culture kids.

Guison (2022) characterizes the experience of living abroad as a "rebirth" that allows people to see the world in a new light and explore it. These "new worlds" can be disorienting at times since they are constantly experiencing varied socio-cultural changes. These socio-cultural experiences include norms, traditions, roles, language, and meanings.

Children of OFWs who have relocated to their OFW parents' destination countries constantly have to master many cultures simultaneously in order to fit in. For them, this is extremely difficult because they also maintain their own origin cultures, which influences how they balance their identities.

According to Williams (2022), when people construct a place in their minds, they are more likely to commit to its value. For third culture kids who are exposed to a culture other than their own, it is not easy to commit because their realities and the world they are navigating constantly change.

For children of OFWs who are considered third culture kids, these experiences have a significant impact on their identities and sense of belongingness. According to Ichimura (2019), Filipino third culture kids belong in a gray area and struggle to find a place in Filipino society, fearing they are not Filipino enough.

The sense of belongingness is challenged by the instability of the place as migrant children feel like they are always in a state of transition and there is a sense of transience. Mclachlan (2007), who studied internationally mobile (IM) families that live a transient lifestyle, says that families who consistently move from one place or another live in a constant state of transition. The transient nature of third culture kids

is what separates them from other groups that experience migration and/or separation (Jones et al., 2022).

Because of this, third culture kids have a unique perspective on how to relate to others and identify themselves on a deeper level. TCKs bond with others based on their lived experiences rather than simple details like a shared hometown, age, and more. (Neely, 2019).

Bhugra et. al (2005) also highlights that people who relocate to other countries have already established their cultural identities. Unless you are born in the host country and not in your home country, the necessity to connect with those who have developed their own cultural identities produces alienation and distress. Children living in the host country with their OFW parents feel increasingly isolated in larger and smaller spaces. Their roots are practiced at home, but when migrant children interact with different cultures outside of their home, it can be challenging because cultures, traditions, and beliefs tend to blend.

Gabriel (2019) discusses in her article how her Filipino mother had expectations for her that were strongly founded in traditional Filipino standards, while she had expectations for herself that were established in American standards because she grew up in America. Her mother, for example, regards her standing up for herself as disrespectful behavior. These subtle variances in perspectives among family members when shifting their homes, their host country and home country, are critical to the process of their individual identities growing up, and therefore redefines their concepts of home.

To cope up with the pressures and the unstable nature that third culture kids (TCKs), families tend to grow closer together in order to build a reliable and solid

support system. Mclachlan (2007) further suggests that family members will need to depend on each other to meet their emotional, social, and spiritual needs.

Lauren Wells, author of the book *Raising Up a Generation of Healthy Third Culture Kids* (2020) and a TCK herself who grew up in East Africa, discussed the challenges and benefits of the TCK lifestyle.

The usual challenges faced by many TCKs and CCKs include:

1. A sense of grief and loss that is experienced in terms of identity, place, and relationships.
2. Trauma from high-stress conditions.
3. A feeling of not being understood by parents or friends in both passport and host country.
4. A yearning for constant change as a result of a lack of settling or a sense of permanence during the developmental years.
5. Unreasonable expectations about what a "normal" life should look like.
6. Feeling ashamed because they cannot instinctively blend in with others.

Forming our identities is also an important process that occurs in early childhood, and our cultural identities are heavily influenced by interactions and the surroundings we reside in. Third culture kids who migrate between cultures as they grow up may struggle to build cultural identities (Neely, 2019).

This is where the third culture experience happens for children of OFWs because while there are Filipino migrants who are able to bring the families with them abroad and live there permanently, OFW life is not deemed permanent for many Filipino migrant workers. There are numerous challenges that OFWs face abroad which causes them to return home (Camendan et al., 2022) and one of the many

reasons is retirement. Labor migration in Asia is intended to be temporary, with return migration built into the system (Garabiles & Asis, 2022). This means that other Overseas Filipino Workers who relocate abroad to work aims to collect income (Albao, 2018), bring their families with them and eventually return to the Philippines.

Because TCKs' sense of belongingness constantly shifts, their self-identity likewise reflects this phenomenon. For example, while immigrant children are expected to adapt to the culture of the host country due to permanent residence/relocation, TCKs are not expected to settle permanently, and thus the sense of belonging is almost always expected to be fluid and more dynamic, mirroring the TCK's sense of identity (Donohue, 2022).

TCKs' identities and interactions with others tend to be fluid, they learn to speak differently to their peers outside and inside their homes and while it may have a long-term effect into their adulthood, it is also a beneficial quality (Fail et al., 2004). Listed below are the benefits and acquired skills TCKs gained from their third culture experience by Wells (2020):

1. The remarkable ability to adapt
2. A broad worldview due to the global citizenship
3. The ability to solve problems and think outside the box
4. Unique and innate ability to empathize with people
5. Enhanced language skills
6. High emotional intelligence
7. Early independence and maturity

TCKs develop more cultural empathy, spoke more languages, and gain a unique sense of identity and belonging (Dewaele & Oudenhoven, 2009). These skills developed in ever-changing cultural surroundings enable TCKs to connect with others

in a more meaningful way through communication and interactions, which is vital not only in the global world market but also in navigating one's significant role in the community.

Role of Communication in the Third Culture Experience

Munodawafa (2018) defines communication as the exchange of verbal and nonverbal messages between a sender, and a receiver, through a chosen medium of communication. Communication is a vital way of relating to people. Communication allows us to form relationships, express ourselves, and gain a sense of belongingness.

Communication and a sense of belonging are inextricably linked. To understand what sense of belongingness is, we must first identify the individuals with whom we believe we are able to interact and communicate, and for the vast majority of us, these people are our families. The family is the first social group to which the child can feel a sense of belonging (Đurišić, 2018). Communication, on the other hand, is described a significant aspect of family process, which also confronts today's families (Yusof, 1984).

Most OFWs struggle to adapt to their new and foreign cultural and social environment (Ofreneo & Samonte, 2005), resulting in communicational difficulties that make them feel even more disoriented. According to Meniado (2019), this communicational barrier involves difficulties in shifting to the host country's local lifestyle and communicating in its local language at work, school, restaurants, hospitals, public transportation, and other key establishments.

The impact of this transition to a new socio-cultural environment is similar to the experiences of children who relocated with their OFW parents. Children of OFWs undergoing a third culture experience struggle to find a balance between practicing and embodying their original cultures and the adapted culture.

Furthermore, when it comes to seeking for help, many OFWs fear becoming a burden to others and often rely on themselves (Hechanova et al., 2011). This prevents them from getting help professionally and dealing with it the proper way. This demonstrates that when it comes to their mental health and difficulties, OFWs prefer to keep them to themselves and also avoid disclosing them to their loved ones back home.

This also suggests that their children, who are with them, are almost expected to embrace and accept the new environment in which they are living. While OFW parents may have prepped their children to the unfamiliar culture, they may also lack proper communication because they, too, are unfamiliar with it. They also tend to keep their thoughts within themselves and third culture kids are also assumed to do so.

Communication can be described in a variety of ways, but it always includes expressing, interacting, and sharing (Genç, 2017). Third culture kids who frequently shift their place of residence and practice other cultures develop new methods of expressing, engaging, and sharing.

The relationship between communication and culture stems from our daily experiences and interactions with individuals and groups (Rabiah, 2018). For third culture kids, communicating differently to various cultures is a way to belong. Therefore, it shapes or expands their identities and influence their concepts of home.

Filipino migrants who experience homesickness for instance, they play sports and attend gatherings where they can sing, dance, and celebrate with other Filipinos (Jimenez, 2010). Eating food is also a way for Filipinos to bond and interact with one another because it reminds them of their origins and their home. Uy (2023), who recounts her life as an international student in America, says Filipino food reminds her

that she is still very much a Filipina and because of it, she finds a sense of home wherever she goes.

These interactions and bonding that happen during get-togethers define and re-define their culture as Filipinos. It also allows OFWs and their children to build relationships with other OFW families which helps preserve and strengthen their cultural identities as Filipinos. These occasions also allow Filipino third culture kids to connect with other children who are going through similar situations. According to Lijadi and Schalkwyk (2014), third culture kids form bonds with others through shared histories, language, and communities, which helps them understand that they are all migrants in an unfamiliar land.

Social media is also being used as a tool to express and connect with family members in their origin home. Social media, is regarded as an “emerging sphere” of communication (Ortico, 2017). Many Filipino families depend on technology for communication and among these social networking sites, Facebook remains to be the largest and most used social media site (Garinga et al., 2018).

According to Ochoa (2011), who researched the influence of Facebook usage on relationship maintenance among OFW families, photo-tagging, sharing of images and videos, messaging, and forming groups online on Facebook aided his respondents in communicating with their loved ones overseas.

These features online allow OFW families to bond virtually with their loved ones back home and also maintain the “family structure” while experiencing the unfamiliarity of their third culture experience.

Online communication can have both beneficial and negative consequences for third culture kids. Sometimes, social media is unreliable at times. According to Racasa and Vargas (2021), college students who have OFW relatives or belong to

OFW families spend hours online but seldom talk to their family abroad in their free time, and when they do, it is usually about financial worries. They rarely discuss their personal lives or what happened to them during the day.

Migrant parents initiate contact primarily to fulfill obligations such as checking in on family members, particularly on special occasions, and financial issues, whereas children of migrant parents are focused on household concerns (Cabigunda & Corpus, 2016).

This is similar to the third culture experience, in which personal contact, bonding, and physical encounters with individuals are still necessary to completely grasp one's origin culture and deal with other cultures. Bonding and interaction with one another are effective communicative acts in developing stronger connections and a sense of belonging. New media trends like social media, according to Meier (2015) have provided third culture kids and third culture individuals a way to interact with the culture they left and the new culture they are entering.

Dunbar (2011) contends that, while technological communication devices might be useful, the main challenge for social networking sites such as Facebook is to make people believe that online interactions are real conversations. Uploading images and tagging people on social media is not enough, and people should be able to have a genuine discourse regarding the photos we upload, much like a real conversation. This means that the modern communication technologies we use still have limitations in terms of forming relationships with others.

However, communication technologies are still vital in the third culture experience because it still helps third culture kids have a kind of sense of stability that they need in order to function in various foreign settings. According to Bacigalupe and Lambe (2011) and Furukawa and Driessnack (2012), modern technologies should not

be taken for granted, but rather utilized to preserve interactions in transnational families. Ariate et al. (2015) also recommend that OFW parents and their children continue to use Facebook as a communication tool because it has been shown to reduce feelings of separation because both parties are regularly updated with each other's life.

Consistent communication is vital, especially with children who have been left in their native country, in order to avoid a broken family (Bautista & Tamayo, 2020). In a study conducted by Santiago (2011), children of OFWs who have longer and more meaningful communication with their OFW parents have a better level of happiness and enthusiasm.

Indeed, communication is important in forming a sense of connection, so it helps third culture kids establish their sense of home and identity by understanding one's origin culture and being open to other cultures. Parents, like OFW parents also play a significant role in dealing with separation and consistent transition in the environmental, emotional, and physical context (Mclachlan, 2007) by talking to their children and explaining their family situation. In other words, third culture kids and their parents should be able to communicate the new cultures that surrounds them.

Culture and communication are inseparable because culture influences the meanings of messages, not simply the communication itself (Rabiah, 2018). Third culture kids who experience cultural shifts respect and comprehend these changes to articulate their identity and find a sense of belonging. Culture is simply the basis for communication (Rabiah, 2018).

Barriers to communication are difficult for third culture kids who struggle to belong. They are continuously shifting environments and might take time to adjust to different cultures. This transient feeling makes it difficult for them to commit to

relationships or the place in which they live. However, because of their unique experiences, third culture kids engage in intercultural communication, which refers to communication across cultural borders (Auwalu et al. 2015). Intercultural communication allows us to build, understand, and transform culture and identity (Ahmdt, 2020). It is a way for people who come from different groups perceive and make sense of one another (Bennett, 2019).

The capacity to communicate with people from diverse cultures is something that third culture kids acquire and to be able to practice intercultural communication, one must value and consider respect, emotional intelligence, adaptability, patience, and positivity (Middlebury Language Schools, n.d.) These intercultural competencies are defined as the knowledge, motivation, and abilities required to communicate effectively and appropriately with people from many cultures (Wiseman, 2002).

Living and working overseas can help acquire better intercultural competencies, as well as other multicultural personality traits and talents (De Waal, 2020).

Redefining Cultural Identity and Home

The concept and definition of home, identity, and a sense of belonging are constantly pursued and questioned. The specificity of our homeland, culture, religion, family, and so on, make our childhood unique (Fernea, 2002).

Home is considered an important component of every person's existence since it provides us with protection and security. A person's sense of home reflects a simple yet complicated setting that appears to be fundamental to human experience, as well as a source of personal identity (Cardinali et al., 2022). Home and/or our sense of

home is a significant part of our life as it helps define who we are as people. Moreover, people's living environment plays a key role in their well-being (Gattino et al., 2013).

Others struggle to determine where they genuinely belong, as certain children affected by migration, such as third culture kids, constantly feel as if their home is being reproduced over and over again (Lijadi & Van Schalkwyk, 2017).

For many OFWs and their families who are with them, home is not stable because of temporary employment. According to Cosalan (2010), there are two types of OFWs: (1) those who leave their home country for temporary work, and (2) those who remain permanently in their destination country.

Retirement, as previously mentioned in the literature reviewed, is one of the reasons why OFWs return home. OFWs in general find it difficult to prepare for retirement (Magidma, 2016) and they also face financial problems because of their lack of knowledge in managing their financial resources. This lack of preparation for the possibilities of returning home, especially for some OFWs who are not absorbed by their destination countries, contributes to the more transient feeling that most Filipino third culture kids feel. Albao (2018) suggests that retirement should not be regarded as a negative word. The value of being effective worker should also translate into the importance of being a productive retiree (Calixto, 2021).

Children of OFWs who relocate to another country should be mentally and emotionally prepared, particularly when returning home. Being a productive retiree, as Calixto (2021) stated, should not only be about having financial security but also emotional and mental stability. Smoothly transitioning to retirement or moving back to the home country, as many OFWs face, is beneficial in assisting the whole family, especially children to a fresh beginning.

Yu (2023), for instance, describes her return to the Philippines as a "rude awakening," recognizing that even if the furniture stayed in place and the rooms remained the same, it still felt like a "home for ghosts," as she defines it. The physicality of a place or a house does not inherently provide us with a sense of home.

Third culture kids have a deep sense of understanding that they do not belong in the culture where they live and the time spent in this world causes TCKs to have a separate sense of identity (Meier, 2015). According to Mclachlan (2007), third culture kids may feel they can relate to many people from different roots yet also feel excluded from any particular culture, therefore missing a clear sense of belongingness.

Third culture kids can cope with this adversity by always leaning on their families as their families can provide a sense of comfort and stability. Jones et al. (2022) suggests that family members and things that remind them of their loved ones can create a sense of continuity, effectively replacing the physical concept of home.

Ultimately, home is a feeling and not necessarily a physical place. Bologna (2018) reveals in his study that students who moved away from their original homes or have lived through harsh conditions can still feel homesick despite arriving in a beautiful campus. Third culture kids rely on this feeling through communication and interaction with others and form their own concepts of home constantly.

Third culture kids have their own concept of home, which is a place in a constant state of flux (Lijadi & Schalkwyk, 2017). This means that TCKs' identities also constantly shift in response to their cultural setting (Pang & Hutchinson, 2018). Simply, TCKs' concept of home is a compilation of the places they lived in and resonated with (Lijadi & Schalkwyk, 2017). This distinct sense of identity stems from the feeling that the majority of TCKs have: they are constantly representing something larger than themselves (Meier, 2015).

Identifying and learning about this phenomenon normalizes their lived experiences (Donohue, 2022), as TCKs' identities and ideas of home are frequently more relational than geographical (Pang & Hutchinson, 2018).

As a third culture kid, it is critical to realize that there are others out there who experienced third culture experiences. This allows me to relate to their experiences and further explore how my environment and cultural setting influence how I communicate with others and how this process of communication (re)shapes my interpretations of who I am and what my home is.

Theoretical Underpinning

In the realm of communication, Craig (1999) presents seven communication traditions, one of which is socio-cultural. In the socio-cultural tradition, communication is emphasized as a means of producing and reproducing social order. In other words, socio-cultural tradition explores how our perceptions, meanings, norms, roles, and customs are produced via interactions with people (Littlejohn & Foss, 2011), and consequently produce, and reproduce culture and realities.

This study uses the socio-cultural tradition as a theoretical underpinning. According to Griffin (2000), the socio-cultural tradition is based on the idea that people reproduce culture through communication. Furthermore, other theorists in this line also suggest that producing and reproducing culture often works the other way around, with the communication we receive shaping our perspective of reality.

According to Craig and Barge (2000), the origins of socio-cultural theory may be traced back to psychologist Lev Vygotsky, who claims that parents, caregivers, peers, and culture as a whole are responsible for the development of higher-order brain processes. These higher-order brain processes include critical thinking, problem

solving, evaluation, and knowledge synthesis. Simply, human growth, according to Vygotsky, is based on social interaction and so varies among cultures (Cherry, 2022).

Third culture kids, who are exposed to cultures other than their origin culture, undergo significant sociocultural transitions and changes as a result of the various types of reality offered to them daily. As a third culture kid, my experience growing up in Saudi Arabia while also maintaining my own culture as a Filipino through various ways of communication with my family, and the people around me has influenced my perception of what my reality is, influencing my sense of belonging, home, and identity. Communication, through language, after all, is considered an imperative instrument for shaping one's perception (Chang'orok, 2017).

Moving to Saudi Arabia at such a young age as a Filipino child with no prior knowledge of the sociocultural changes in norms, traditions, behavior, and language, my introduction to this new world was first and foremost through my parents, particularly by my father who is an OFW and the primary reason for our relocation. How they prepped me and communicated about what I should wear, how I should behave, and how I should speak in a foreign country influenced how I construed who I am and what home is for me. Reality, then, in the sociocultural tradition, is socially produced through micro-level interactions (Apuke, 2018).

Because third culture kids experience a world that is not always consistent due to the sociocultural differences, their reality is constantly constructed, replicated, restored, and transformed. Their identities and perceptions of home are then also being constantly constructed, reproduced, restored, and transformed.

Identity formation is important in the socio-cultural tradition. Identity is a combination of the self, society, relationships with others, and cultures, as described by scholars in this tradition (Magut, 2016). According to Littlejohn and Foss (2008),

people adapt their identities based on their surroundings, and culture plays a significant role in communication and meaning-making.

As a third culture kid, establishing a sense of belonging is important to me since it provides me with a sense of identity which is essential for a person's well-being. To feel connected to these foreign experiences and with different people, communication is needed. Communication is a fundamental process in human existence.

Without communication, according to Günther and Folke (1993), none of the living things on Earth would exist, as life is formed through interactions between various organisms. Sociocultural theorists emphasize that communication allows us to comprehend certain things, which determine how we grow. Communication then has the power to better understand our reality (Apuke, 2018).

The relevance of the socio-cultural tradition to communication theory is that it addresses and highlights how our understandings, meanings, norms, roles, and socio-cultural experiences are formed through communication. It explores the subjective realities we live in that are being produced and reproduced through interactions with people and cultures. It states that communication has a ripple effect (Chang'orok, 2017).

Looking through the lens of sociocultural tradition, this study explores how my experiences as a Filipino third culture kid (re)shaped my cultural identity and concept of home through communication. Telling my personal story seeks to value our third culture experiences and lessen the alienation that third culture kids face.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Adopting the socio-cultural tradition of communication, this research is qualitative in nature. Qualitative research relies on people as creators of meaning in their experiences and focuses on the why, which may be used to find unexplored themes and produce fresh research concepts (Ugwu & Eze, 2023). It seeks to explore rather than control research elements (Nassaji, 2020), provides valuable insights from people's experiences (Denny & Weckesser, 2018), and consists of descriptive data in the form of words or pictures (Wua et al., 2022).

Using autoethnography as the main qualitative method, this study is focused on myself as the main subject to uncover my experiences as a Filipino TCK in Saudi Arabia and the Philippines and discuss how these experiences (re)shape my concept of home and identity.

Autoethnography

Moving beyond the boundaries of qualitative research and is also one of the branches of narrative inquire (Watts, 2023), is the methodology of autoethnography, a type of qualitative research in which the researcher describes his or her personal experiences within a social context (Dionson, 2021). It is also defined by Méndez (2014), as an effective qualitative research tool for exploring people's lives.

Furthermore, autoethnography is an emerging qualitative method that enables the author to write about and draw on personal experiences to better understand a societal issue (Wall, 2006). Autoethnographers use hindsight to write retrospectively and selectively on their prior experiences (Lucero, 2021).

As both the "subject" and the researcher of this study, it is simply necessary for me to feel that I can reflect freely on my personal experiences as a third culture kid and explore the third culture phenomenon. Autoethnography, as a methodology for this study, permits and assists me in that area by allowing me to tell my narrative into meaningful sequences and connecting it to the larger picture.

I chose autoethnography as a research method to not only tell the story of my third culture experience but also analyze and interpret these experiences to gain meaningful insights that can provide a new perspective on the third culture phenomenon and the Filipino diaspora. It is more than just an autobiography or a recounting of my personal experiences; it is a study of them. Autoethnography relies on ethnography, but unlike ethnography, it focuses on the researcher's personal experiences as a participant in the social world under study (Hokkanen, 2017).

Autoethnography is a form of academic writing that analyzes and interprets the author's lived experiences, linking the researcher's insights to self-identity, norms, communication practices, shared meaning and values, and larger social, cultural, and political issues (Poulous, 2021).

Dyson (2007) defined autoethnography as not only a suitable method but also the sole means to express mindfully the cultural phenomenon that he was experiencing. I feel the same way about autoethnography in this context because I know that the only way for me to comprehend my experiences as an OFW child, who can also be considered a third culture kid, is to enable myself to go deeper into my experiences and articulate them authentically.

Autoethnographers must convey aspects of cultural experience in order to make cultural features familiar to both insiders and outsiders (Ronai, 1995, 1996). According to Ellis and Bochner (2000), the autoethnography approach reveals layers

of consciousness, connecting the personal and the cultural, going inward and outward, making the gap between the cultural and the personal more and more blurry.

According to Besio (2009), autoethnography is distinguishable by its explicitly self-referential mode of writing, whereby the divide between the participant and observer is blurred and even ignored. It encourages inclusivity and the sense of being seen and appreciated. It is a reflective method that allows the researcher to comprehend a social phenomenon by drawing on their own personal experiences (Tyler-Mullings et al., 2019).

When researchers write autoethnography, they seek to provide artistic and compelling descriptions of personal and interpersonal experiences (Ellis et al., 2011). Our proclivity to tell stories and make sense of the world through logic is the very essence of humanness but it has come to be regarded as our inclination to make sense of the world through narrative. (Barbara, 2001).

While autoethnography can provide many substantial and useful results, it is not without criticism. According to Allen-Collinson and Hockey (2008), autoethnography is still being considered controversial or even self-absorbed. To apply the same method might also be difficult and daunting at times for researchers because readers' reactions are unanticipated. Readers may have negative attitudes about the narratives (Bochner & Ellis, 1996).

However, I would like to believe that it is still an effective tool in understanding and exploring a phenomenon as it requires oneself to be vulnerable and open. Writing about oneself and conveying a personal account involves courage and faith that one's story will positively influence others (Dionson, 2021).

One of my research goals is to validate the experiences of third culture kids like myself who may have gone through the same thing. Apart from being “reader-friendly”

(Dionson, 2021), autoethnography and writing about the self through storytelling can help readers understand personal experiences in a more meaningful way. The feeling of oneness is something that autoethnographers aim to have with their readers, a feeling that we can sense deep in our gut and souls (Bochner & Ellis, 2022).

Autoethnography addresses an absence in traditional research in which the researcher's voice is often not prominently featured. In this study, my voice as the autoethnographer and the main subject of the research will provide a more in-depth look on how the communication experiences of third culture kids, particularly those who belong to OFW families, (re)shape their cultural identity and their construction of home.

The two types of autoethnography are analytic and evocative autoethnography. Both have different goals, ways, and rooted in different research traditions, depending on the chosen topic (Grantham et al., 2023). Since this research is about my personal experiences as a Filipino third culture kid and my memories of growing up in Saudi Arabia and now as a member of a returnee OFW family, applying evocative autoethnography seems more appropriate in writing and analyzing my memories emotions, and interpretations of my personal experiences.

According to Polous (2021), evocative autoethnography enables the author to write and produce research texts that recall vivid imagery, deep meaning, and sometimes overwhelming emotions, resulting in a fuller depiction of the world and its people.

In the confessional-emotive or evocative style of autoethnography, the autoethnographer finds self-disclosure in the chaotic and emotional components of their experience, allowing the reader to emotionally engage with the story (Cooper & Lilyea, 2022).

The autoethnography is focused on myself as the subject of inquiry to gain a thorough understanding of how communication played an important role in my experiences as a Filipino TCK who grew up in Saudi Arabia and later permanently returned to the Philippines. Through autoethnography, I seek to explore how and why communication can help build a TCK's sense of home and identity to normalize their experiences, reduce alienation and disorientation, and empower them to be positive influences in the global society.

Reflexivity

Autoethnography analyzes personal and cultural experiences, allowing researchers to engage in reflexivity (Adams et al., 2015; Koopman et al., 2020). Reflexivity, as described by Berger (2013), is a process in which the researcher actively evaluates his or her positionality. Personal reflexivity analyzes the researcher's emotions, beliefs, culture, and educational background and explores how they influence the research (Burnam, 2023). It requires transparency and acceptance that the researcher is a part of the study (Finlay, 1998).

To practice reflexivity in my research process, I considered how I was going to write my narrative and decided to write my narrative based on recall data. I decided to go with evocative autoethnography not just to convey my emotions in the text, but also to acknowledge my position as the sole storyteller of the narrative. Reflexivity, according to Burnam (2023), is not about erasing oneself to achieve "pure objectivity", instead it is about embracing oneself as a subject and active participant in research.

Having said that, it is also important to acknowledge the researcher's goal in reflexivity which is to neutralize the influence of their subjectivity (Gentles et al., 2014).

Since autoethnography relies greatly on the researcher's personal interpretations (Tarisayi, 2023), I included my diary entries to demonstrate self-awareness, my willingness to be vulnerable but reliable at the same time in writing about my experiences and my interpretation of these experiences. It is important to honestly reflect and assess oneself in doing autoethnography (Lucero & Muscente, 2021).

Participant/s of the Study and Sampling

The sampling method chosen for this study is theoretical sampling, which according to Glaser and Strauss (1967), is a method of gathering data and determining what data to collect based on the concepts and categories that arise from the data obtained. Theoretical sampling emphasizes what the sample communicates (Qureshi, 2018) and it possesses the characteristics of the phenomenon to be studied.

The study's participant is - myself. Autoethnography involves using the researcher's personal experiences, emotions, and critical reflections (Tarisayi, 2023). Therefore, it is only essential to introduce myself and explain why I choose to reflect on my own experiences, emotions, and critical reflections.

As previously stated, I identify as a third culture kid. As Filipino child who relocated to the Middle East due to my father's work as an OFW, this experience shaped the person I am today, especially the fact that, while adapting to the unfamiliar sociocultural experiences that I faced in the Middle East, I still maintained my Filipino culture through language, traditions, and norms.

Balancing two or more cultures at once, partnered with alternating Saudi Arabia and the Philippines as my home, was tough as I struggled, and quite frankly still have a hard time feeling a sense of belongingness wherever I go.

At age 16, I left Saudi Arabia and returned to the Philippines to pursue college. This was a crucial transition that I faced because I felt like a foreigner in my own home country. This feeling of constantly seeking to belong, redefining home and my identity has always stayed with me. While I have also gained positive outcomes from my experience like having a high self-awareness and empathy for other people, it can be alienating at times.

Reading about third culture experiences and what third culture kids feel from various literatures gave me a sense of home, which helped to alleviate the disorientation I always felt. This inspired me to write my own story and evaluate my own.

I was curious about how communication and culture intersect, and how understanding our sociocultural experiences as third culture kids is crucial for developing positive relationships through interactions. These fruitful interactions can only occur if we understand how communication works and how our interpretations of these experiences influence how we perceive ourselves and develop a sense of home, thereby redefining home and identity.

Research Instrument and Data Gathering

This study used autoethnography as the main methodology, hence data is derived from the researcher's personal memory and subjective experiences. Autoethnography examines the author's personal views as events, memories, and cultural practices emerge or unfold in the researcher's life (Poulous, 2021).

The researcher is the "data source" (Tarisayi, 2023) and data can come from recall memory, journal, vignettes, and epiphanies (Olobia, 2023). Memory work, artifact analysis, external data, self-observation, and reflexive journaling are common

data collection approaches in autoethnography for situating personal experiences (Adams et al., 2015).

In this study, the primary source is my personal memory data, or memory/recollections written in a timeline or in a chronological order, partnered with personal artifacts for cross-checking purposes which include photos and home videos, and diary entries to help me recall events with greater clarity (Tarisayi, 2023). These collected data helped provide a timeline of my story

Personal Memory Data

I began gathering data in December 2022, while I was already considering using my personal experiences as a TCK for my master's thesis.

Personal memory data can be taken from memory and “can be written down as textual data” (Chang, 2008, p.72) and this can also be referred to as memory work, which entails mining one’s past and significant personal events through structured recall (Tarisayi, 2023).

Photos and Home Videos

Over the years, I have kept all of our family photos and home videos on a hard drive and arranged them by year. In fact, for my undergraduate thesis, I created a documentary film using these home videos to tell my family's narrative. My undergraduate thesis, however, focused on these particular video materials and how they may be utilized to visually make a compelling personal documentary film.

I categorized and arranged all of the family videos and photos by year, allowing me to process my memories more quickly and precisely, which aided me in the writing process. Arranging and gathering material was also part of the recalling process

because it allowed me to visually reorganize my memories. Although there are 19 folders in total, some of them are organized by event. The total number of folders is 177, containing 39,099 files (home videos and images).

Figure 2.

Screen capture of family photos and videos arranged by year

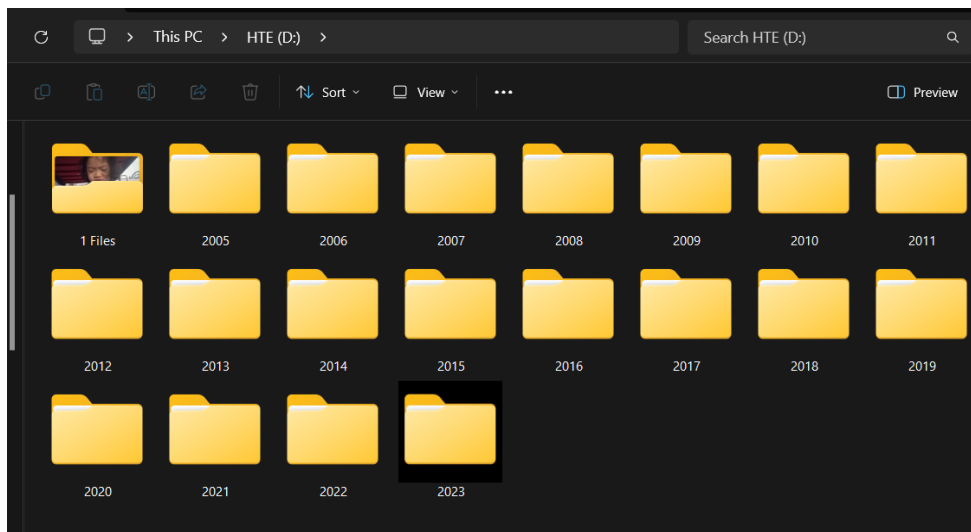
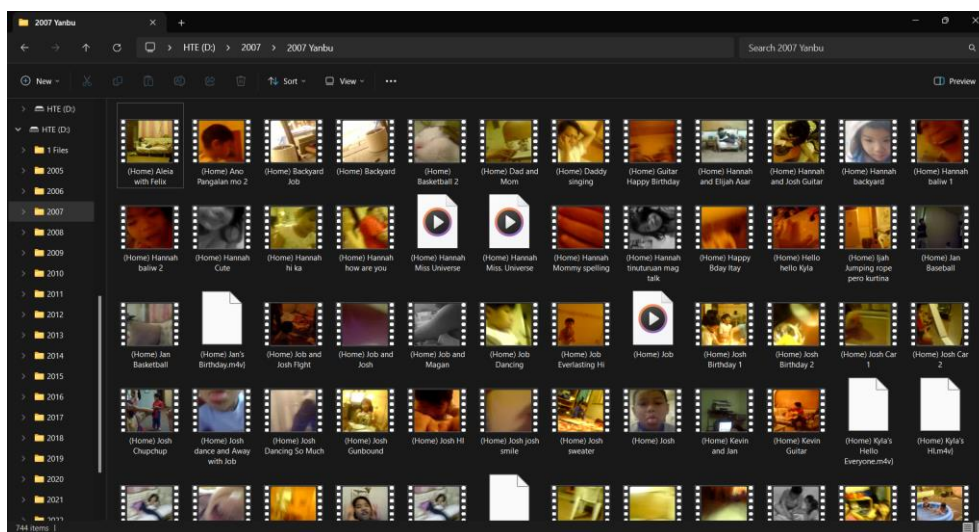


Figure 3.

Screen capture of family photos and videos from the 2007 folder



Arranging and organizing my data was nothing new for me; I had always treasured these files since my father collected and kept them on CD. I collected each of them and even asked my siblings if they have files that I might not have, and copied and collected these.

It was still difficult to archive and collect them because other files were old enough. Thankfully, most of the files are working and the system could still detect the year when they were captured so I was able to label them accurately. Organizing the photos and videos by year also made it easier for me to write my story in a narrative style by allowing me to choose which photos or videos to put in the timeline more easily.

These home videos and photos not only helped me with the writing process but also gave me insight into how I interacted with people, particularly family members and close friends, as a third culture kid living in a foreign country. Through it, I can gain perspectives on how I acted and communicated with people all through the years, given the transient nature of my residence.

For my data collection and familiarization, organizing, watching and re-watching, viewing and labeling these files allowed me to reflect on my life and experiences as a third culture kid.

Diaries

Diaries are frequently overlooked in the data gathering process, yet they can be used for a range of study topics (Wise et al., 2005).

To include my diary entries as part of my data collection and analysis, I read each of them, photographed each page of all my diaries, collected them, and organized them by year. This allowed me to not only organize my written journals but

also create a digital backup in case something happened to my diaries as some are already starting to lose the ink.

Figure 4.

Diaries



Note. Photo of my diaries written from 2013-2023.

I chose to include my diaries as part of my data collection because writing in my diary was the only consistent way of documenting my emotions and the circumstances that I was experiencing when I left Saudi Arabia and returned to the Philippines permanently. I was able to write and document my interactions with new people, my feelings about missing my childhood home, and my understanding of what was going on around me as a third culture kid.

Only through my diaries did I feel comfortable enough to say everything I wanted and express all of my concerns, frustrations, hopefulness, and viewpoint on my family's experiences as an OFW family.

Figure 5.

Screen capture of soft copies of my diaries organized by the year

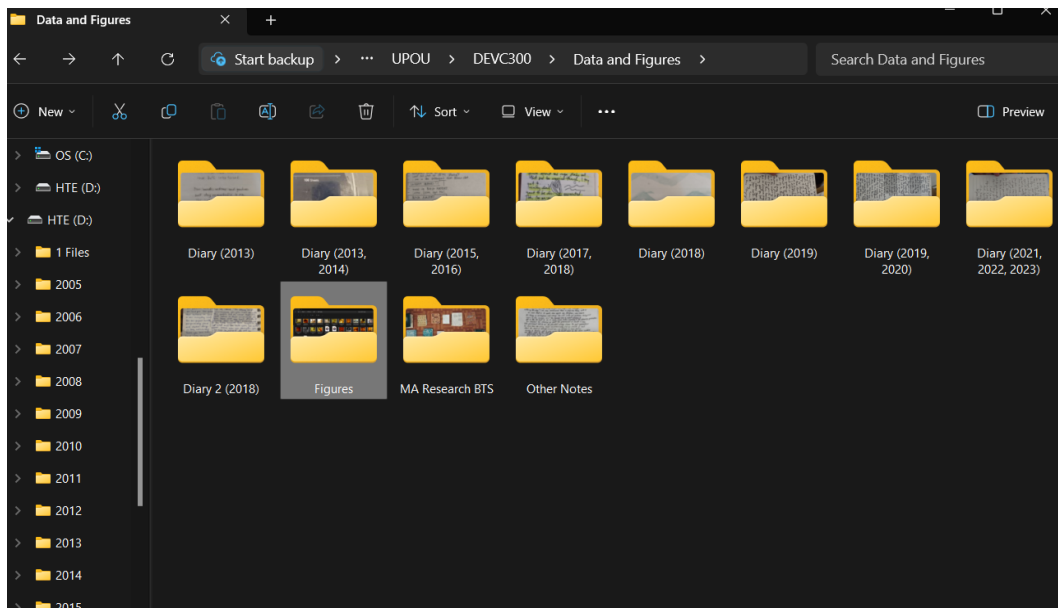
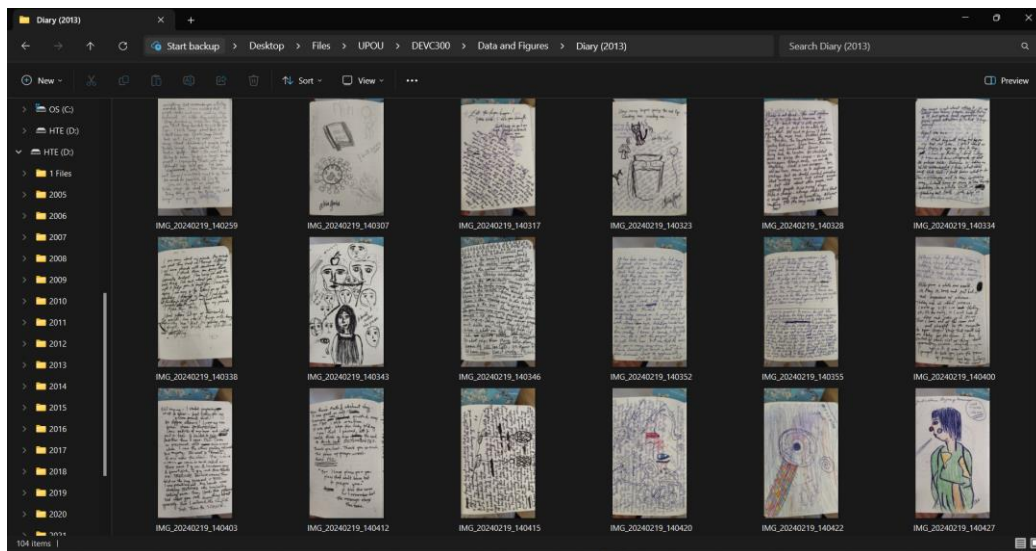


Figure 6.

Screen capture of the folder of my diary written in 2013



Furthermore, my diaries written over the years helped me in recreating the timeline of communication experiences, interactions, changes in identity, and cultural transformations.

Data Analysis

Chang (2008) defines analysis and interpretation in autoethnography as a process of dissecting and linking, looking in and out, and using the I's of insight, intuition, and impression. While there is no strict formula in analyzing autoethnographic data (Gregersen, 2019), methods like qualitative data analysis, narrative analysis, arts-based analysis, and ethnographic research can be used for analyzing autoethnographic data (Cooper & Lilyea, 2022).

Narrative Analysis

I used narrative analysis as it is aligned with my method, data, and objectives. Narrative analysis allows the researcher to explicate personal experiences, seek a deeper knowledge of these experiences, and gain a sense of understanding of the self. It also helps readers understand the emotional roots of the experiences described in the text (Watts, 2023).

The narrative inquiry is a qualitative research approach in which researchers are often the ones being researched and utilize the writing process to reflect on their experiences in order to discover meaning (Clandinin, 2000). Qualitative methodologies not only describe the events that happened but also provide a better understanding of the event's context as well. (Sofaer, 1999).

Narratives is our main means of human communication (Polkinghorne, 1995) and provide us meaning and structure to our experiences, which us to access different facets of who we are (Pawelczyk, 2012).

Ellis (2008) describes 'narrative' as the stories people tell and how they are told and organized into meaningful sequences. According to Son (2008), telling narratives is one of the most effective ways for people to understand one another and learn from each other. We can learn about ourselves as humans and our sociocultural contexts

through storytelling. Halverson (2010) defines storytelling as a way for people to create representations of themselves and by connecting the past, present, and envisioned future, a narrative identity emerges, supplying us with a sense of individual continuity and significance (McAdams, 2001).

Narrative analysis is an instrument for interpreting and assessing stories from individuals (Riessman, 2008), allowing researchers to better understand the social, cultural, and historical contexts that form these experiences (Sandelowski & Barroso, 2003).

The inductive method was used to derive patterns directly from the data. Researchers, according to Abbadia (2023), do inductive coding by immersing themselves in the narratives and identify themes that emerged from the narrative.

I collected my data and organized them by year and types, and from there, I developed a timeline which helped me organized my narrative in meaningful sequences (Ellis, 2008). I wrote about my personal experiences in a reflective and retrospective way, alongside my collected data to develop holistic and in-depth understanding of my experiences. In a way, my personal narrative has become my data, analysis, and the final result (Wall, 2006).

Ethical Considerations

Except for myself, the people involved in my stories remained anonymous to the readers. I avoided their names in the course of my inquiry to safeguard their privacy and safety. I tried to maintain the persons' trust by depicting them respectfully in my narratives.

Overall, I tried to remain scholarly, ethical, and authentic while straddling the boundaries of my professional and personal viewpoints as both the researcher and subject of the research.

The data that show specific faces and names of the people involved in my story were blurred to protect their privacy and identity.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

In this section, I first provide a chronology of my personal experiences as a third culture kid guided by evocative autoethnography, partnered with the data collected and reflections of my past experiences. Then, I made sense of my communication experiences in this journey. Lastly, I made sense of communication's role in (re)producing my culture and identity as a Third Culture Kid, as well as my sense of home. This will provide a clear picture of my experiences as a third culture kid dealing with sociocultural changes over the years, through the process of communication.

Chronology of Personal Experiences as a TCK

Autoethnographers evocatively produce personal experiences based on artifacts, field notes, and interviews that help insiders and outsiders understand the culture described within the text. (Ellis & Bochner, 2011). Usually written in a first person and can sometimes be expressed as a conversation between the author and reader to encourage further dialogue, autoethnographers use storytelling to describe these patterns to reach a more diverse mass audience than traditional research readers (Lucero, 2021).

Using narrative analysis in autoethnography allows autoethnographers to develop a chronology, marking significant life events and turning points in their own lives (Cooper & Lilyea, 2022). These are also called epiphanies that comes from the autoethnographer's past experiences, written in retrospect, and can be used for analysis (Kim, 2016).

The timeline on which this autoethnographic research is based, namely the periods of time when I moved with my family to Saudi Arabia and returning to the

Philippines, includes an overview (Figure 7) of the number of years I spent in Saudi Arabia and the Philippines, my age, and a brief description of what happened during those years.

Figure 7.

A Chronology of my Personal Experiences as a TCK

SAUDI ARABIA	PHILIPPINES	SAUDI ARABIA	PHILIPPINES	PHILIPPINES
2005	2007	2008	2013	2017
AGE 9	AGE 11	AGE 12	AGE 16	AGE 21
Moved to Saudi Arabia with my family to join my father who was working as a Fire Safety officer.	Stayed in the Philippines with my mother and my younger siblings for almost a year. A decision made by my parents.	Returned to Saudi Arabia and finished high school until 2013. During this time, we would go home every summer to spend our vacations in the Philippines	After graduating high school, I left Saudi Arabia without my parents and younger siblings, and joined some of my older brothers (who are in college or already working) in the Philippines.	Finished college. My father retired from his work and all of my family returned to the Philippines for good.

Moving to Saudi Arabia

In mid-2005, my father moved to Yanbu, Saudi Arabia for his work as an OFW, and processed our family visa. My mother, who was still in the Philippines with us, organized and processed all of our paperwork. I only have vague memories of this time, but I do recall my mother taking us to Kodak to get photographs for our passports.

Figure 8.

Passport Photos

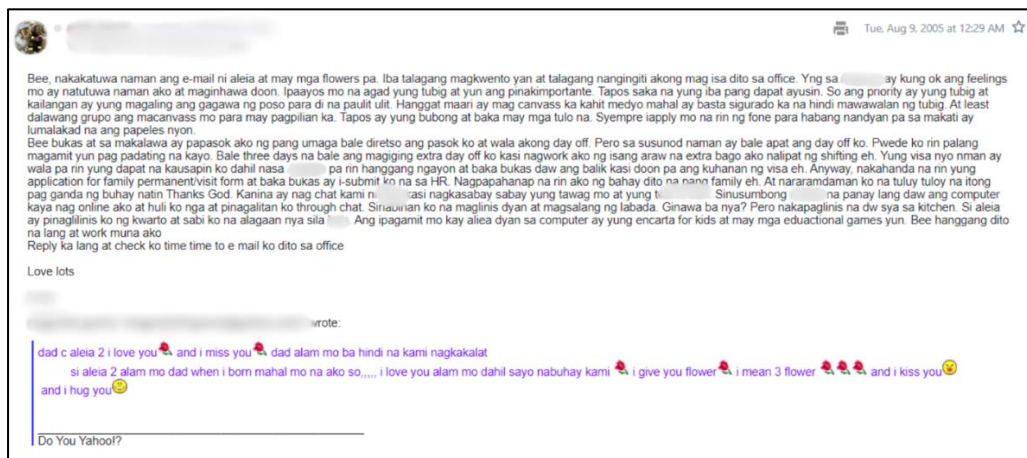


Note. Our passport photos taken in the Philippines circa 2005.

I do not recall my parents sitting us down and explaining why we relocated to Saudi Arabia, and I always assumed that this was just another transition for us as a family because living a transitory life was always a part of my father's work. When my father left his job in Pangasinan to work overseas in Yanbu, Saudi Arabia before we joined him, my mother would share emails from my father and casually just mention that we would join him soon. Sometimes, my mother would let me use her account to talk to my father.

Figure 9.

Screen Capture an Email Exchange between my father and I (2005)



(AE, Dad: Email exchange – Aug. 9, 2005. Age 8) – English Translation

AE: Dad, this is Aleia. I love you and I miss you. Dad, do you know we don't make a mess anymore? This is Aleia. Dad, I knew you loved me from the moment I was born. I love you. You are the reason we are still alive. Flowers for you! Hugs & kisses!

Dad: Bee, Aleia's email is very sweet and she also sent me flowers. She has a way with words, and reading it makes me grin here at work. If you are good now with _____ then I am happy because it's such a relief to stay there. You may ask someone to set up the water supply there and that's the most important thing. Our priority is the water supply and we need someone who's an expert so we don't keep fixing it. We need someone to make us a blueprint even though it's pricey but at least we're assured that we won't lose the water supply. You could request two groups to come up with designs so you can choose the best one. The roof should also be repaired. You can register your phone so that while you are still in Makati, someone is already processing the documentation. Bee, I'll be working tomorrow and the day after tomorrow, and I don't have any days off. But I have four days off after that, but my schedule has changed. Your visa has not yet been processed because it's still in _____ and they told me that I might get it tomorrow. Anyway, I have already prepared the application for family permanent/visit form and I might submit it to HR tomorrow. I am also looking for a house here that's good for our family. I can really feel that our life is going to get better, thank God. Earlier, I was chatting with _____ and he was telling me that _____ just keeps using the computer, so I went online to scold them. I told them to clean the house and to do the laundry. Did he do it? Although, he told me that he cleaned the kitchen. I told Aleia to clean the bedroom and to take care of _____. Let Aleia use the computer and explore Encarta for kids and there are educational games in there. I'll go back to work now. I'll wait for your reply and check my email from time to time. Love lots.

By December 2005, along with my mother, we were able to join my father in Saudi Arabia. I was 9 years old at the time. On the day of our flight, I remember the nervousness, excitement and confusion I felt. It was my first time on a plane and I remember being amazed that I was flying. It was also an amusing situation because I recall that we were lining up for the wrong counter and being late to our gate. The flight attendants looked for us, and recognized that we were a group of young children, with my mother who is probably stressed out, and the flight attendants quickly assisted us with our passports. I recall rushing through the hallways at Ninoy Aquino International Airport (NAIA) with my mother and siblings, and two flight attendants carrying some of my siblings running alongside us to get to the plane. We eventually made it.

When we arrived in Saudi Arabia, I was overjoyed to see my father and hurried inside the van, falling asleep on the floor of our car. The trip was lengthy because we arrived at Jeddah Airport, which is a 3-hour drive from Yanbu, which is where we live.

It was already late when we arrived at the house, and my siblings and I rushed all to the house, excited that this would be our home. I remember feeling the carpet on my feet, and we were both surprised that the bathroom was carpeted. We toured the house, and while it was quite small considering the size of my family, it was the most beautiful and warm place I could ever picture living in.

Our house was a one-bedroom bungalow with a kitchen, living room, and backyard. We have two mattresses on the floor in our bedroom, and the kids sleep together on one, while my parents sleep on the other. However, as children, we would sleep wherever we wanted and build our little nook because the mattress was on the floor anyway and we would fall asleep on the carpet occasionally.

Figure 10.

Family house in Saudi Arabia



Note. Our family house in Saudi Arabia (left corner). Photo taken in 2006.

Moving to Saudi Arabia was a new experience for me, but I did not make a big deal about it because I never felt like I was leaving something behind, even though I knew I had just moved to an unfamiliar country. This was most likely due to my age, which prevented me from fully comprehending what was going on and the changes that needed to be made.

I was simply overjoyed to be with my father, who had been primarily away from our lives as children due to his work. In the Philippines, he was working and staying in Pangasinan, a coastal province, and we were staying in Makati, a city in Manila, which meant that he was still away from us most of the time even though he was in the same country, and we only got to visit him from time to time. At least in this situation, I can see him every day, and my mother can focus on raising us.

Figure 11.

Iqama Family Photo



Note. Family photo taken in Saudi Arabia for our residence permit (iqama).

Living in Saudi Arabia

My father took us throughout the city, buying things we needed and getting to know other families, particularly Filipino families also living in Saudi Arabia. For instance, before we joined our father in Saudi Arabia, he made friends through a Born-Again Christian church he attended. Most of the families in this church were Filipino or Indian. When we arrived in Saudi Arabia, I recall visiting several of these Filipino families, making friends with other Filipino children, and getting to know them.

Interacting with other Filipino families through our church community was quite beneficial since it alleviated the disorientation that one may experience in my situation. Having my siblings with me all the time and having a close relationship with them also helped me understand the strange situation I was in. Knowing that my siblings were

going through similar experiences as I was made me feel less lonely and nervous about meeting new people.

Figure 12.

Family Photo



Note. A photo of us outside our house in Saudi Arabia. Taken in 2006.

One of the first introductions I had to Saudi Arabia was through clothing. My father took us downtown to buy *abayas*, which is a loose over-garment or dress worn by women in Muslim countries. This requirement meant that I had to be wearing abaya at all times when going out in public.

The clothing that people wear in Saudi Arabia alone introduced me to some of their religious and cultural beliefs. Because of this, I gained a high sense of awareness and a concern of not being able to go outside without wearing an abaya or covering my body.

The overwhelming feeling I had was primarily caused by my encounters and communication with other people, particularly those from foreign backgrounds such as Saudi Arabia, Pakistan, India, Egypt, Korea, and Malaysia. Aside from the fact that I am innately shy, the language barrier was difficult for me because I had to

communicate in English. I felt out of place most of the time. In my early years in the Middle East, I was unable to speak the English language and though I understand them because I grew up watching American shows and movies, I just spoke Tagalog, which is my native language. Tagalog, was also the main language used around the house.

Fortunately, I had Filipino friends who understood and accepted me, but it was still difficult to connect with them because I was the "newcomer" and most of my Filipino friends had already lived in the Middle East for a longer period of time than I had. I felt like I was always falling behind and despite the fact that we spoke the same language, the emotional connection was difficult to establish or maintain initially.

My school follows the Philippine curriculum while additionally teaching required subjects such as Saudi history and Arabic. We also take two breaks each day for lunch and prayer time. During prayer time, we are instructed to observe silence in respect for those who are praying. There is a designated spot where they pray, and I occasionally see and watch them. Our school days are Saturday through Wednesday, and our off days are Thursday and Friday. During my early years in Saudi Arabia, there was limited access to technology and I had no access to social media, as well as strict country rules. As a result, I was able to immerse myself in the environment by only speaking with my classmates in person and witnessing their cultural practices firsthand. The situation could feel isolated at times, yet it helped me to live in the moment.

I gradually learned to accept and adapt to the sociocultural norms and customs that I experienced. What helped me adjust and connect with my friends was the community that was formed in numerous places, primarily the school and church. At school, I learned English just by talking with my schoolmates and watching a lot of

American shows. During flag ceremonies, we also sing the national anthems of the Philippines, Saudi Arabia, Pakistan, India, and more.

We did not have The Filipino Channel (TFC) yet which is a channel that ABS-CBN owned that aired Filipino shows. It was only 2 years later when we were able to get TFC and from there I was exposed to more Filipino shows.

Our school's activities and events played an important role in developing my friendships with others. Through school activities, I was able to communicate more effectively with my classmates and have a deeper understanding of who they are as individuals, not simply as just my classmates. I would often go to their houses to practice for school presentations. On Wednesdays, we would hold flag ceremonies and sing the national anthems of all the countries we represent. This underlines the importance of not only our families but also institutions outside our homes, such as our school, in one's identity creation and sense of belongingness.

Figure 13.

School Photo



Note. Photo of me (right) with my classmates, celebrating UN day circa 2006.

At school, my situation would also continuously shift. For example, during my first year in Saudi Arabia, I had a large number of classmates and thought that the class was more diverse because we all came from different backgrounds; but, because we are all technically foreigners in Saudi Arabia, my classmates changed each year. Some of my classmates would either return to their home countries, move to other countries, or transfer to other schools. I also transferred to other schools, and my class size became increasingly smaller. In 2009, I had just one classmate. By 2013, there were only three of us in the classroom.

Figure 14.

Second School



Note. Photo of my classroom and our school backyard when I was in sixth grade.

Our school setting also did not feel like a school because the architecture and structure of the schools I attended were more akin to a house than a school facility. As a result, I have always felt like there was no divide between our house and our school, and how I connect, communicate, and interact with my friends and family remained quite similar except for the languages that I would use.

Figure 15.

School Facilities Collage



Note. Photo of the second school I attended in Saudi Arabia. Taken in 2009.

At school, I would mostly communicate in both English and Tagalog but at home, I would usually speak Tagalog to my siblings and parents. Taking Arabic classes is also part of our curriculum at school where we learn how to read, write, and speak Arabic. My teacher spoke and taught in Arabic, and he could hardly speak English.

My father, on the other hand, understands the Arabic language and would occasionally teach us. For example, instead of saying "water," he would say "moya," which is Arabic for water.

Figure 17.

Friendly gathering at the Food Court



Note. Photo of my friends and I at the mall.

Figure 18.

Graduation Photo



Note. Performing *Tiniking*, a Philippine folk dance, in my HS graduation.

At church, we would also commemorate similar events and hold numerous outdoor gatherings with other families and church members. This provided me a sense of security as a third culture kid because I was spending time with other families who were going through similar experiences as my family.

Going to church also helped because we were able to practice the same religious belief and gain a sense of unity and camaraderie that helped me established and maintained my identity helped me shape my identity. However, we do this in secret or in a discrete way because it is prohibited, but we maintained it simple and more like the usual gathering rather than it being more formal and systematic.

Figure 19.

Church Family Photo



Note. Photo of my family and I at the church, days after we arrived in Saudi Arabia.

Aside from birthdays and special family occasions, we still celebrate holidays that are not customary or allowed in the Middle East, such as Christmas and New Year. We never had a genuine Christmas tree, and on New Year's, we would simply gather and throw a huge feast, eat, and continued to communicate with families and relatives back home via email and video conferencing. We would also celebrate

Christmas with our churchmates and other Filipino families, exchanging gifts and singing/performing Christmas and worship songs.

Figure 20.

Christmas with other OFW families



Note. Celebrating Christmas with other OFW families in Saudi Arabia.

During the early years, it was hard to contact families and relatives back home in the Philippines through video chatting because of the connection and the limitations with technology. The timing also was challenging to deal with because of the time difference between the Middle East and the Philippines. But we still tried and mostly spend our time together as a family.

Figure 21.

Photo Collage of Birthdays



Note. Birthday photos taken in 2007.

My daily routine remained the same, and I was always with my family. I would usually just stay at home. On my father's off days, he would take us to the park, visit the Red Sea, or Yanbu Lake. Because of Saudi Arabia's culture of privacy, we rarely get to meet other people because the majority of places in Yanbu, Saudi Arabia, do not have large crowds which means that chances of communication with other locals is minimal.

Figure 22.

Park with the Family



Note. Spending time with the family at the park which is our family routine/tradition.

I learned to value boundaries and personal space because this is what I have observed in the Middle East. There is also prayer time that happens thrice a day and shops would close to prioritize their prayer sessions. I grew accustomed to it over time and rarely questioned it because I was too young to understand.

Figure 23.

Me at the Red Sea



Note. Photo of me at the Red Sea. Taken in 2007.

The quiet moments we spent in our small home as a family, our routine that held us together all these years despite facing strange circumstances, provided us with the opportunity to develop our new culture, norms, and traditions as a Filipino family.

Figure 24.

Friendly Gatherings



Note. Photos of me hanging out with friends at local park and mall.

My friends from various backgrounds provided me with new insights on understanding and empathizing with others when it comes to building friendships. I learned to accept them because of our shared experience as outsiders in a foreign land. We made friendships as a result of our unusual circumstances and our ability to relate to one another on a more personal level. Our cultural differences only made our bond stronger and more valuable.

Alternating Saudi Arabia and the Philippines as our Home

Every summer, we had the privilege to travel home to the Philippines during our school break. Our school break lasts usually for a month and then we would return to Saudi Arabia before our school starts.

During our vacations in the Philippines, we try our best to spend time with my older brothers and relatives. My father usually stays for only two weeks then he goes back to Saudi Arabia for his work then we would just follow him until we finish our school break. Going back to the Philippines for vacation is enjoyable because I get to spend time with my family.

Figure 25.

Exploring Manila with the Family

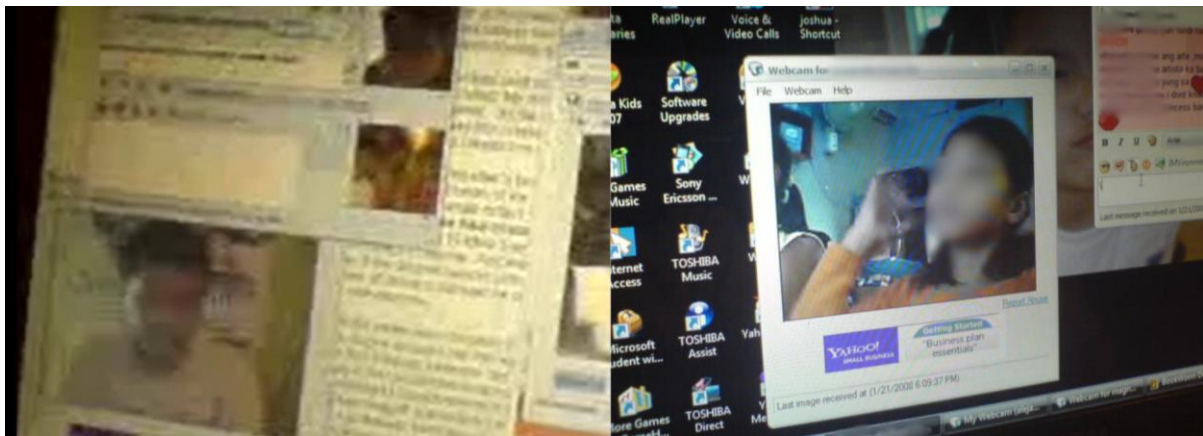


Note. Photos of me and my family during our vacations in the Philippines.

We were also constantly communicating with family via email and video chat. This was often difficult for us to do because Saudi Arabia would occasionally prohibit video conferencing or because our connection was poor. We utilize Yahoo! as a communication channel for chatting and exchanging life updates. This platform enabled us to alternate or bridge the distance between the Philippines and Saudi Arabia.

Figure 26.

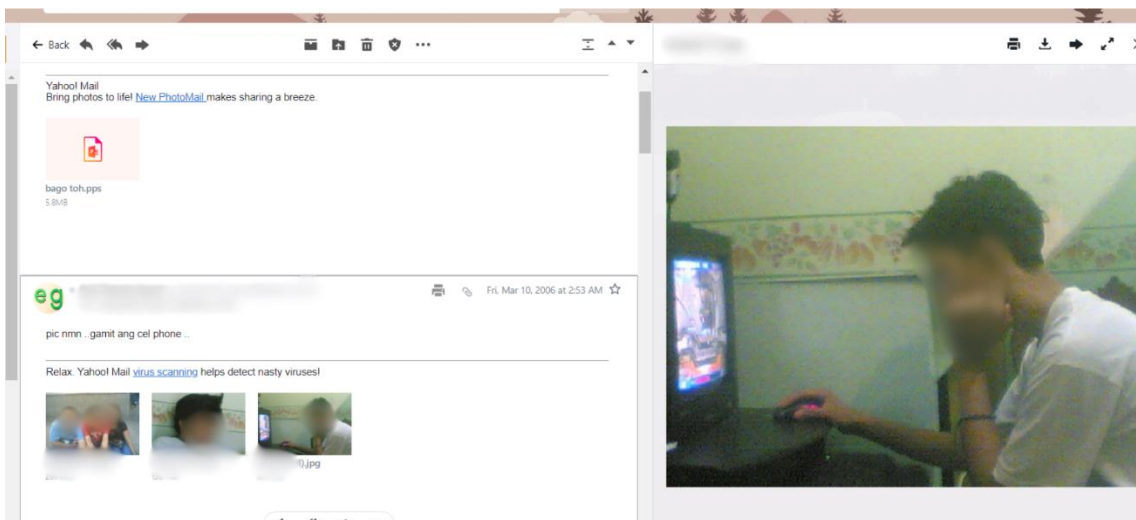
Yahoo! Chat



Note. Photos of us communicating via Yahoo! chat.

Figure 27.

Email Exchange



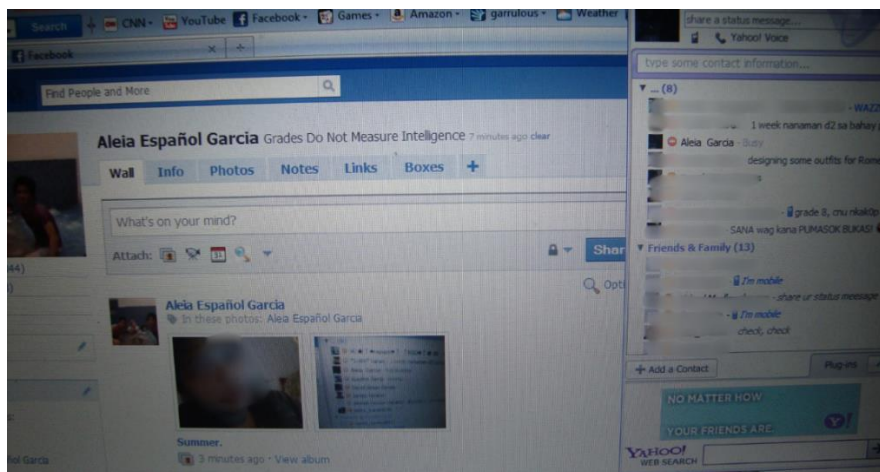
Note. Email exchange between my mother and brother using Yahoo! email.

We also used Yahoo! to exchange emails. My older siblings, who were in the Philippines at the time, would send pictures to keep us updated. Emails and video chats really alleviated our homesickness and worries about our families back home.

During my short vacations in the Philippines, I kept in touch with my close friends in Saudi Arabia via Yahoo! and Facebook. In 2009, I opened my first Facebook account, which I largely used to share images and personal updates. I was still using Yahoo! to contact friends since it was much easier, and Facebook was still relatively new, so not everyone I knew was on it.

Figure 28.

My Facebook and Yahoo! accounts circa 2010



Alternating Saudi Arabia and the Philippines as our home was quite disorienting at times but I got used to it over time. I was just always excited to go back to the Philippines and I also felt the same way leaving it and returning to Saudi Arabia.

In 2007, my parents agreed that that the girls, including myself, would stay with my mother in the Philippines while my father returned to Saudi Arabia with our brothers. We were separated for a few months. I did not like it because I did not fit in at school and was often bullied. I do remember crying a lot to my mother to convince her that I wanted to go back to Saudi Arabia and that I did not like staying in the

Philippines because of the school system. We eventually returned to Saudi Arabia and finish our schooling there.

Leaving Saudi Arabia

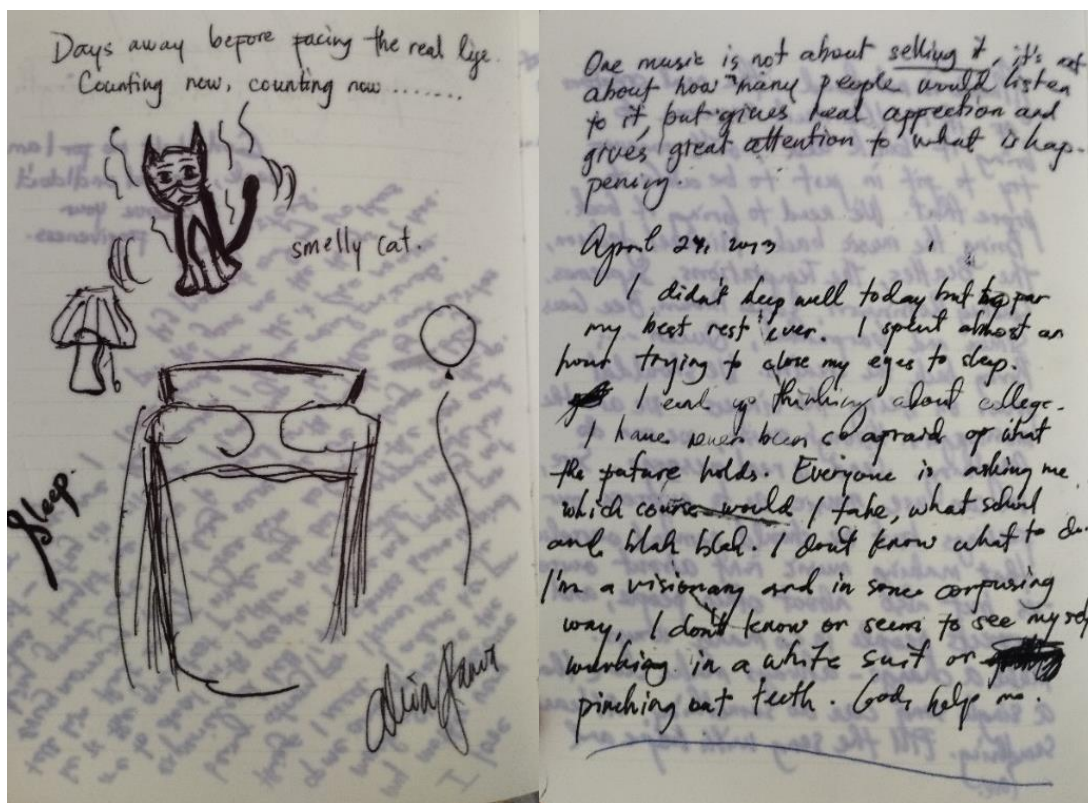
After finishing high school, I left Saudi Arabia at 16 to pursue college in the Philippines. This is the usual plan for most Filipino families living in Yanbu, Saudi Arabia. After finishing high school, one must leave the country permanently because college education in the Middle East is expensive. Most, if not all, companies only assist overseas Filipino workers with their children's education through high school. As a result, most Filipino families send their children back to the Philippines after high school, leaving them with a guardian or relative. Other families would return home with their children, leaving the father behind in Saudi Arabia.

Returning to the Philippines was tough for me because I was worried that I would not feel like I belonged and that the adjustment would be difficult especially since the majority of my family, including both of my parents, would not be physically be with me anymore. Commuting to school is something I was worried about. I was scared I would get lost and not know the proper terminology, language, or even the pronunciation of the places.

I have always kept a journal growing up but it was during this time, when I was gearing up to leave Saudi Arabia, that I started to really document each day to lessen my anxiety. Writing helped me cope with my worries about leaving because instead of keeping or rejecting my feelings of concerns, I was putting it on paper and getting it out of my chest.

Figure 29.

Personal diary entry (April 2013)

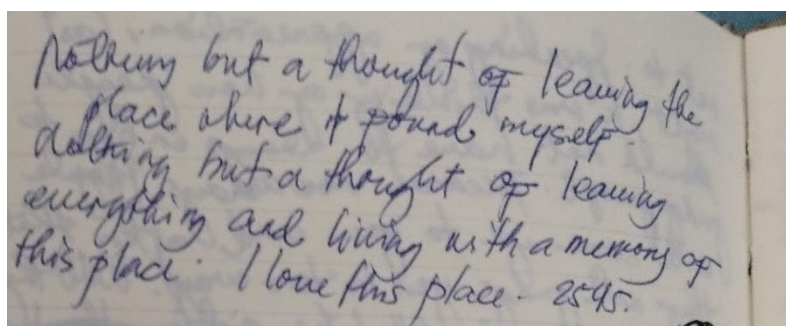


(AE: Diary Entry – April 27, 2013. Age 16)

I didn't sleep well today, but for some reason, that was the best rest ever. I spent almost an hour trying to close my eyes to sleep. I end up thinking about college. I have never been so afraid of what the future holds. Everyone is asking me which course should I take, what school, and blah blah. I don't know what to do. I'm a visionary and in some confusing way, I don't know or seem to see myself working in a white suit or pinching out teeth. God help me.

Figure 30.

Personal diary entry (2013)



(AE: Diary Entry – 2013. Age 16)

Nothing but the thought of leaving the place where I found myself. Nothing by a thought of leaving everything and living with a memory of this place. 2545.

I left Saudi Arabia in late April 2013 and returned with my family to the Philippines. Leaving Saudi Arabia was an entirely different shift since I felt as if I was disposing of every memory of the place. Goodbyes and farewells are nothing new to me as someone who is constantly in motion with time, distance, and home, yet it still feels painful every time.

Figure 31.

Family photo at the Airport



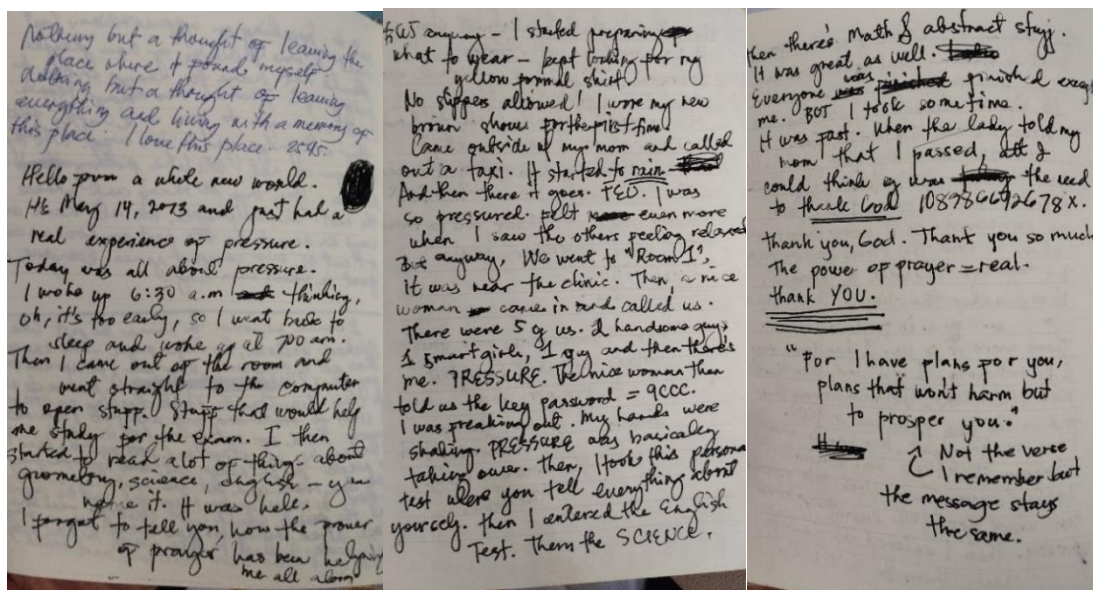
Note. Photo of my siblings and I at the Ninoy Aquino International Airport

Living in the Philippines

When I returned to the Philippines with my family, who were merely there for summer vacation, I continued to take admission examinations to get into universities.

Figure 32.

Personal diary entry (May 2013)



(AE: Diary Entry – May 14, 2013. Age 16)

Hello from a whole new world. It's May 14, 2013 and just had a real experience of pressure. Today was all about pressure. I woke up 6:30 a.m. thinking, oh, it's too early, so I went back to sleep and woke up at 7:00 a.m. Then, I came out of the room and went straight to the computer to open stuff. Stuff that would help me study for the exam. I then started to read a lot of things about Geometry, Science, English--you name it. It was hell. I forgot to tell you, how the power of prayer has been helping me all along. But anyway—I started preparing what to wear, kept looking for my yellow formal shirt. No slippers allowed! I wore my new brown shoes for the first time. Came outside with my mom and called a taxi. It started to rain. And then, there it goes. FEU. I was so pressured. Felt even more when I saw the others feeling relaxed. But anyway, we went to ROOM 1, it was near the clinic. Then, a nice woman came in and called us. There were 2 handsome guys, 1 smart girl, 1 guy, and then there's me. Pressure. The nice woman then told us the key password = 9CCC.

I was freaking out. My hands were shaking. PRESSURE was basically taking over. Then, I took this personal test where you tell everything about yourself. Then I entered the English test, then Science, then there's Math and abstract stuff. It was great as well. Everyone was finished except me. But I took some time. It was fast. When the lady told my mom that I passed, all I could think of was the need to thank God 10896672678x. Thank you, God. Thank you so much. The power of prayer = real. Thank you.

"For I have plans for you, plans that won't harm but to prosper you." Not the verse I remember, but the message stays the same.

Eventually, I chose to study film in college after my older brother urged me to pursue my passion. My older brothers, who had more experience living in the Philippines, helped me learn how to navigate my new surroundings. They taught me how to commute and assisted me in my school works.

Figure 33.

Cinematography Class



Note. Photo of me taken at the Mapua University.

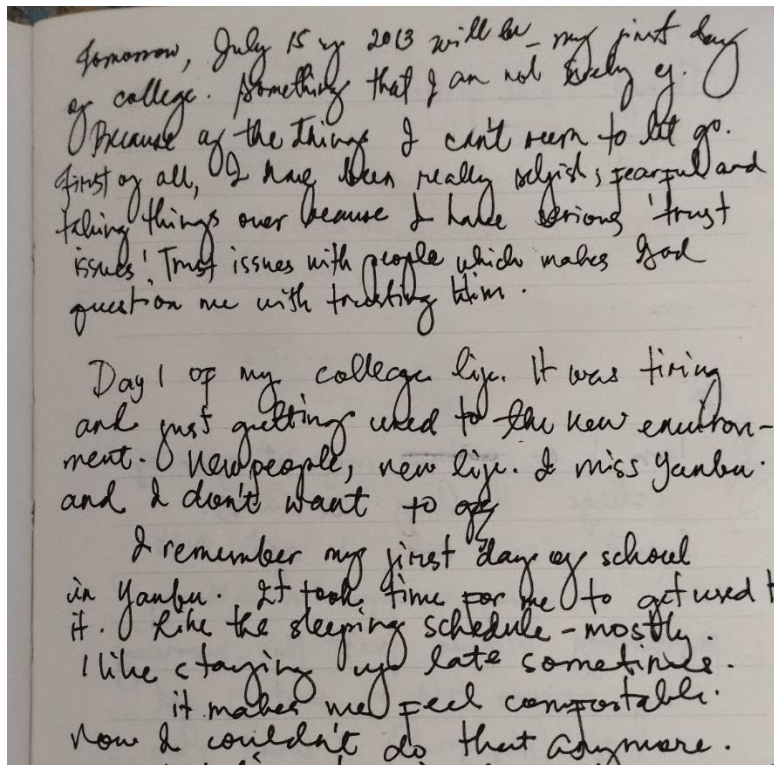
My first day of college was quite overwhelming, not just because the school is an entirely different setting, but also because everything was new to me. It was difficult for me as someone who had spent most of her youth in Saudi Arabia. I felt compelled to redo everything, particularly how I communicated with others. From jeepney drivers during commute, to strangers on the street, and classmates at school.

Moving to the Philippines and beginning a new chapter reminded me of how I felt as a young girl who went to Saudi Arabia in 2005. It is almost same, although it

differs in many ways. I felt greater pressure at 16, just because I was older and more conscious and sensitive to changes than when I was younger.

Figure 34.

Personal diary entry (July 2013)



(AE: Diary Entry – July 14-16 2013. Age 16)

Tomorrow, July 15, 2013, will be my first day of college. Something that I am not sure of. Because of the things I can't seem to let go. First of all, I have been really selfish, fearful, and taking things over because I have serious trust issues. Trust issues with people which makes God question me with trusting Him.

Day 1 of my college life. It was tiring and just getting used to the new environment, new people, new life. I miss Yanbu and I don't want to go.

I remember my first day of school in Yanbu. It took time for me to get used to it. Like the sleeping schedule mostly. I like staying up late sometimes, it makes me feel comfortable. Now I couldn't do that anymore.

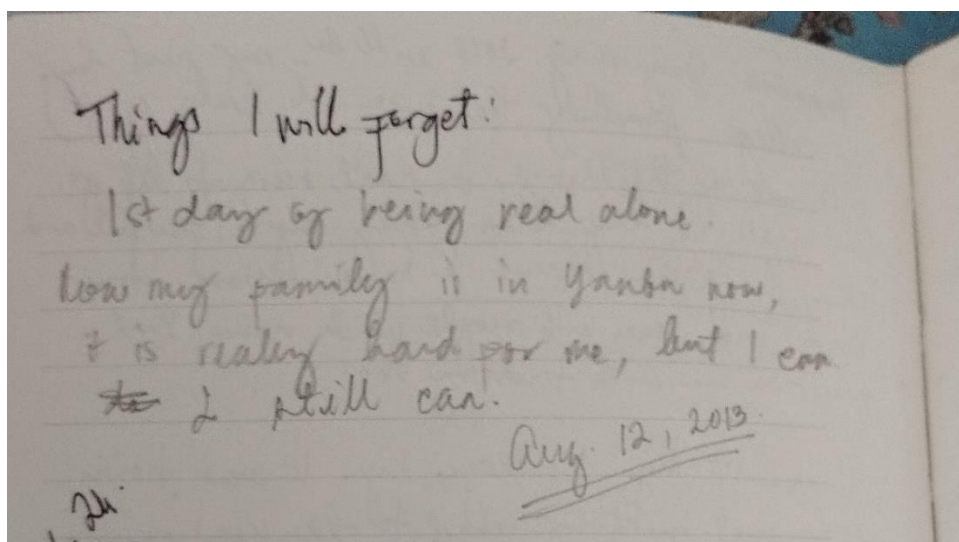
I was usually quiet at school, but I managed to make new friends. It is a good thing I opted to do something I love since it gave me something in common with my

classmates and enabled me to relate to them. I spoke Tagalog because they were all Filipinos, but the difficult thing was not the language itself, but how I could use the language to build real connections that would last the friendship and trust. In my diary that I wrote in 2013, that was one of my biggest concerns because it was a new setting and I was worried about being judged because I did not know if they could relate to me or I could relate to them.

My parents and younger siblings went back to Saudi Arabia, leaving me with my older brothers. This is a turning point for me. I was mostly sad because my family is such an important part of who I am as a person and as a third culture kid. My family served as the basis for my sense of belonging and identity because they are the most stable and permanent part of my life. Writing in my diary was a way for me to cheer myself up.

Figure 35.

Personal diary entry (August 2013)



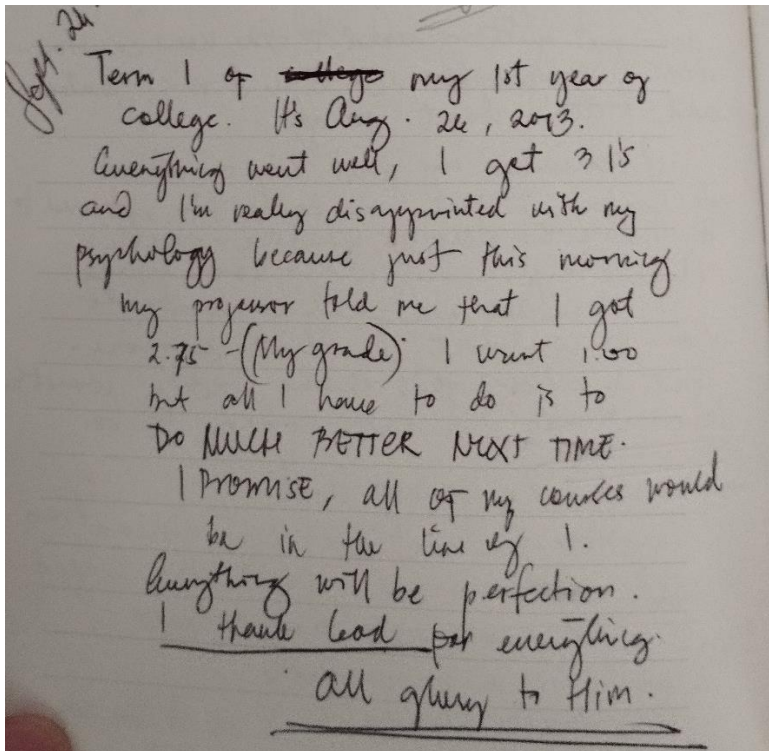
(AE: Diary Entry – August 12, 2013. Age 16)

1st day of being real alone. Now my family is in Yanbu. It is really hard for me but I can, I still can.

To deal with my sadness and the alienating feeling in my new experience, I put my attention to my studies. I was very serious with my studies and classes not just because I am passionate of what I do but I also felt that it was the only thing I can do to keep my stability and sense of identity. If I was doing good in class, it helped me build my confidence and establish my identity. Returning to the Philippines and experiencing this new environment was difficult for me but I had to believe and trust God that I was going through it for a reason which prompted me to focus on my studies and take it seriously. Making friends was important for me but because I had a hard time adjusting, I was more focused on my grades.

Figure 36.

Personal diary entry (September 2013)



(AE: Diary Entry – September 21, 2013. Age 16)

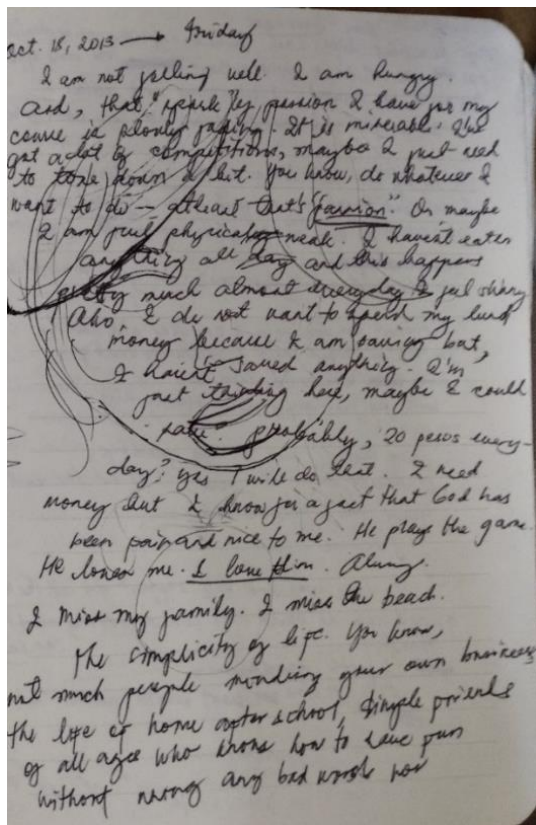
Term 1 of my 1st year of college. It's Aug. 26, 2013. Everything went well, I get 3 1's and I'm really disappointed with my psychology [subject] because just this morning my professor told me that that I got 2.75 (my grade). I want 1.00 but all I have to do is to DO MUCH BETTER NEXT TIME.

I promise, all of my courses would be in the line of 1. Everything will be perfection. I thank God for everything. All glory to Him.

My university friends are all generally decent people. Still, I felt alienated and out of place because they still speak differently than I do. I was used to Saudi Arabia's private, low-key, and more isolated environment, and because the Philippines is more open, I felt like I did not fit in.

Figure 37.

Personal diary entry (October 2013)



(AE: Diary Entry – October 18, 2013. Age 16)

I am not feeling well. I am hungry. And, that “spark” of passion I have for my course is slowly fading. It is miserable. I’ve got a lot of competitions, maybe I just need to tone down a lot. You know, do whatever I want to do---at least that’s “passion”. Or maybe I am just physically weak

I haven’t eaten anything all day and this happens pretty much almost every day. I feel skinny. Also, I do not want to spend my lunch money because I am saving but I haven’t saved anything. I’m just thinking here, maybe I could save probably 20 pesos every day?

Yes, I will do that. I need money but I know for a fact that God has been fair and nice to me. He plays the game. He loves me. I love Him. Always. I miss my family. I miss the beach. Not much people minding your own business, the life of home after school, simple friends of all ages who knows how to have fun without using any bad words—

My university classmates are mostly respectful, kind, and accepting of who I am, and as a result, I was able to learn how to adapt to the norms and traditions of the new environment, including how I communicate or talk, while remaining true to the core values that I was raised with.

I gradually adapted to my daily routine and became more at ease with my university classmates. I can identify with them because of their welcoming nature and our shared love of film. I was able to make friends who shared my ideas and experienced the same sense of seclusion as I did as a third culture kid.

There were no communication barriers at all when it came to verbally communicating with my university classmates because I speak the same language. However, it is the meaning and the emotional connection that became the barrier in relating to them because I was an outsider, not because of language, but because of my cultural experiences.

Figure 38.

Me at the Luneta Park



Note. Photo of me at the Luneta Park, 2014.

I was still missing Saudi Arabia, and I never got over the fact that I grew up differently than others, especially because my parents and younger siblings remained in the Middle East while I was in college in the Philippines. We continued to communicate via video chat and social media, and I would email my father from time to time.

Figure 39.

Screen capture of an email exchange between my father and I (2013)



(AE, Dad: Email exchange – 2013.) – English Translation

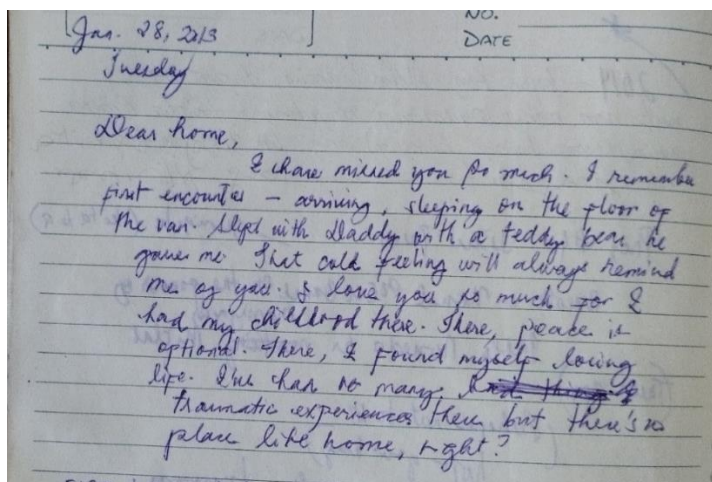
AE: Miss u.

Dad: Miss you too, dude. We've already sent the baggage home, and your Form 137 is in there. We are currently celebrating the flower festival and plan to go and take pictures tonight. I love you, my child. I loved the music video. God Bless.

Aside from talking with my family in Saudi Arabia via the internet, one thing that helped me cope with homesickness was to keep writing in my diary or notebooks.

Figure 40.

Personal diary entry (July 2014)



(AE: Diary Entry – July 28, 2014. Age 17.)

Dear home, I have missed you so much. I remember my first encounter--- arriving, sleeping on the floor of the van. Slept with daddy with a teddy bear he gave me. That cold feeling will always remind me of you. I love you so much for I had my childhood there. There, peace is optional. There, I found myself, loving life. I've had so many traumatic experiences there but there's no place like home, right?

Living in the Philippines, especially without my whole family, was difficult, but thankfully, I had my brothers with me to help me adjust to my surroundings, and I made friends who would also help me learn Filipino culture and camaraderie that I did not have in the Middle East.

I also got to experience Christmas and other holidays being celebrated more openly, which made me feel at home. I also met and spent more time with other relatives, particularly my grandmother, who lived next door to us. Despite my ever-changing environment, I never forgot who I am thanks to them and the memories I have kept alive by communicating my valued third culture experience through continuously writing in my diary, preserving home photos and videos, and talking to my family.

Settling in the Philippines

In 2016, I graduated from college, and my mother returned to the Philippines to attend. During this time, it was difficult for all of us because my mother had to return to the Philippines for my grandmother's funeral aside from attending my graduation.

My grandmother was a significant part of my life because she helped me cope with homesickness, and occasionally after I got home from university, I would go straight to her and spend the rest of the day there. We would always talk about the

past especially the time when she took care of my brothers while my parents were still in Riyadh in the 80s.

Figure 41.

PICC Graduation

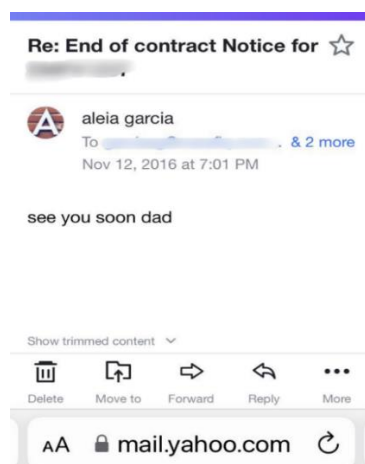


Note. Photo of me with my family at my college graduation taken in 2016.

Around this time, before my graduation, I was notified of my father's retirement and that they would eventually depart Saudi Arabia permanently. My father also emailed me a copy of his End of Contract to let us know ahead of time.

Figure 42.

Screen capture of an email exchange between my father and I (2016)



In 2017, my entire family came home to the Philippines. I was excited, but I was also anticipating a significant adjustment for our family. My parents were able to save money to buy a house apart from where we were previously staying, and we moved in straight away. My father and I explored around the neighborhood for schools for my younger siblings.

Figure 43.

Family Reunited in the Philippines



Note. Family photo taken in the Philippines circa 2018

I cannot truly express how my family felt, but as a member of a returnee OFW family, I did feel that the transition was difficult for all of us due to cultural differences and changes in the environment, particularly for my father, who had worked his entire life and is now retired.

The architecture of our new home in the Philippines reflects the influences we gained while living in Saudi Arabia. For example, our family room resembles the Middle Eastern interior design or culture, with sofa cushions on the floor and a large

carpet. The furniture also comes from Saudi Arabia. We also brought artifacts from our home and exhibited them throughout the house. As an OFW family, we never forget about what we have been through and the kind of life we lived.

Figure 44.

Our Family Room



Note. Photo of our family room. The design is influenced by the cultures and artifacts from Saudi Arabia.

In our new life as a family, we worked hard to rebuild our sense of belongingness through moving into our new home and reconnecting with our friends and relatives in the Philippines. We all accepted our situations differently, and I dealt with the changes in the same way as I did years ago when I returned to pursue college. I continued to write in my diary and make films.

The cultural adjustments we again have to make as a family was challenging for each of us but because we maintained our connection and communication with the

family left-behind through various social media channels, and maintain our Filipino cultural identities by celebrating events with other Filipino families overseas, speaking our native language at home, and having empathy for other people from different backgrounds, we are able to start over again and rebuild our sense of home.

At the age of 21, I followed in my father's footsteps and became an OFW when I relocated to the United Arab Emirates in search of work in 2018. This experience lasted a year, and I eventually returned to the Philippines in 2019 to pursue my passion for film. I was mainly interested in working on documentary films produced by non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and here is when I understood that I want to serve the marginalized communities through my passion in film

At 24 years old, I took Master of Development Communication degree at UPOU while also teaching Multimedia Arts and making films. My films usually talk about home, family and identity. My family and I are still in the Philippines; my other siblings have graduated from college, and I have older brothers who became OFWs.

Figure 45.

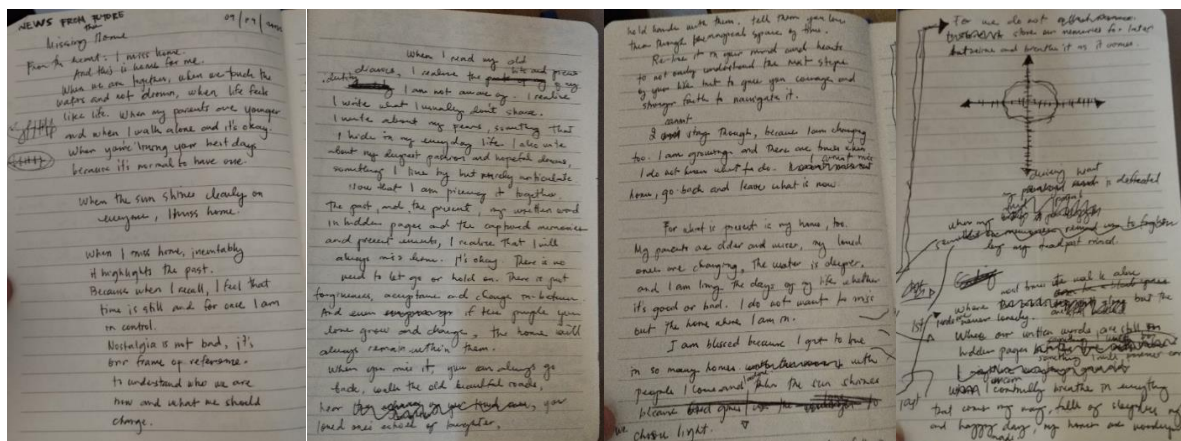
Screen capture from my film Spring by the Sea (2019)



I have accepted and embraced my third culture experience, as well as my ways of reflecting on my own and my family's treasured memories. The feeling of alienation and the fleeting nature of my sense of home and identity never went away because there was no clear and permanent home. The one closest to home was in Saudi Arabia, and now that we are no longer there, it will continue to manifest in ways that allow me to (re)shape my sense of home to belong and make others feel like they belong as well. Home is everywhere for me and it is not a physical place but a feeling that exists in me.

Figure 46.

Poem written in my diary (September 2022)



(AE: Poem – September 19, 2022. Age 25)
Missing Home.

From the heart: I miss home. And this is home for me. When we are together, when we touch the waters and not drown, when life feels like life. When my parents are younger and when I walk alone and it's okay. When you're living your best days because it's normal to have one.

When the sun shines clearly on everyone, I miss home. When I miss home, inevitably it highlights the past. Because when I recall, I feel that time is still and for once I am in control.

Nostalgia is not bad, it's our frame of reference to understand who we are now and what we should change. When I read my old diaries, I realize bits and pieces of my identity I am not aware of. I realize I write what I usually don't share. I write about my fears, something that I hide in my everyday life. I also write about my deepest passion and hopeful dreams, something I live by but rarely articulate.

Now that I am piecing it together, the past, and the present, my written word in hidden pages, and the captured memories and present events, I realize that I will always miss home. It's okay. There's no need to let go or hold on. There is just forgiveness, acceptance and changes in between.

And even if people you love grow and change, the home will always remain within them. When you miss it, you can always go back, walk the old beautiful roads, hear your loved ones' echoes of laughter, hold hands with them, tell them you love them through the magical space of time.

Realize it in your mind and hearts to not only understand the next steps of your life but to give you courage and stronger faith to navigate it. I cannot stay though, because I am changing too. I am growing and there are times when I do not know what to do. I cannot miss home, go back, and leave what is now.

For what is present is my home, too. My parents are older and wiser, my loved ones are changing, the water is deeper, and I am living the days of my life whether good or bad. I do not want to miss out the home where I am in.

I am blessed because I get to live in so many homes with people I love and I adore. The sun shines because we choose light. For we do not store our memories for later but we live and breathe it as it comes.

Where most times we walk alone but never lonely, where our written words are still in hidden pages, something I will forever carry.

I can continually breathe everything that comes my way, full of sleepless nights and happy days, my homes are wonderfully made.

Communication Experiences in my Journey as a TCK

As a Filipino TCK who grew up in Saudi Arabia and then returned permanently to the Philippines, my communication experiences have been crucial in understanding who I am, the world I live in, and the people that fill it. Communication, whether verbal or nonverbal, in person or not, continues to be a crucial aspect in helping me maintain important relationships and embrace the ongoing sociocultural shifts I face as a third culture kid.

Online communication

As a TCK, I believe that using online communication platforms throughout time has helped me retain relationships with important people in my life, such as my family and friends. Furthermore, it assisted me in preparing for and processing the transient nature of my experiences, as well as dealing with the sudden shift in my environment.

Online communication helps TCKs maintain connection

When my father moved to Saudi Arabia for his work as an Overseas Filipino Worker (OFW) in 2005 and left us in the Philippines, he spoke with my mother through email. Emailing helped me understand that my father was an OFW whose job required him to be physically separated from my life. My mother would occasionally allow me to use her email account to communicate with my father, as well as read some of his messages.

While I had no idea how things work technically, I realized that behind the words written in those emails to my mother, I have a father who, despite the distance, is an involved parent in my life. In an email I sent to him on August 9, 2005, three months before our planned departure to Saudi Arabia, it is clear that my father is no stranger

to me, and that despite the distance we had at the time, I was able to communicate with him as if he never left.

(AE, Dad: Email exchange – Aug. 9, 2005. Age 8) – English Translation

AE: Dad, this is Aleia. I love you and I miss you. Dad, do you know we don't make a mess anymore? This is Aleia. Dad, I knew you loved me from the moment I was born. I love you. You are the reason we are still alive. Flowers for you! Hugs & kisses!

As a left-behind child of an OFW parent, the physical distance is the most difficult thing to understand. However, thanks to the availability of online communication platforms, my mother's guidance and permission to use these online mediums and my father's active involvement in communicating, I was able to get to know and appreciate him both as my father and as an OFW.

My parents' use of these online platforms also pushed me not to be afraid to express my thoughts and feelings online and/or not take the chance to connect with people online for granted. For example, in my father's email response, he not only acknowledged what I wrote to him on August 9, 2005, but he took the opportunity to be open about his experiences as an OFW:

(AE, Dad: Email exchange – Aug. 9, 2005. Age 8) – English Translation

Dad: Bee, I'll be working tomorrow and the day after tomorrow, and I don't have any days off. But I have four days off after that, but my schedule has changed. Your visa has not yet been processed because it's still in _____ and they told me that I might get it tomorrow. Anyway, I have already prepared the application for family permanent/visit form and I might submit it to HR tomorrow.

My father's ability to openly talk about his situation at work through his regular online communication with my mother, greatly aided in sustaining our family connection. This also helps me understand my situation and role as a child with an OFW parent. Instead of being bitter about our physical separation, I saw my father's sacrifices, efforts, and love for us in his emails to my mother.

This is critical because many OFWs feel burdened and keep their situations private as Hechanova et al. (2021) mentioned. However, based on this finding, we can see that being open to families left-behind can help children of an OFW parent not only become aware of their work as an OFW but also appreciate them on another level.

When we moved to Saudi Arabia, I continued to use social media to communicate with relatives and family members who remained in the Philippines. We shared special events with them via Skype and Facebook. However, we still experienced limitations with these technologies due to internet connectivity or accessibility, as well as the time difference, which created a significant communication barrier between us and our left-behind family.

(AE: Chronology)

During the early years, it was hard to contact families and relatives back home in the Philippines through video chatting because of the connection and the limitations with technology. The timing also was challenging to deal with because of the time difference between the Middle East and the Philippines. But we still tried and mostly spend our time together as a family.

There are numerous restrictions and disadvantages to using online communication platforms, such as a lack of true engagement (Dunbar, 2011), but the online channels that we were able to access as a Filipino family residing in Saudi Arabia were only beneficial in terms of coping with homesickness. I have understood how crucial it is to use these online resources responsibly to preserve relationships we care about. Facebook, as recommended by Ariate et al. (2015) should still be utilized by OFW parents and children because it does help with feelings of separation.

Whenever I am on vacation in the Philippines, I continue to communicate with my friends in Saudi Arabia since I grew up there and it was an inherent decision to retain the friendships I made abroad. Maintaining a connection with my friends

overseas helps me to feel stable when my surroundings change as it can feel overwhelming at times.

(AE: Chronology)

During my short vacations in the Philippines, I kept in touch with my close friends in Saudi Arabia via Yahoo! and Facebook. In 2009, I opened my first Facebook account, which I largely used to share images and personal updates. I was still using Yahoo! to contact friends since it was much easier, and Facebook was still relatively new, so not everyone I knew was on it.

Over time, I became keenly aware of the physical separation and instability of my experiences as a TCK. It can become disorienting but frequent use of online communication platforms has reduced feelings of isolation and shock, allowing me to accept constant transitions and transformations emotionally, mentally, and culturally.

(AE: Chronology)

I was still missing Saudi Arabia, and I never got over the fact that I grew up differently than others, especially because my parents and younger siblings remained in the Middle East while I was in college in the Philippines. We continued to communicate via video chat and social media, and I would email my father from time to time.

My ties with family and friends are stronger because we utilize numerous online communication channels. It is also critical to emphasize our role as willing and active participants and users of these online platforms. TCKs and their family and friends, if unwilling to sincerely participate in online conversations, these platforms are deemed ineffective, and relationships with the people we care about can also deteriorate.

Online communication helps TCKs prepare and process

As a Filipino TCK, online communication offers a deeper purpose than simply allowing me to express and reach out to people online. They also assist me in preparing for changes and processing my third culture experiences. In an email dated

August 9, 2005, my father discussed our family visa and his plans for our family's move to Saudi Arabia:

(AE, Dad: Email exchange – Aug. 9, 2005. Age 8) – English Translation

Dad: Anyway, I have already prepared the application for family permanent/visit form and I might submit it to HR tomorrow. I am also looking for a house here that's good for our family. I can really feel that our life is going to get better, thank God.

In my chronology, I write about how I do not recall our parents sitting us down and having a big discussion about our relocation to Saudi Arabia, but based on my data collection and analysis of my father's emails, I can see that online communication platforms/social media are where I am being prepared physically, mentally, and emotionally for the sociocultural shift that transforms me into a TCK.

(AE: Chronology)

When my father left his job in Pangasinan to work overseas in Yanbu, Saudi Arabia before we joined him, my mother would share emails from my father and casually just mention that we would join him soon.

After graduating from college in the Philippines while my family remained in Saudi Arabia, my father informed me of the end of his contract and retirement by email. His email, once again, informed, prepared, and assisted me in processing their return to the Philippines, making us into a returnee OFW family.

(AE: Chronology)

Around this time, before my graduation, I was notified of my father's retirement and that they would eventually depart Saudi Arabia permanently. My father also emailed me a copy of his End of Contract to let us know ahead of time.

Simply put, it was through my father's emails that I came to comprehend that I was leaving my home country, therefore preparing me and helping me process the decision to move. Online communication through email and social media have always played an important role in notifying me about the environment and cultural shifts.

My communication experiences online provided a way to enlighten me on how to prepare for and process the changes in my life as a TCK, allowing me to keep my relationships with my family and friends stable and alive, and accept the unfamiliar situations I am placed in.

Face-to-face communication

Aside from communicating online, my face-to-face communication with my family, friends (both in Saudi Arabia and the Philippines), and other OFW families have also helped me embrace the continuous changes I go through as a TCK and alleviate disorientation and homesickness.

Face-to-face communication helps TCK accept change

Since my father was already in Saudi Arabia, it was my mother who was physically with us and was the one who did the paper work for travel and arranged our passport photos.

(AE: Chronology)

My mother, who was still in the Philippines with us, organized and processed all of our paperwork. I only have vague memories of this time, but I do recall my mother taking us to Kodak to get photographs for our passport.

Taking passport photos with our mother is a distinct memory for me, and it helped me identify when I became consciously aware of my parents' desire to move to Saudi Arabia. It is also an important part of my memory because I do not remember many things pre-departure, so being able to remember it and having original copies of the passport photos makes it feel real for me as a TCK.

On the other hand, the recall data also shows how clueless I was as a child set to leave her home country because I had no say over my parents' decision to relocate.

I did not even question it. Thus, I realize that the feeling of disorientation happened way before the move to Saudi Arabia and way before I transformed into third culture kid.

Because of my mother being physically there with us to prepare the travel documents, getting us ready for the flight and conversing with us in person about the move in a positive way, the feelings of disorientation decreased.

(AE: Chronology)

I was 9 years old at the time. On the day of our flight, I remember the nervousness, excitement and confusion I felt since there were nine children ranging from age one to thirteen, with only my mother helping us.

Instead of being fully scared of the move, I felt that my parents' decision was only normal. My parents' continuous reminders that it is a good thing for the family, as well as their readiness to relocate, reassured me that there is nothing to be afraid of about the change.

(AE: Chronology)

Moving to Saudi Arabia was a new experience for me, but I did not make a big deal about it because I never felt like I was leaving something behind, even though I knew I had just moved to an unfamiliar country.

This is not to claim that moving to Saudi Arabia was easy for me as a TCK. I still felt alienated and shocked because the place was so different from my home country, the Philippines. This echoes the sentiments of Yu (2023) who described her returning to their family house in her home country as a “home for ghosts”. However, my interactions with my siblings helped me respond to my new environment with reduced feelings of loneliness and fear.

In my timeline, I discuss going to the same school as my siblings and how, since I was not doing it alone, I was able to deal with the changes and adjustments that needed to be made. My siblings, who are also TCKs, helped shape how I approached the world and accepted change rather than rejecting it. Being able to interact with my

siblings and go through the same school together provided me strength and helped me understand the new environment I was in.

(AE: Chronology)

Having my siblings with me all the time and having a close relationship with them also helped me understand the strange situation I was in. Knowing that my siblings were going through similar experiences as I was made me feel less lonely and nervous about meeting new people.

When I returned to the Philippines to pursue college at the age of 16/17, I lived with my five older brothers, two of whom I had grown up with in Saudi Arabia, while the rest of my family remained in Saudi Arabia. The experience was difficult for me as a TCK since, after building a sense of belonging overseas, I felt that I had to restart. I was anxious since this time I would be doing it without my family. I wrote in my journal in 2013:

(AE: Diary Entry – August 12, 2013. Age 16)

1st day of being real alone. Now my family is in Yanbu. It is really hard for me but I can, I still can.

Thankfully, my brothers helped me navigate around the places in Manila and continued to communicate with me so we were able to maintain a connection. Seeing them going through the same thing also gave me the confidence to accept and go through changes in my life.

(AE: Chronology)

Living in the Philippines, especially without my whole family, was difficult, but thankfully, I had my brothers with me to help me adjust to my surroundings.

Gaining friends at university by communicating in our native language (Tagalog) and getting to know them better based on our shared love of filmmaking gave me a sense of acceptance, which allowed me to be more accepting of them.

(AE: Chronology)

My university classmates are mostly respectful, kind, and accepting of who I am, and as a result, I was able to learn how to adapt to the norms and traditions of the new environment, including how I communicate or talk, while remaining

true to the core values that I was raised with. I gradually adapted to my daily routine and became more at ease with my university classmates. I can identify with them because of their welcoming nature and our shared love of film.

I was able to focus on our similar experiences and feelings towards being an artist/filmmaker, rather than our differences in culture and core values, making our friendship more profound and meaningful. Furthermore, being able to reconnect with my relatives, particularly my grandmother, who lived next door to me, gave me a sense of belonging and gratitude for my family.

Whenever my grandmother and I talk to each other, most of our discussion would be about the past. Being able to reminisce with her allowed me to enjoy my present moment and gave me comfort that difficult times will pass.

(AE: Chronology)

My grandmother was a significant part of my life because she helped me cope with homesickness, and occasionally after I got home from university, I would go straight to her and spend the rest of the day there. We would always talk about the past especially the time when she took care of my brothers while my parents were still in Riyadh in the 80s.

As a Filipino TCK who grew up in Saudi Arabia and then returned to the Philippines, being able to interact with siblings, friends (classmates), relatives, particularly my grandmother, is something that I will never take for granted. I was able to accept what was unfamiliar to me and find a sense of home because of their willingness to take me under their wing, communicate with me, and include me in their daily lives.

When my family returned to the Philippines after my father's retirement, they bought a house for us to live in using their savings. I believe that through this action and decision, I was able to restart and regroup with my family, allowing me to gain a sense of home.

Because of my parents' leadership and efforts in regrouping us even though they are experiencing a massive shift in their lives, especially my father who has been an OFW all his life, I was able to not only accept change but find ways how to process the changes in my life which is to continue writing on my diary and make films.

(AE: Chronology)

In our new life as a family, we worked hard to rebuild our sense of belongingness through moving into our new home and reconnecting with our friends and relatives in the Philippines. We all accepted our situations differently, and I dealt with the changes in the same way as I did years ago when I returned to pursue college. I continued to write in my diary and make films.

Face-to-face communication transforms TCKs into culturally flexible individuals

When we moved to Saudi Arabia, one of the first things that my parents did was to buy the things we need like culturally appropriate clothes. As stated in my chronology of my personal experiences:

(AE: Chronology)

My father took us downtown to buy abayas, which is a loose over-garment or dress worn by women in Muslim countries. This requirement meant that I had to be wearing abaya at all times when going out in public.

My father also toured us around the city and get to know OFW families.

(AE: Chronology)

My father took us throughout the city, buying things we needed and getting to know other families, particularly Filipino families also living in Saudi Arabia. For instance, before we joined our father in Saudi Arabia, he made friends through the church he attended. Most of the families in this church were Filipino or Indian. When we arrived in Saudi Arabia, I recall visiting several of these Filipino families, making friends with other Filipino children, and getting to know them. In fact, our house came from a church member who had previously owned it.

Through our interactions with other OFW families from our church and school we were able to practice our Filipino norms, traditions, and cultures by celebration special events like Christmas and scheduling friendly gatherings. In a way, this is the

turning point in my life where I officially became a third culture kid as I was practicing both my home culture through my interactions with other OFW families, but at the same time following and adapting to the foreign cultural practices of my host country.

(AE: Chronology)

We would also celebrate Christmas with our churchmates and other Filipino families, exchanging gifts and singing/performing Christmas and worship songs.

Guison (2022) characterizes living abroad as a “rebirth” where people can explore the new world they are living in, and for me, this was the new world I was living in as a TCK. My experiences with other Filipino families lessened the feeling of separation between the home culture and host culture, as well as the physical distance I have away from my home country.

My parents also continued to speak around the house using our native language (Tagalog). Because of this, I never lost the ability to speak Tagalog and I never felt ashamed of using it around my peers at school.

(AE: Chronology)

In my early years in the Middle East, I was unable to speak the English language and though I understand them because I grew up watching American shows and movies, I just spoke Tagalog, which is my native language. Tagalog, was also the main language used around the house.

As a Filipino third culture kid, I was already noticing the changes I needed to make in my host country, such as changes in my clothing, my public behavior, and the physicality of our environment, but these factors did not bother me as much as I felt that I could process this internally on my own.

If there is one thing that I was pressured about, it was my inability to speak the English language during my first year in Saudi Arabia. I feel compelled to learn and not just be a passive listener and receiver so there was a lot of pressure to adapt quickly so that I can relate to them.

(AE: Chronology)

The overwhelming feeling I had was primarily caused by my encounters and communication with other people, particularly those from foreign backgrounds such as Saudi Arabia, Pakistan, India, Egypt, Korea, and Malaysia. Aside from the fact that I am innately shy, the language barrier was difficult for me because I had to communicate in English. I felt out of place most of the time.

Thankfully, because of the school's positive and welcoming approach to everyone at school, I gained the confidence to practice my Filipino cultural identity openly, without shame, and opened my eyes and heart to other cultures too. I not only learned about other cultures but gained an appreciation from them. Over time, I learned to speak in English and decrease the language barriers between us.

(AE: Chronology)

Despite our differences at school, I felt that the school system and management allowed me to express my Filipino cultural values and practices, while also reminding us to respect other cultures, particularly the Arab culture. Through various activities and gatherings, inside and outside the school, we learned about each other's cultures, and simply enjoy each other's company. I believe that because we are all outsiders and third culture kids, we relate to one another, which has helped us establish the trust necessary for friendships.

I learned to speak English over time, and it would serve as our universal language, allowing us to communicate with one another. I grew closer to my friends, gained respect for how they carry out their personal lives. Through our interactions and discussions regarding our personal situations, I discovered they are not different from me at all.

(AE: Chronology)

My friends from various backgrounds provided me with new insights on understanding and empathizing with others when it comes to building friendships. I learned to accept them because of our shared experience as outsiders in a foreign land. We made friendships as a result of our unusual circumstances and our ability to relate to one another on a more personal level. Our cultural differences only made our bond stronger and more valuable.

While my family communicated in our native language (Tagalog) and followed Filipino traditions and norms at home, they also helped me adjust to the host culture in the most seamless way possible. They not only taught us how to behave in public but also made it common for us to hear Arabic around the house. It was not forced; it was just simply practiced.

(AE: Chronology)

My father, on the other hand, understands the Arabic language and would occasionally teach us. Certain Arabic words are heard around the house. For example, instead of saying "water," he would say "moya," which is Arabic for water.

As a result, it would be usual for us to hear such words in Arabic and every time I hear them now as a TCK living in the Philippines, I would only feel nostalgic since they remind me so much of my childhood. My father still uses Arabic phrases and words around us to this day. It also became normal for me to switch languages depending on who I am talking to.

(AE: Chronology)

At school, I would mostly communicate in both English and Tagalog to my Filipino classmates and teachers but at home, I would usually speak Tagalog to my siblings and parents.

When I returned to the Philippines, there was not much of adjustment when it comes to language because I retained my ability to speak Tagalog. Because of this, I was able to talk to my classmates at the university with ease. It was tough to connect with them because of our differences in our core values and cultural experiences, but because of the shared language, this became a bridge in getting to know them deeply.

This finding is consistent with Neely's (2019) study, which implies that TCKs relate to others based on their lived experiences rather than simple characteristics like similar birthplace, age, and so on. As a TCK, I have learned that speaking the same language does not always guarantee meaningful relationships.

(AE: Chronology)

There were no communication barriers at all when it came to verbally communicating with my university classmates because I speak the same language. However, it is the meaning and the emotional connection that became the barrier in relating to them because I was an outsider, not because of language, but because of my cultural experiences.

After my father retired and my family returned permanently to the Philippines, turning us into a returnee OFW family, my father and I would discuss rebuilding our lives. Like we had experienced when we tried to rebuild our life in Saudi Arabia in 2005, my father did the same thing by getting to know the immediate communities and neighborhood.

Since I had gained more experience living in the Philippines, I was motivated to assist my parents in guiding my younger siblings, who are also TCKs, to find a sense of belonging in their home country. We started by looking for schools for them.

(AE: Chronology)

In 2017, my entire family came home to the Philippines. I was excited, but I was also anticipating a significant adjustment for our family. My parents were able to save money to buy a house apart from where we were previously staying, and we moved in straight away. My father and I explored around the neighborhood for schools for my younger siblings.

My chronology of my personal experiences, as well as some of my archived data, showed how online communication (mediated and unmediated) and face-to-face communication, helped me cope with the transient state of my life as a TCK. Though two types of communication are very different from one another, both gave positive ways in maintaining a sense of continuity in my cultural identity and home.

Through online communication and/or utilization of online platforms, I was able to maintain and preserve important relationships particularly with my family and friends, as well as help me prepare and process the consistent mobility I experience

with or without my family. This echoes Ariate et al.'s (2015) recommendations for using social media as a communication tool for OFW families.

I acknowledge that my communication experiences will continue to evolve because of my cultural experiences. According to Wang et al. (2011), the connection between communication and culture is complicated and personal. Culture develops through communication and is a natural result of social interactions.

Furthermore, Rabiah (2018) describes culture as the foundation of communication. As a TCK, my communication experiences and skills may feel inconstant due to the transitory nature of my environment(s). However, these experiences have helped me value my Filipino cultural identity, embrace other cultures, and recognize the importance of communication in maintaining a sense of home and belongingness through consistent communication with my family and friends, verbal or nonverbal.

Figure 47.

Communication embedded in my journey as a Filipino TCK

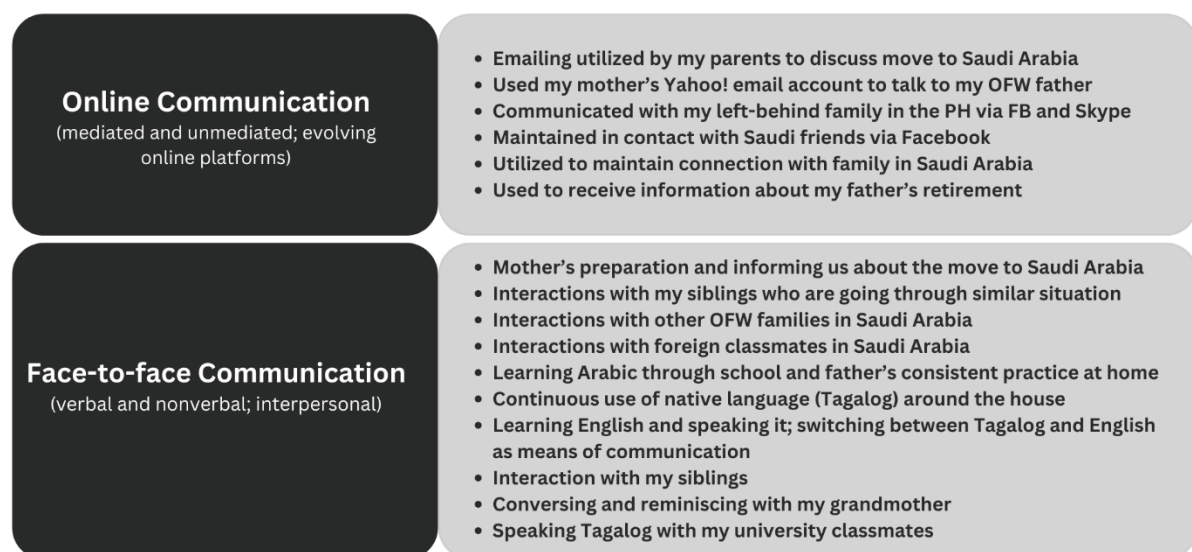
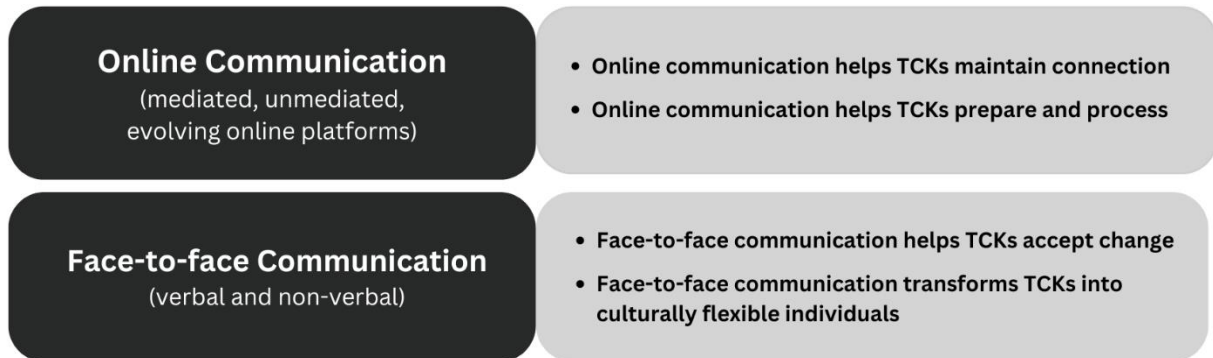


Figure 48.

Effects of communication embedded in my journey as a Filipino TCK



In this table, I summarized the various sources of communication, the messages we exchanged, the channels we used, and their influences on my knowledge, attitude or emotions, and behavioral responses (Table 1).

The table shows the predominance and the importance of my family as co-communicators (parents and siblings) in various modes – face to face, mediated, and through social media in recent years.

Table 1.*Summary of my communication experiences as a TCK*

Source/Co-communicator	Message (Verbal and Non-verbal)	Channel	Response
Mother and children	Did paper work for travel; took children for passport photos; Converse about the relocation to Saudi Arabia.	Face-to-face	Priming us children of impending move to Saudi Arabia.
Parents	Updates on preparations.	Mediated (Yahoo! email)	Priming of impending move to Saudi Arabia.
	Continued to speak Tagalog around the house and with us in Saudi Arabia.	Face-to-face	Continuous use of Tagalog language.
	Continued talking to them and updating them about my college experiences.	Social media	Maintained relationship which lessened feelings of separation.
	Provided a good house in the city hence removing misconceptions about Saudi Arabia.	Interpersonal	Reassurance of a good home to stay and group up in; gave us a sense of a united family.
	In 2017, upon returning to the Philippines, parents bought a house with their savings. We moved right away.	Interpersonal	

Father and me	Updates on visa processing and preparation for family's relocation to Saudi Arabia; looks for family home; expressed love; instructions on the house repair in the PH.	Mediated (Yahoo! email)	Priming of an impending move to Saudi Arabia; Understands nature of father's work as an OFW.
	Introduced us to other families; especially other Filipino families.	Face-to-face	Continuous practice of Filipino cultural traditions.
	Speaking certain Arabic words around the house and occasionally teach us to speak and understand the Arabic language.	Face-to-face	Adapting to the Arabic language making it normal for us to hear the language; therefore, accept it.
	Informed about retirement.	Yahoo! email	Priming of an impending return to the Philippines.
	Trip around Yanbu City, Saudi Arabia to buy things we need for school; abaya.	Interpersonal	Change of clothes to make us one with the community.
	Emailing back and forth about the baggage coming to the Philippines and sending the contract and letter about his retirement.	Yahoo! email	Priming of impending return to the Philippines upon retirement.

	My father and I explored the neighborhood to look for schools for my younger siblings.	Interpersonal	Helped us start over again in the Philippines as a returnee OFW family and get to know the community.
Left-behind relatives/family	Using video chat when celebrating Christmas and special holidays.	Facebook; Skype	Helped adjust to new surroundings and lessened feeling of
Siblings	Siblings went to the same school in Saudi Arabia and maintained a close relationship.	Face-to-face	disorientation and loneliness.
	After returning to the Philippines for college, my younger siblings and parents remained in Saudi Arabia. We continued to communicate via video chat and social media.	Facebook; Skype	Helped adjust to new surroundings and lessened feeling of disorientation and loneliness.
	Older brothers living in the Philippines far longer than I have taught me how to commute, and assisted me in adjusting to the environment and with my school works.	Face-to-face	Helped adjust to new surroundings and lessened feeling of disorientation and loneliness.

Other OFW families	Interactions with them during Christmases, birthdays and friendly gatherings.	Face-to-face	Alleviated disorientation and homesickness; also maintained Filipino cultural traditions.
School	Activities and events that allows us to practice our diverse cultures.	Face-to-face	Developed friendships with others; enabled communication and understanding of classmates in a more personal way.
	Instructed us to keep quiet during prayer time.	Face-to-face	
	During flag ceremonies, we would recite all of the national anthems of the Philippines, Saudi Arabia, Pakistan, India, and more.	Face-to-face	
	Class size became smaller over the years.	Face-to-face	Gained understanding and appreciation for both home culture and host culture.
	Taught Arabic and Filipino subjects.	Face-to-face	
	School architecture more like a house.	Interpersonal	Felt like there was no divide between the school and house.
Saudi friends	Continued to communicate with them online whenever I take vacations in the Philippines and/or when I returned permanently to the Philippines.	Facebook; Yahoo!	Maintained relationship with people I met overseas.

Filipino classmates	Communicated with them using Tagalog and English.	Face-to-face	Learned how to switch between Tagalog and English.
Foreign classmates (Arab, Pakistan, India, Egypt, Korea, and Malaysia)	Communicated with them in English.	Face-to-face	Learned how to communicate with them and their families, and appreciated diversity but they always change so my ways of communicating also evolved.
	Interaction through gatherings outside the school; being able to visit their own houses to do school works, witnessing their family traditions and culture.	Interpersonal	
Grandmother	Occasionally after I got home from the university, I would go straight to her and spend the rest of the day with her. We would always talk about the past, especially the time when she took care of my brothers while my parents were in Riyadh in the 80s.	Face-to-face	My grandmother was a significant part of my life because she helped me cope with homesickness.
Myself	Started documenting my experiences on my journal, especially when I returned to the Philippines from Saudi Arabia.	Diary	Helped process alienation, disorientation and prepared me for cultural changes and transitions.

University Classmates (Filipinos)	I communicated with them primarily in Tagalog and learned about similarities in our lives, as some of them are from the province and/or are going through a significant transition as a college student.	Face-to-face	I felt accepted and reassured about who I am as a college student and enabled me to be more accepting of them as well.
---	--	--------------	--

Communication's Role in Re(producing) TCK Culture and Identity

Third culture kids who are exposed to cultures different than their own, experience major sociocultural transitions and transformations as a result of repeated changes in the lives.

As a Filipino TCK who grew up in Saudi Arabia and later returned to the Philippines permanently, I have learned a lot from my communication experiences that help influence and shape how I view myself and others and the larger world.

In my case, the cultural components that (re)created my culture as a TCK and yet a Filipino are the language we spoke, the multi-platform communication with my family members, my interactions with fellow Filipinos, the institutions around me, the rituals we practiced, the norms we followed, the traditions we maintained, and the cultural values we upheld (Table 2 and Figure 13). These factors helped me traverse 'in between worlds' of both Saudi Arabia and the Philippines.

Language

Language is a key factor in TCKs for building meaningful relationships. Language, whether Tagalog or English, has allowed me as a Filipino TCK to relate to people from various cultural backgrounds as well as gain appreciation for those who are from the Philippines.

As a Filipino TCK who grew up in Saudi Arabia and arrived incapable of communicating in English, I learned how to relate to my foreign friends by first realizing our cultural differences through observation and interactions.

I have gotten to know my classmates better over time because of their shared third culture perspective and experience of being a foreigner in the same unfamiliar country. I realized I was also a foreigner to them, which motivated me to learn English to communicate with them and better comprehend what they verbally share. Language came in second since I learned to speak English as a result of my interaction with them and exposure to the language through various communication channels.

Meanwhile, my parents continued to speak our native language (Tagalog) at home, and I was free to do the same wherever I went. Because of this, I gained confidence in using Tagalog through consistent practice, first with my family and subsequently with other Filipino friends/TCKs, and it instilled in me the importance of not losing the ability to speak it. If I lose it, I believe I would be unable to communicate with my family and other Filipino friends as effectively as I would like.

The continued use of Tagalog also reminded me of my cultural identity. As someone who grew up in Saudi Arabia, my host country, hearing Tagalog reminded me of who I am and where I belong. When I hear someone speak Tagalog in a public place, I immediately feel less lonely.

Aside from English, I would also learn to read and write Arabic, as required by the school. However, I do not fully understand it. My father would also speak Arabic phrases and words around the house, which I grew accustomed to hearing.

Learning the language of my host country helped me not only to respect the language but also to appreciate my native language, as I witnessed how dedicated my host country is in ensuring they teach their language to the visitors of their country. As a result, I learned to perceive my native language as more than just a skill that I can do, but also as a skill that I am willing to share with others who do not speak it.

When I returned to the Philippines, I met and formed new friendships. Despite being able to communicate in the same language (Tagalog), I did not feel immediately at ease or accepted. However, because of our shared language, I was able to make more of an effort to get to know them and bond over our personal experiences.

As I have gotten older, I have learned how to instantly switch languages depending on who I am interacting with. Furthermore, my third culture experiences have influenced my communication skills and language use because I have met people from other cultures, and my communication experiences with them have provided me with endless opportunities to learn how to adjust to their preferences and present myself through language.

As a TCK, language remains to be an important tool for communicating and developing connections. Relating to others through shared lived experiences can inspire and encourage to use a certain language. Communication, through language, (re)shapes my understanding of the world and the people around me. Therefore, as a third culture kid, I have a broad and ever-changing viewpoint on the world and the people around me as a result of the constant change in language use.

Multi-platform communication

My parents used email as their primary means of communication, and I was able to communicate with my father through it. Using my mother's account, I would occasionally send emails to my father, who would respond. Seeing my parents communicate via email and allowing me to send emails to my father gave me a sense of understanding for his work as an OFW. Instead of feeling lost and looking for my father who is physically absent, I gained a sense of understanding of where he is and why he is not with us.

My Filipino cultural identity is also preserved and developed by being in contact with left-behind families/relatives in the Philippines via the Internet. These interactions have helped me tighten my grip on my native cultural identity even more, because as a TCK who was growing up in Saudi Arabia, I am constantly looking for ways to define home, and even though my moments with them are mostly via Facebook, it gave me a sense of belonging and therefore reshaping how I create my ideas of home.

When I returned to the Philippines, I utilized the internet to communicate with my family who remained in Saudi Arabia. My experience with using online communication platforms for many years has trained me enough to depend on it when coping with homesickness.

As a TCK who moves around a lot and experiences a variety of unforeseen and unfamiliar situations, the people I rely on are not always physically present, so being able to communicate with them online provides me comfort and encouragement to face challenges with compassion and acceptance. Using communication platforms that continue to evolve over the years, I was able to maintain valuable relationships adapt and feel a sense of belonging despite the physical distance.

However, there are still limitations I have experienced with using the internet as our mode of communication and because of this, I have found writing to be an effective tool to express my sadness in a healthy way. Writing on my journal helped me express my emotions and homesickness, validated it and process the disorientation I was experiencing as a TCK.

(AE: Diary Entry – July 28, 2014. Age 17.)

Dear home, I have missed you so much. I remember my first encounter--- arriving, sleeping on the floor of the van. Slept with daddy with a teddy bear he gave me. That cold feeling will always remind me of you. I love you so much for I had my childhood there. There, peace is optional. There, I found myself, loving life. I've had so many traumatic experiences there but there's no place like home, right?

Writing as a means of communicating one's thoughts aids in expressing and recognizing sudden shifts in the environment and surroundings. As a TCK who returned to my native country after growing up abroad, it was difficult for me to accept my situation and the changes I needed to make. Writing in my diary allowed me to process my experiences in a healthy way, and rather than rejecting the abrupt cultural and environmental transition, I was able to embrace it because I recognized the worth of my experiences when I began writing about them.

(AE: Poem – September 19, 2022. Age 25)

Nostalgia is not bad, it's our frame of reference to understand who we are now and what we should change. When I read my old diaries, I realize bits and pieces of my identity I am not aware of. I realize I write what I usually don't share. I write about my fears, something that I hide in my everyday life. I also write about my deepest passion and hopeful dreams, something I live by but rarely articulate.

Because of the utilization of email, Facebook, Skype, and other communication platforms, as well as writing on my journal, I found ways to accept and embrace change and (re)shape my idea of my third culture identity and home in a positive way.

Institutions

Having a good support system which includes my family, friends, and institutions (e.g. school and church) helped me mold my cultural identity as a Filipino and determine what home feels like, rather than defining what it is.

My family's openness in allowing me to practice my home culture by meeting other Filipino families and embracing my host culture by showing respect to the cultural difference and following the norms, have provided me with the balance I need for redefining my home. Their simple approach to ensuring that we have a good upbringing in Saudi Arabia and giving us a space to know who we are as Filipinos while adapting to other foreign cultures out of respect and love has taught me to value the significant effect of people in my life as a TCK.

Because of my family, the process of communicating who I am to people as a Filipino TCK has become more meaningful. Never forgetting our experience as an OFW family in Saudi Arabia has (re)shaped my perspective on the transient nature of my home. Instead of dreading it, I have learned to cherish and embrace my consistent yearning for what home is as a TCK.

Furthermore, my school and church provided a safe space for me to practice my Filipino traditions while also respecting foreign cultures and norms. Through friendly gatherings and organized events, I felt a sense of security and acceptance which molded me to be more accepting and flexible too when it comes to other TCKs.

As a college student in the Philippines without my family, my older brothers, my grandmother, and friends helped me manage my anxieties about being back in my home country. Through them, I was able to transition smoothly without being in denial about my homesickness and fear of starting over again.

As a TCK, my communication experiences with my family, friends, and the institutions in which I am placed in, such as the school and the church, have enabled me to face the sociocultural changes I go through with acceptance, gratitude, and optimism.

Rituals

My religious rituals included consistent prayer, going to church on Sundays, celebrating holidays like Christmas with a focus on God by singing worship music, doing bible studies at home, and writing prayers in my notebooks and talking to God. All while honoring and respecting the prayer rituals practiced in Saudi Arabia.

As a TCK, I gained a lot from the many adjustments I had to make in my communication experiences; yet, I also lost a lot of confidence along the way as caused by failures in some of my efforts to connect with people with different cultural backgrounds or core values. I also felt that my efforts of building relationships do not matter sometimes because of the transient nature that I was used to as a TCK.

These failures and my worries taught me to rely on God and instead of dealing with communication experiences based on how much confidence and strength I have, which varies from time to time, I put my faith in God in making my interactions with people I meet more meaningful. This also means that I am able to understand if there are times where I cannot really feel a sense of belongingness in a group of people and still think of those experiences as valuable to my personal growth, instead of blaming myself or others.

Because I was able to practice my religious beliefs in a place like Saudi Arabia, where religious practices are strictly restricted, I have learned to accept people who come from different religious backgrounds and respect their right to practice their faith.

I also learned to have a lot deeper trust in God because I practiced and found it in an environment where it is not as widely accepted. As a result, I carried this with me everywhere I went, particularly when I returned to the Philippines, where I was able to be more open and less conscious about my faith while not forcing it on others or viewing it as a barrier to developing meaningful relationships.

As a TCK, my sense of home is also always evolving, and the timeline and my diaries show how much I want to define it. Because of prayer and my relationship with God, I am able to let go of my fears and anxieties and stop trying to identify or pinpoint where home is for me.

When I returned to the Philippines, I felt nervous about starting again and meeting new people. As a TCK, the most difficult part is always the transition period, which is filled with goodbyes. As a TCK, I was able to embrace the 'new worlds' in a fruitful way due to my relationship with God and continuous practice of prayer.

(AE: Diary Entry – May 14, 2013. Age 16)

Hello from a whole new world. It's May 14, 2013 and just had a real experience of pressure. Today was all about pressure... when the lady told my mom that I passed, all I could think of was the need to thank God 10896672678x. Thank you, God. Thank you so much. The power of prayer = real. Thank you. "For I have plans for you, plans that won't harm but to prosper you." Not the verse I remember, but the message stays the same.

Norms

Because I spent the majority of my youth in Saudi Arabia as a Filipino TCK, the norms I grew up with were based on both my home culture and host culture. Women in Saudi Arabia wear Abayas, a loose over-garment, and tarhas, to hide cover their hair as part of their norms, traditions, and religious beliefs.

I was so used to wearing abayas that when I returned to the Philippines, I could not wear shorts or anything that showed skin. I would always wear pants. This was a

culture shock for me since I thought it was too much to display skin, and I also felt like I was breaking a rule when I did.

However, because I spent vacations in the Philippines, communicated with my left-behind family/relatives via online chat, and spent a significant amount of time with other Filipino families in Saudi Arabia, the notion of always needing to wear it faded over time.

Wearing an Abaya was also a tangible transition for me as a TCK, as it introduced me to my host country's culture and served as my first demonstration of willingness to adapt and belong. It represents how TCKs' communication experiences manifest not only in how they communicate and interact with others but also in how they represent themselves physically according to the rules and norms of their host culture. As a TCK, my transformations manifested not only internally but also externally where people can see and get a glimpse of what I have been through.

Traditions

To retain our traditions as an OFW family in Saudi Arabia, my father would take us to the park, the Red Sea, and Yanbu Lake. This family tradition or routine made me appreciate my family and my temporary home even more because my parents instilled in us a love for our host country (Saudi Arabia) by taking us to these places and form memories there.

My parents' determination to take us to these places and enjoy the experience shaped how I depict and/or represent Saudi Arabia in my interactions with others. When people ask me about it, I always relate my memories of these places, sometimes clearing up some of the preconceived assumptions about the country.

As a TCK, these traditions influenced how I see the world, and learned that there is always an opportunity to create a sense of home, even in places that are unfamiliar to me.

Cultural Values

As part of a Filipino family in Saudi Arabia, I continued to celebrate Christmas and other holidays that are not usually done in the Middle East. I can keep these cultural values through my online communication with my left-behind family in the Philippines and interactions with other Filipino families.

Furthermore, I have gained love and respect for my family by engaging with them via numerous platforms from wherever I am. I also continued to develop my appreciation for my home culture by spending our vacations in the Philippines, performing and displaying our Filipino culture to other foreigners and educating them about it, as well as speaking Tagalog and watching Filipino television.

These cultural values have helped me approach individuals from diverse cultures and keep a strong sense of self as a TCK. In my situation, I have learned to preserve my own Filipino cultural identity while also adjusting to other cultures out of appreciation and respect.

Because of the constant change and adjustment that comes with being a TCK, I have learned to find balance and meaning in all of my communication experiences through the cultural values that have been instilled in me. I am a TCK who has learned to value one's Filipino cultural identity, accept and welcome other cultures, and recognize the shared link between two cultures.

This realization empowers me as a TCK, to (re)create my cultural identity and home by communicating empathy and acceptance through language, institutions, rituals, norms, traditions, and cultural values.

As a TCK, home is a present feeling that exists in me simply because it was also communicated to me by the people who care about me. It is not about a certain place.

As I have shared in my diary about home:

(AE: Poem – September 19, 2022. Age 25)

For what is present is my home, too. My parents are older and wiser, my loved ones are changing, the water is deeper, and I am living the days of my life whether good or bad. I do not want to miss out the home where I am in.

I am blessed because I get to live in so many homes with people I love and I adore. The sun shines because we choose light. For we do not store our memories for later but we live and breathe it as it comes.

Where most times we walk alone but never lonely, where our written words are still in hidden pages, something I will forever carry. I can continually breathe everything that comes my way, full of sleepless nights and happy days, my homes are wonderfully made (p.99)

After all is said and done, I can provide a summary (Table 2) of how my communication experiences, both verbal and nonverbal, aided my adjustment as a TCK in traversing my passport culture (Philippines) and my second culture (Saudi Arabia). I include communication as it has progressed from mediated communication, to face-to-face, beginning with my parents' Yahoo email, and progressing to the social media platforms we use to communicate with family members and friends. I was able to express and document my experiences by writing them in my diary.

Table 2.

Summary of the cultural components that have emerged from my communication experiences as a TCK

Cultural Components	Communication Experiences
Language	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• I was unable to speak English and mainly spoke Tagalog which is my native language.• Learned how to relate to my friends by embracing our cultural differences and shared third culture experiences and not mainly because of language.• I learned English by interactions with friends and exposure to American TV, shows.• Taking Arabic classes as part our curriculum in school which helped me learn how to read and write Arabic.• I continued using the Tagalog language with my Filipino classmates and teachers.• Exposure to the The Filipino Channel (TFC) helped me maintain my Filipino cultural identity through consistently hearing the Tagalog language.• I spoke Tagalog with my university classmates in the PH but did not make connection right away, but the shared language pushed me to make an effort to get to know them better.• My father who understands the Arabic language would sometimes speak it around the house and incorporate it through our conversations.

Communication

- Evolving communication channels: Yahoo! mail then to the social media (Facebook, email, video conferencing etc.) we use to connect to family members and friends/ schoolmates.
- Face-to-face communication: Conversations with family members and friends which helped me cope with disorientation and homesickness.
- Continued use of email and Facebook video chat to connect with left-behind family in the Philippines; difficult to maintain because of time difference and Saudi Arabia rules on video chat and internet.
- Connecting to the host country: During my short vacations in the Philippines, I would remain in contact with my friends in Saudi Arabia. In 2009, I opened my first Facebook account which I largely used to share images and personal updates.
- Continued use of email and Facebook to talk to my family who remained in Saudi Arabia while I was a college student in the Philippines.
- Writing memories: Aside from talking to my family in Saudi Arabia via the internet, one thing that helped me cope with homesickness was to keep writing in my diary or notebooks.

House/family

- As an OFW, my father was eager to bring us Saudi Arabia to give us a “good life” and worked on the travel documents and family visa.
- As the one who is mostly physically present, my mother helped and organized travel documents in the Philippines by taking our passport photos and traveling with us, her nine children and just her.
- My father took us around the city, buying things we need and get to know other Filipino families living in Saudi Arabia.
- In Saudi Arabia, my daily routine remained the same and I was always with my family.
- I went to the same school as my siblings and it helped me cope with the nervousness about meeting new people because I realize I am not doing it alone.
- In the PH, my older brothers and my grandmother were the ones who helped me cope with homesickness and anxiety for being back in my home country.
- After my family returned to the Philippines due to my father’s retirement, as a Filipino family who lived in Saudi Arabia, we never forgot about the life we lived. We designed our home with influences from Saudi Arabia.
- My father’s eagerness to get to know the community in the Philippines gave me an opportunity to assist my younger siblings. My father and I looked for a school for them.

Church

- At church, we were able to practice our religious belief in a discrete way and hold numerous outdoor gatherings that not only highlight our beliefs but form a camaraderie and a sense of unity with other families who are going through the same experiences as my family.
- We would celebrate Christmas with our churchmates, exchanging gifts and performing Christmas and/or worship songs.

School

- Our school follows the Philippine curriculum and included subjects like Saudi History and Arabic which is a requirement.
- The events and activities at school gave me a chance to get to know my classmates personally, as sometimes I would go to their houses to practice.
performances/presentations for school
- We would hold flag ceremonies on Wednesdays and sing the national anthems of each country we represent.
- Despite our differences at school, I felt that the school system and management allowed me to express my cultural views while reminding us to respect other cultures, particularly the Arab culture. Everyone related to one another because are all outsiders in the host country and this helped build trust.

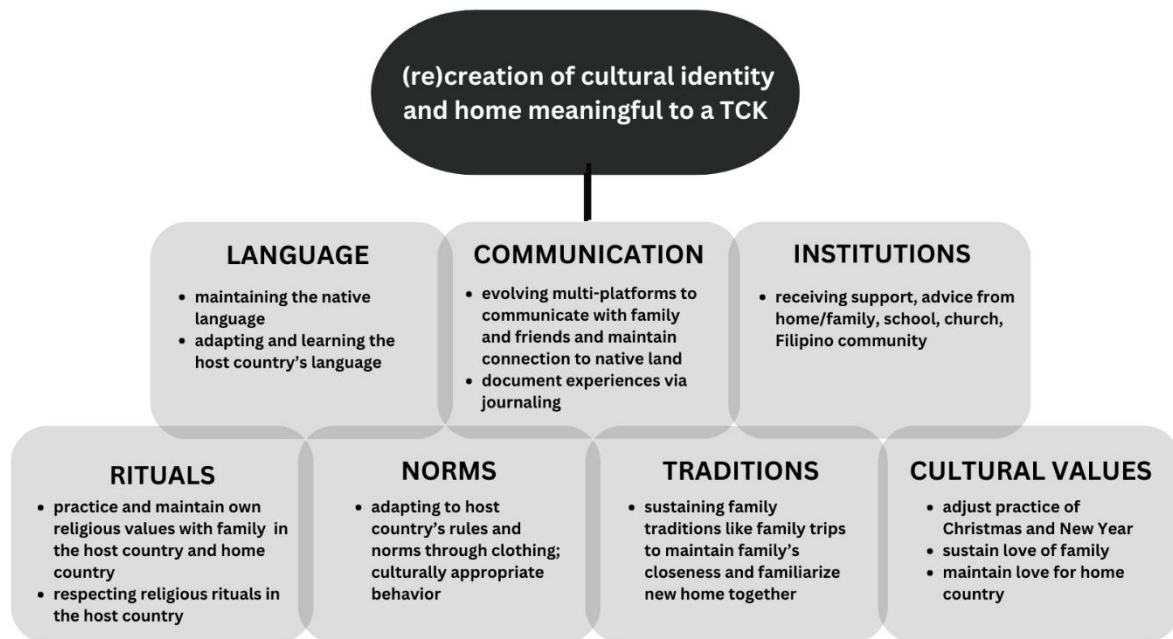
Religious rituals

- My classmates would change from time to time as some would transfer to other school or go back to their home countries which then affect how I communicate with people.
- Our school setting also did not feel like a school because of the architecture and structure are houses turned into schools. It felt like there was no divide between my house and school.
- As a student, we were able to organize events that celebrate my Filipino culture, like performing Tinikling, a Philippine folk dance, in our graduation.
- In 2013, when I returned to the Philippines to pursue college, it was difficult to relate to my classmates but eventually formed a bond with them through our shared love for filmmaking which is our major.
- Prayer time in Saudi: During prayer time, we are instructed to observe silence in respect for those who are praying.
- We would pray together as a family and go to church on Sundays as well as do bible studies at home.
- On Christmas, aside from singing and performing Christmas songs, we would sing worship songs.
- Usually I would write prayers on my journals; some of my diaries are prayer journals: "I forgot to tell you, how the power of prayer has been helping me all along. Thank you, God. Thank you so much. The power of prayer = real. Thank you."

Norms	Clothes: Wearing of abaya in Saudi Arabia and freedom of wearing shorts in the Philippines: transformed me physically as the abaya reminded me of the restrictions and differences between Saudi Arabia and my home country.
Traditions	Tours and/or trips: On my father's off days, he would take us to the park, Red Sea, or Yanbu Lake.
Cultural values	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aside from birthdays and special family occasions, we still celebrate holidays that are not customary or allowed in the Middle East, such as Christmas and New Year. We would simply gather and throw a huge feast, eat, and continued to communicate with families and relatives back home via email and video conferencing. We would also celebrate Christmas with churchmates and other OFW families and perform Christmas/worship songs. • Love of family: We constantly communicated with family using various platforms. • Connecting to native land: We get to spend our vacations in the Philippines, performed traditional Filipino folk dances at school in Saudi Arabia, continued to use the Tagalog language, watching Filipino shows.

Figure 49.

Socio-cultural factors embedded in my communication experiences as a TCK



It is crucial to emphasize that by maintaining my Filipino cultural traditions, norms, practices, and language, I have built a stronger foundation for my cultural identity as a TCK. Speaking my native language (Tagalog) and continuing to practice my Filipino cultural practices, norms, and traditions with my family and other OFW families increased my love for my home country and cultural history.

Knowing one's own cultural identity helps TCKs express who they are in global culture, making their transition and adjustment much more seamless. Instead of feeling lost when adjusting to different cultures and environments, I become more mindful and intentional because I am aware of who I am as a Filipino. I become more aware of my native cultural identity, and thus more knowledgeable and appreciative of other foreign cultures, customs, and traditions.

This not only helps TCKs adjust, but it also makes them become glocal citizens that are fundamental to the global culture. Steger and James (2019) define cultural globalization as the global exchange of ideas, meaning, and values to broaden and strengthen social relationships.

As a TCK, I can say that my experiences with language, communication, people, norms, and traditions over the years have been (re)shaped over and over again through communication. Therefore, TCKs, in essence, are glocal citizens whose abilities and skills gained from their third culture experiences can strengthen global social relationships. TCKs are therefore effective communicators capable of approaching the world and their surroundings with empathy, maturity, an open mind, and better language skills (Wells, 2020).

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION, IMPLICATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

This study explored how communication has been interwoven in my third culture experiences as a member of an OFW family who lived in Saudi Arabia and how these communication experiences allowed me to (re)shaped my concept of home and identity as a third culture kid, who now lives in the Philippines. The research questions are the following:

1. How is my journey as a Filipino third culture kid growing up in Saudi Arabia and as a member of a returnee OFW family in the Philippines?
2. How did communication embed in my journey as a Filipino third culture kid growing up in Saudi Arabia and as a member of a returnee OFW family in the Philippines?
3. How did communication (re)create my cultural identity, as well as concept of home as a Filipino third culture kid growing up in Saudi Arabia and as a member of a returnee OFW family in the Philippines?

Looking through the lens of sociocultural tradition, this study explored how my experiences as a Filipino third culture kid (re)shaped my concept of home and cultural identity through communication. Socio-cultural tradition explores how our perceptions, meanings, norms, roles, and customs are produced via interactions with people (Littlejohn & Foss, 2011), and consequently produce, and reproduce culture and

realities. It is also based on the idea that people reproduce culture through communication (Griffin, 2000).

Autoethnography was used as the main research method to write and analyze the timeline of my third culture experiences in Saudi Arabia and my experiences after returning to the Philippines permanently. An evocative autoethnography is used. According to Polous (2021), evocative autoethnography enables the author to write and produce research texts that recall vivid imagery, deep meaning, and sometimes overwhelming emotions, resulting in a fuller depiction of the world and its people. It helps the autoethnographer find self-disclosure in the emotional aspect of their personal experiences which allows the reader to emotionally connect with the story (Cooper & Lilyea, 2022).

Using personal memory data as my primary source partnered with personal artifacts such as photos, videos, and diary entries for credibility and further self-analysis of my personal experiences, a retrospective timeline was written. The timeline included the periods of time when I moved with my family to Saudi Arabia, my third culture experience in Saudi Arabia while also being able to go on vacations in the Philippines, my experience when I stayed for a year in the Philippines and then returned to Saudi Arabia to finish high school, leaving Saudi Arabia after graduating high school and returning to the Philippines for good to pursue college, and lastly when my family returned to the Philippines after my father's retirement.

A narrative analysis was also utilized to analyze my personal memory data, timeline, and artifacts attached to the personal narrative. Narrative analysis is an instrument for interpreting and assessing stories that individuals tell about their experiences (Riessman, 2008), allowing researchers to better understand the social,

cultural, and historical contexts that form these experiences (Sandelowski & Barroso, 2003).

The highlights of the finding are summarized as follows:

My Journey and Communication Experiences as a TCK

As a Filipino child from an OFW family who relocated to Saudi Arabia at the age of nine and became a TCK as a result, my communication experiences have always evolved and adjusted based on where I am, the people I am with, the language we use, and the available channels of communication accessible to me.

Growing up in Saudi Arabia, my communication experiences were both accepting and disorienting because I was able to practice my native language while also having to comprehend different languages in order to form relationships with others. However, the people around me, such as my parents, siblings, and friends, as well as the institutions (school and church) where I was placed, were instrumental in providing me with an environment in which I could freely communicate and express in my native language while also learning to value and respect others who did not speak the same language.

Returning to the Philippines for college at the age of 16, was also a huge adjustment for me as a TCK since, despite being back in my home country, I felt the need to adjust how I communicated and interacted with others. I had to learn to be more open with my conversations with my classmates and the people around me while remaining loyal to who I am. Fortunately, the majority of my friends are very accepting, and because of their lived experiences, I was able to focus on that and establish a relationship around it, rather than our differences in personalities and communication abilities.

The utilization of social media, emailing and/or the internet has also enabled me to maintain my relationship with family and friends. Before moving to Saudi Arabia, I was communicating with my father via email, using my mother's email account. Because of this, I became aware of the demands of my father's situation as an OFW, and the physical distance it requires. This helped me recognize and prepare for what is to be the transient nature of my home as a TCK, and face the seemingly never-ending adjustments and changes we go through as an OFW family.

The use of modern technology and social media was beneficial, as this was the primary communication avenue for reaching my distant family. My older brothers and grandmother, who were with me in the Philippines, also helped me cope with homesickness and estrangement by constantly talking to and spending time with me. Writing on my diary also helped me communicate my frustrations, loneliness, as well as document my experiences as a TCK.

My family's permanent return to the Philippines due to my father's retirement required several sociocultural adjustments yet again, but my experiences of the constant shifting of home have equipped me and my family to start afresh and adapt as our communication experiences evolved.

As a Filipino TCK from a returnee OFW family from Saudi Arabia, my communication experiences can be disorienting because I innately adjust how I communicate and express myself to people. However, it also taught me how to overcome the communication barriers I face daily to create more meaningful relationships with those around me, by grasping the importance of valuing our shared experiences and embracing cultural differences.

My parents' efforts to teach all of us not to forget our roots by continuing to practice our Filipino culture, norms, and traditions wherever we go helped me develop

a strong sense of Filipino cultural identity. They also taught me how to adapt and continually shift between cultures, allowing us to remain open and receptive to the variety of cultures around us.

For example, even after we relocated to Saudi Arabia, my parents continued to practice and speak Tagalog, our native language. My siblings and I were able to preserve our ties to our mother tongue since we were free to speak Tagalog every day. Aside from environmental and communication differences, we did not have to make numerous adjustments when interacting with our left-behind family and friends back home in the Philippines because we never lost our ability to speak Tagalog.

On the other hand, learning to speak and completely grasp English was necessary to build connections with others, especially my foreign friends. After being exposed to American TV shows and films, as well as my daily interactions with the locals and friends, I learned how to speak English, serving as our universal language.

The institutions such as the school and church, as well as my family and friends, educated me how to accept the cultural differences while also encouraging me to express my Filipino identity. Events and simple gatherings at school, such as singing the national anthems of every country we represent, helped me become more conscious of other people's cultural identities.

My parents, who have been OFWs for most of their lives and spent many years in the Middle East before our move to Saudi Arabia in 2005, have prepared us and taught us how to act in public to respect the people and their norms. My introduction to Saudi Arabia for instance was when my father bought us culturally appropriate clothes (Abaya) as a form of respect for the host country's rules and traditions. Additionally, my parents encouraged us to appreciate the surroundings and public

places by frequently visiting the Red Sea, Yanbu Lake, parks, and other public areas. Because of this family tradition, I felt at home even though everything was unfamiliar.

Returning to the Philippines for college was a huge change for me after living in Saudi Arabia for so long. I gradually accepted my situation and began to appreciate the transformation I was experiencing. I have found friends because of our shared love for filmmaking and family. When my father officially retired and my entire family returned to the Philippines for good, we were able to mix and apply the cultures we have gained from our experiences in Saudi Arabia.

As a TCK, my communication experiences taught me to value both my Filipino identity and other cultures that are foreign to me. This included practicing speaking my native language, spending time with other OFW families, reconnecting with distant family members back home, and enjoying Filipino cultures and traditions with other OFW families, consistently practicing our traditions that are not often recognized in the Middle East. Furthermore, I was raised to respect and appreciate various cultures by learning about their norms and practices firsthand.

Communication Experiences

Communication has been essential in preserving my cultural identity as a Filipino while adapting to other cultures. It has evolved from mediated to face-to-face, starting with my parents' Yahoo email and proceeding to the social media platforms we use to interact with family and friends. Writing in my diary allowed me to express and document my experiences as a TCK, which in turn, also helped (re)shape my cultural identity and concept of home.

Communication, through meaningful interactions, is also made possible by the trusted individuals and institutions that TCKs have in their experiences. A TCK's most

significant source of support is his or her family. My family, particularly my parents, helped me keep my Filipino cultural identity and learn how to adjust to different foreign cultures.

To keep our Filipino cultural identity, my family continuously communicated in our native language (Tagalog), met with other OFW families to celebrate Filipino traditions and customs, and used communication channels and technologies like social media to reach out to left-behind families in our home country. On the other hand, we were taught to accept foreign practices by simply adjusting to their cultures, norms, traditions, and laws. My parents ensured that we had the freedom to express our Filipino cultural identity while also maintaining discipline and respect for what was unfamiliar to us.

Through the utilization of online communication platforms, I can contact my family and friends at any time using email, video conferences, and social media. This helped me cope with homesickness and the constant sense of isolation I experienced as a TCK. It was also through this that I maintained in touch with my left-behind family/relatives in the Philippines while in Saudi Arabia. Christmas, for example, is not openly celebrated in the Middle East, so we celebrate quietly at home, but we can also enjoy it the Filipino way, as openly as possible, with our family back home online.

Interacting with other OFW families on holidays and free days also allowed me to practice Filipino traditions, customs, and norms. The role of institutions such as schools and churches also allowed me to practice my Filipino traditions, norms, and customs by allowing me to speak both my native language (Tagalog) and English at the same time, celebrating events that recognize my native Filipino cultural traditions and history, and practicing my religious beliefs while respecting the religious practices

of others. The consistent swapping of language, behavior, and approach to my environment transformed my cultural identity to be more open and flexible.

Institutions like schools and churches play an important role in embracing one's own beliefs and cultural identities as well as recognizing other cultural differences. This can be accomplished by organizing events and simple gatherings that recognize cultural differences and teach us to be courteous and open with one another. Creating a safe space for individuals to express their cultural backgrounds helped us connect, despite our differences.

Furthermore, the physical architecture of our house, school, and church also served to alleviate my sense of alienation as a TCK. It was made to feel more like a home, which I believe helped me accept my circumstances because it was less intimidating and more open.

Communication has also helped me gain a greater understanding of other people's cultures and adjust to their customs by the consistent reminders of my parents, teachers, and elders. My communication experiences as a TCK expands over time and becomes dynamic enough to create meaningful relationships through interactions while respecting cultural differences.

I have gained empathy from my communication experiences for the people surrounding me. This ability to comprehend and value in our shared experiences regardless of whether we share the same culture, has guided me in how I transition in between cultures as a TCK.

(Re)creating Cultural Identity and Home as a TCK Through Communication

Looking back on my timeline and the patterns that have emerged from my narrative, I have come to understand how my cultural identity and concept of home

have evolved over time as a TCK who grew up in Saudi Arabia and as a TCK who returned permanently to the Philippines.

My cultural identity and sense of home have undoubtedly been influenced by the constant shifts in my communication experiences as a TCK over the years. It also emphasized the importance of communication in establishing a sense of belonging during and after third culture encounters, which has an impact on my perception of home and identity.

Using personal memory data as a basis for constructing my timeline, as well as going through home pictures, videos, and diary entries, helped me understand how I formed a particular picture of my home and how it transformed as I grew older. Because of this experience, I have greater regard and gratitude for my family and friends, who have had a significant impact on how I (re)create my cultural identity and concept of home.

(Re)creating my concept of home and identity would not have been possible without the guidance of my family, friends, and institutions who have played significant roles in my life as a TCK. As I have grown older, I have gained a deeper appreciation for my family and friends' guidance in how I navigate myself in what is unknown to me. They are instrumental in (re)shaping my concept of home and ourselves. My story would not have been complete without them.

As a TCK, redefining home and identity can be challenging and disorienting. Surrounding ourselves with reliable people can help us stay on course. These people whom we can trust serve as a guiding light, pointing us in the direction of defining home as something we always have, even if the physical form is lacking and transient by nature.

Furthermore, having a strong sense of belonging and an understanding of one's native culture, as well as learning to adapt to various cultures, aids TCKs in (re)creating one's identity and confidence in transitioning to the global culture.

Learning to adapt and use a universal language for connecting with people, such as English, helps develop ties while reducing communication barriers through verbal, nonverbal, face-to-face, and online communication. I have also learned the value of preserving my original culture since, like others, I am a foreigner in their third cultural experience, and I should embrace my Filipino identity, even more, to help advocate our home culture to a global audience.

Communication built on empathy and love and expressed through language, institutions, rituals, norms, traditions, and cultural values is an important process that have helped me (re)create my cultural identity and home.

Conclusion

Communication, whether verbal, nonverbal, in person, or online, plays an important role in shaping my concept of home and identity as a TCK. First, it was largely through online that I learned about the nature of my father's work as an OFW, and later it became more face-to-face. As a Filipino TCK, I would still experience the transient feeling as I navigate myself in the world I am facing.

While there are many communication difficulties and challenges, communication must be consistent in whatever shape it takes to maintain one's pursuit of a sense of home and identity. Communication must be fluid and continuing, rather than static as redefining home and identity through my communication experiences is a continuous process that I must live with. Using social media and even a simple pen and paper (e.g., diaries, journals) can help TCKs begin or maintain vital

relationships. It also helps TCKs learn who they are and how they progress as individuals, preventing them from feeling stuck and disoriented in unfamiliar situations.

Having a good communication support system (especially the family), preserving one's home culture, and being respectful to different cultures make defining home and identity less overwhelming for TCKs. Communication fueled by empathy and love, brings up endless possibilities to (re)create a deeper meaning of what home is and who I am as a TCK. Home is simply a feeling that exists within us that we can share with others despite our differences. Home is now, with the people we love, whether together or apart.

My native culture as a Filipino preserved through continued use of our native language (Tagalog), frequent interactions with other Filipino families abroad, and the use of social media or the internet to communicate with distant relatives, as well as my communication experiences with cultures that are foreign to me, further influenced my communication skills and cultural identity to become more flexible, adaptable, and driven by empathy. These acquired abilities garnered from my experiences as a TCK have taught me to adjust and shift between cultures, as well as to holistically equip me to blend in with global society.

Sharing my own experiences as a TCK aims to alleviate the alienation that many third culture kids face, particularly those who belong to returnee OFW families who are currently residing in the Philippines. Writing about my journey as a TCK not only helped me cope but also provided me with valuable insights into how these third culture experiences may help us understand and embrace the uniqueness of our narratives about migration, diaspora, cultural identity, and the concept of home.

Implications and Recommendations

This study contributes the following implications to the current literature on TCKs and emphasizes the significance of exploring the third culture experiences of Filipino children from returnee OFW families, which could be valuable in the future.

(Re)creating Home and Identity as a Continuous Process for TCKs

TCKs' communication experiences will always be inconsistent and unpredictable, therefore their (re)creation of home and identity will evolve continuously. As a Filipino TCK, my experiences have been difficult to deal with because they can be disorienting at times; however, accepting that switching between cultures and learning to adapt to the changes is a necessary part of blending in has encouraged me to be intentional with making it more of a meaningful experience.

Meier (2015) argues that TCKs embody a wider purpose. TCKs represent not only their cultural identities but also the various interpretations of the home they have experienced. As a result, it is vital to understand how TCKs define and redefine "home." Having a good support system, preserving one's home culture, and being respectful to different cultures make it less overwhelming for TCKs to define their home and identity.

A Good Support System of Relationships is Vital

A TCK's family, friends, and mentors can play an important part in establishing their sense of home and identity. Constant communication, whether in person or not, can help TCKs feel heard and secure as they navigate unfamiliar situations.

As a TCK, choosing the right people in our social circle can positively impact our sense of home and identity. Thus, it is critical to always look back at the people

who have only brought positive change to us and helped us be more mature, open, and empathetic. Acknowledging them throughout our lives can inspire us to provide a good support system to other TCKs as well.

Preserving One's Native Culture is Important

Furthermore, having a strong sense of belonging and an understanding of one's native culture, as well as learning to adapt to various cultures, aids TCKs in (re)creating one's identity and confidence in transitioning to the global culture.

I have also learned the value of preserving my original culture since, like others, I am a foreigner in their third cultural experience, and I should embrace my Filipino identity, even more, to help advocate our home culture to a global audience.

(Re)creating home and identity for TCKs is an arduous process that never ends, but it is also an invaluable experience that trains them to be more empathetic, caring, and effective communicators who can positively contribute to the global society.

Stories of TCKs from OFW Families is Valuable to Development Communication

This research not only gave me a greater understanding of my own experiences as a Filipino third culture kid, but it also helped me understand the experiences of other Filipino third culture kids affected by migration. In my review of the literature, I noted that migration is not a new phenomenon and that poverty is one of the main reasons of migration.

My parents decided to move to Saudi Arabia because they wanted a better life for us. It was not a decision based on want or comfort but on the need to provide for their children. Understanding this, first and foremost, from the study, can help development workers, communicators, and policymakers view third culture kids from

OFW families with greater empathy and examine how language, communication, norms, traditions, institutions, and cultural values shaped them and their communication experiences.

Organizations focusing on Filipino migration can also provide further assistance, educating and/or orienting OFWs on bringing their children overseas and what to do after they return to the Philippines, to ensure that OFW families/Filipino TCKs are prepared and educated about the emotional, mental, and cultural impact they go through abroad.

Since only a few studies are focusing on Filipino TCKs, the findings of this study may provide additional relevant insights that may be used to improve development projects or initiatives aimed at OFW families and Filipino third culture kids.

Suggestions for Future Research

- Filipino third culture kids, according to Ichimura (2019), deal with the kind of alienation in their own home country too, because of the fear that they might not be Filipino enough. The alienation that Filipino third culture kids struggle with, particularly those from returnee OFW families, is important to explore since it addresses not only their third culture experiences in their host country but also how they deal with it when they return to their home country. How Filipino TCKs adjust and navigate in their home country has an impact on local culture as well as the Filipino migration. This can be explored further in future studies.
- Looking at other stories of TCKs, especially when told in the first-person, can help researchers gain a deeper understanding on how language, communication, institutions, rituals, norms, traditions, and cultural values

become instrumental in (re)shaping a Filipino TCK's concept of home and identity. Writing about it, using autoethnography as a method, empowers Filipino TCKs about their important role in the local and global society.

- Autoethnography is more than just sharing personal experiences; it is also a tool for insiders to study their specific environment and involvement, as well as develop their perceptions of that community (Español, 2022). It would be an interesting concept to focus on a specific community of OFW families whose children are classified as third culture kids and see if they share the same understanding of their third culture experiences.
- A phenomenological method and thematic analysis to identify patterns and contrasts in the opinions, reflections, and views of third culture kids from the same OFW family could also be explored.
- Third culture kids from returnee OFW families that lived in other countries other than the Middle East can be studied.
- Third culture kids from OFW families, from the perspective of an OFW parent can give a different perspective.
- Third culture kids from OFW families born in the host country and who have to go back to their native countries as teens can also be explored.

REFERENCES

- Abbadia, J. (2023, August 2). Proficient Narrative Analysis: A Comprehensive Step-by-Step Guide. *Mind the Graph Blog*.
<https://mindthegraph.com/blog/narrative-analysis/#:~:text=The%20inductive%20method%20for%20narrative,categorie s%20based%20on%20emerging%20themes>.
- Abenir, M. A. D. (2019). Towards enhancing capabilities of children of Overseas Filipino Workers to sustain resilience and mitigate vulnerabilities. *Philippine Journal of Social Development*.
- Adams, T. E., Jones, S. H., & Ellis, C. (2015). *Autoethnography: Understanding Qualitative Research*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Adams, T. E., & Manning, J. (2015). Autoethnography and Family Research. *Journal of Family Theory and Review*, 7(4), 350–366.
- Ahrndt, S. (2020). Intercultural Communication. *Open Educational Resources Collection*. 24. <https://irl.umsl.edu/oer/24>
- Albao, M. (2018). A comparative study of the retirement confidence level between domestic workers and OFW as linked to their job commitment. *Journal of Administrative and Business Studies*, 4(3). <https://doi.org/10.20474/jabs-4.3.2>
- Almendral, A. (2018, December). 10 million Filipinos endure hardship abroad as overseas workers. *Magazine*.
<https://www.nationalgeographic.com/magazine/article/filipino-workers-return-from-overseas-philippines-celebrates>
- Allen-Collinson, J & Hockey, J (2008). Autoethnography as ‘valid’ methodology? A Study of disrupted identity narratives, *The International Journal of Interdisciplinary Social Sciences*, 3 (6): 209-217.

- Alunan-Melgar, G., & Borromeo, R. (2002). The Plight of Children of OFWs. In E. Dizon-Añonuevo & A. T. Añonuevo (Eds.), *Coming Home: Women, Migration and Reintegration* (pp. 106–114). Manila, Philippines: Balikbayani Foundation, Inc and Atikha Overseas Workers and Communities Initiatives, Inc.
- Andes, S. (2013, March 3). *Do children understand why their parents leave?* | *Global News*. INQUIRER.net. <https://globalnation.inquirer.net/66355/do-children-understand-why-their-parents-leave>
- Apuke, O. D. (2018). ANOTHER LOOK AT MAPPING THE TERRITORY: SEVEN TRADITIONS IN THE FIELD OF COMMUNICATION THEORY. *International Journal of International Relations, Media and Mass Communication Studies*, 4(2), 20–27.
- Ariate, R. J., Cruz, R. J., Dimaculangan, J., & Tibayan, C. A. (2015). THE ROLE OF FACEBOOK IN SUSTAINING RELATIONSHIP AMONG FAMILIES OF OFW. *LPU Laguna Journal of Arts and Sciences Communication Research*, 2(1).
- Artico, C. I. (2003). *Latino families broken by immigration: The Adolescent's Perceptions*. LFB Scholarly Publishing. ISBN: 978-19-312-0263-3
- Asis, M. M. (2006). LIVING WITH MIGRATION. *Asian Population Studies*, 2(1), 45–67. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17441730600700556>
- Atos, L. N. P., Cruz, E. M., Hong, S., Kim, S., & Soliven, M. J. (2022). More than Heroes: Life Challenges and Goals of Overseas Filipino Workers. *4th DSLU Senior High School Research Congress*. https://animorepository.dlsu.edu.ph/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1069&context=conf_shsrescon
- Auwalu, A. I., Yunusa, M., & Garga, F. Z. A. (2015). The Meaning and Theories of Intercultural Communication. <https://doi.org/10.13140/RG.2.2.14026.36806>

- Bacigalupe, G., & Lambe, S. (2011). Virtualizing intimacy: Information Communication Technologies and transnational families in therapy. *Family Process*, 50(1), 12–26. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1545-5300.2010.01343.x>
- Bălățescu, S., Strózik, T., Soo, K., Kutsar, D., Strózik, D., & Bacter, C. (2023). Subjective well-being of children left behind by migrant parents in six European countries. *Child Indicators Research*, 16(5), 1941–1969. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12187-023-10054-w>
- Barbara, J. (2001). *The Handbook of discourse analysis*: Malden, USA: Blackwell Publishing.
- Bautista, A. G. M., & Tamayo, V. T. (2020). Life challenges of overseas Filipino workers. *OAlib*, 07(10), 1–9. <https://doi.org/10.4236/oalib.1106854>
- Bennett, M.J. (2019, May 20). *Intercultural Communication – IDR Institute*. IDR Institute. <https://www.idrinstitute.org/resources/intercultural-communication/>
- Berger, R. (2013). Now I see it, now I don't: Researcher's position and reflexivity in qualitative research. *Qualitative Research*, 15(2), 219–234.
- Berry, J.W. (1997) Immigration, Acculturation, and Adaptation. *Applied Psychology: an international review*, 46, (1), 5-68.
- Berry, J. W. (2005). Acculturation: Living successfully in two cultures. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 29(6), 697–712. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijintrel.2005.07.013>
- Besio, K. (2009). Autoethnography. *Elsevier EBooks*, 240–243. <https://doi.org/10.1016/b978-008044910-4.00405-3>
- Bhugra, D., & Becker, M. A. (2005). Migration, cultural bereavement, and cultural identity. *World Psychiatry: Official Journal of the World Psychiatric Association (WPA)*, 4(1), 18–24. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC1414713/>

- Bochner, A. P., & Ellis, C. (1996). Talking over ethnography. In C. Ellis & A. P. Bochner (Eds.), *Composing Ethnography: Alternative Forms of Qualitative Writing* (pp. 13-45). Walnut Creek, CA: Alta Mira Press.
- Bochner, A. P., & Ellis, C. (2022). Why Autoethnography? *Social Work & Social Sciences Review*, 23(2), 8–18. doi.org/10.1921/swssr.v23i2.2027
- Bologna, C. (2020). What Happens To Your Mind And Body When You Feel Homesick. *HuffPost*. https://www.huffpost.com/entry/what-happens-mind-body-homesick_n_5b201ebde4b09d7a3d77eee1
- Botezat, A., & Pfeiffer, F. (2014). The Impact of Parents Migration on the Well-Being of Children Left Behind: Initial Evidence from Romania. *Social Science Research Network*. <https://doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.2450416>
- Brown, A., & Orthner, D. K. (1990). Relocation and Personal Well-Being among Early Adolescents. *Journal of Early Adolescence*, 10(3), 366–381. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0272431690103008>
- Burnam, L. (2023, April 27). Reflexivity in Qualitative Research: Why You'll Never Be an Objective Observer. *User Interviews*. Retrieved April 22, 2024, from <https://www.userinterviews.com/blog/reflexivity-in-qualitative-research>
- Cabigunda, G. J. & Corpus, H. J. L. (2016). The Nature of Communication and Relationship Between Migrant Parents and Left-Behind Children. *University of the Philippines Visayas*.
- Calixto, A. C. R. (2021). Retirement Preparedness of Employees in San Juan City Philippines. *International Journal of Science, Engineering and Technology*.
- Cardinali, P., Ferrari, J. R., Romoli, V., Camilleri, A. P., & María, L. (2022). The meaning of home in male Migration: Listening to men's experiences. *Journal*

of International Migration and Integration, 23(4), 2219–2233.

<https://doi.org/10.1007/s12134-022-00934-5>

Chang, H. (2008). *Autoethnography as a Method*. Routledge.

Chang'orok, J. (2017). *Social Cultural Traditions by Edward Sapir and Its Implication*. Social Science Research Network. <https://doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.3061709>

Cherry, K. (2022, November 8). *What is sociocultural theory?* Verywell Mind.

<https://www.verywellmind.com/what-is-sociocultural-theory-2795088>

Camendan, D. Y. V., Pablo, A. M. M., Pamplona, C. D., Quilaton, R. S., Luy, M.G. & Melaco, A. (2022). *Unveiling the Journey of Overseas Filipino Workers: Interview Analysis for Education*. Camendan | ASEAN Journal of Community Service and Education.

ejournal.bumipublikasinusantara.id/index.php/ajcse/article/view/145/0

Clandinin, J. (2000). *Learning to teach: A question of knowledge*. Education Canada-Toronto, 40(1), 28-35.

Craig, R. T. (1999). *Communication theory as a field*. *Communication Theory*, 9(2), 119–161. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-2885.1999.tb00355.x>

Craig, R. T. Barge, J. K.; (2000) *Practical Theory in Applied Communication Scholarship* Routledge *Handbook of Applied Communication Research* 55-78
Frey, R.; Cissna, K. N. Routledge

Cooper, R., & Lilyea, B. (2022). *I'm interested in autoethnography, but how do I do it?* *The Qualitative Report*. <https://doi.org/10.46743/2160-3715/2022.5288>

Cosalan, S. M. (2010). *STUDY ON THE OVERSEAS FILIPINO WORKER: A GENERAL PROFILE* [MA Thesis]. KDI School of Public Policy and Management.

- Creswell J. W. (2014). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed method approaches* (4th ed.). SAGE Publications.
- Crossman, T. (2021, November 6). *What is a Third Culture Kid (TCK)?* — Tanya Crossman. Tanya Crossman. <https://www.tanyacrossman.com/blog/what-is-a-third-culture-kid-tck>
- Denny, E., & Weckesser, A. (2018). Qualitative research: what it is and what it is not. *BJOG*, 126(3), 369. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1471-0528.15198>
- De Waal, M. F., Born, M. P., Brinkmann, U., & Frasch, J. (2020). Third Culture Kids, their diversity beliefs and their intercultural competences. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 79, 177–190. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijintrel.2020.09.002>
- De Waal, M. F., & Born, M. P. (2021). Where I'm from? Third Culture Kids about their cultural identity shifts and belonging. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 83, 67–83. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijintrel.2021.04.004>
- Dionson, R.D. (2021, June). Communicative Construction of Teacher Identity: A Phenomenological Study of Being a Non-Native English-Speaking Teacher in the United States. *University of the Philippines Open University. Doctor of Communication*, 40.
- Donohue, C. (2022). Growing up as a third culture kid and its impact on identity and belonging. *Counselling Psychology Review*, 37(2), 47–58. <https://doi.org/10.53841/bpscpr.2022.37.2.47>
- Dunbar, R. I. M. (2011). How many “friends” can you really have? *IEEE Spectrum*, 48(6), 81–83. <https://doi.org/10.1109/mspec.2011.5783712>

- Dyson, M. (2007). My Story in a Profession of Stories: Auto Ethnography - an Empowering Methodology for Educators. *Australian Journal of Teacher Education*, 32(1). <https://doi.org/10.14221/ajte.2007v32n1.3>
- Durišić, M. (2018). RELATIONS AND COMMUNICATION IN FAMILIES OF CHILDREN WITH EXTERNALIZING BEHAVIOR PROBLEMS. *Istraživanja U Pedagogiji*, 8(2), 111–120. <https://doi.org/10.17810/2015.77>
- Ellis, C. (2008). Beyond measure: The role of stories, conversations, and personal narratives in quality of life research. *J Med Person*, 6, 104-112.
- Ellis, C. & Bochner, A. P. (2000). Autoethnography, personal narrative, reflexivity: Researcher as the Subject. In N.K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *Handbook of qualitative research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Ellis, C., Adams, T.E. & Bochner, A.P. (2011). Autoethnography: An Overview [40 paragraphs]. *Forum Qualitative Sozialforschung / Forum: Qualitative Social Research*, 12(1), Art 10, from nbnresolving.de/urn:nbn:de:0114-fqs1101108.
- Español, E. T. (2022). *Philippine Media Under the Duterte Administration: Extralegal Constructs Manifested in the ABS-CBN Closure* [MA thesis]. University of the Philippines Open University.
- Espinetti, G. L. (2011). *The third culture Kid (TCK) experience: Adult-TCKs' reflections on their multicultural on childhood, its impact on Student-Teacher relationships in U.S. classrooms and their recommendations for multicultural teacher education in the United States* [PhD Dissertation, Kent State University].
https://etd.ohiolink.edu/acprod/odb_etd/ws/send_file/send?accession=kent1300914837&disposition=inline

- Fail, H., Thompson, J., & Walker, G. (2004). Belonging, identity and Third Culture Kids. *Journal of Research in International Education*, 3(3), 319–338.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/1475240904047358>
- Fernea, E. W. (Ed.). (2002). *Remembering Childhood in the Middle East*. The University of Texas Press. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.7560/725461>
- Ferrara, T. (2022). *Understanding the Homesick Experience Through the Narratives of First-Year College Residential Students*. Theses & Dissertations. 119.
<https://digitalcommons.molloy.edu/etd/119>
- Finlay, L. (1998). Reflexivity: an essential component for all research? *the British Journal of Occupational Therapy/British Journal of Occupational Therapy*, 61(10), 453–456. <https://doi.org/10.1177/030802269806101005>
- Furukawa, R., & Driessnack, M. (2012). Video-Mediated Communication to support distant family connectedness. *Clinical Nursing Research*, 22(1), 82–94.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/1054773812446150>
- Gabriel, A. (2019). *My mother's journey as an overseas Filipino worker*. National Geographic. Retrieved March 19, 2023, from
nationalgeographic.com/culture/article/my-mothers-journey-overseas-philipino-worker
- Gabriel, Y. (2015). Reflexivity and beyond – a plea for imagination in qualitative research methodology. *Qualitative Research in Organizations and Management an International Journal*, 10(4), 332-336.
- Galbraith, J. K. (1979). *The nature of mass poverty*.
<http://ci.nii.ac.jp/ncid/BA24500125>
- Garcia, A. (Director). (2015). *Yanbu*.
- Garcia, A. (Director). (2019). *Spring by the Sea*. Section Daisy Cinema.

- Garcia, A. (2020). Spring by the Sea: An Autoethnographic Documentary Film about an OFW Family Using Personal Home Videos. *Imahenasyon: Journal on Multimedia Arts and Film*, 1(1).
- Garabiles, M. R., & Asis, M. M. B. (2022). Remigration or Reintegration: What Explains the Intentions of Overseas Filipino Workers? In *IOM UN Migration*. International Organization for Migration.
- Garinga, M. L., Laylo, A. L., & Villareal, C. A. (2018). FILIPINO SEAFARERS' USE OF FACEBOOK TO COPE WITH HOMESICKNESS. *LPU–Laguna Journal of International Tourism and Hospitality Management*, 4(1).
- Gattino, S., De Piccoli, N., Fassio, O., & Rollero, C. (2013). Quality of life and sense of community A Study on Health and Place of Residence. , *Journal of Community Psychology*, 41(7), 811–826.
- Genç, R. (2017). The Importance of Communication in Sustainability & Sustainable Strategies. *Procedia Manufacturing*, 8, 511–516.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.promfg.2017.02.065>
- Gentles, S. J., Jack, S. M., Nicholas, D. B., & McKibbin, K. A. (2014). Critical Approach to Reflexivity in Grounded Theory. *The Qualitative Report*, 19(44), 1-14. <https://doi.org/10.46743/2160-3715/2014.1109>
- Glaser, B. G. (1978). *Theoretical sensitivity: Advances in the methodology of grounded theory*. Mill Valley, CA: Sociology Press.
- Glaser, B. G., & Strauss, A. L. (1967). *The discovery of grounded theory: Strategies for qualitative research*.
- Grantham, W., Płaszewski, M., & Byczkowska-Owczarek, D. (2023). Giving Voice to Young People: Evocative Autoethnography as a Method of Researching Personal Experiences Connected to Adolescent Idiopathic Scoliosis. A

discursive article. *Physiotherapy Review*, 27(1), 5–14.

<https://doi.org/10.5114/phr.2023.123329>

Green, O., & Ayalon, L. (2016). Whom do migrant home care workers contact in the case of Work-Related Abuse? An exploratory study of Help-Seeking Behaviors. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 31(19), 3236–3256.

<https://doi.org/10.1177/0886260515584347>

Gregersen, E. (2019). THE LIVED EXPERIENCE OF A UNIVERSITY LAW CLINIC SUPERVISOR: AN AUTOETHNOGRAPHIC INQUIRY [Doctoral Thesis, Northumbria University]. <https://nrl.northumbria.ac.uk/id/eprint/41722/>

Griffin, E. (2000). *A first look at communication theory* (4th ed.). New York: McGraw Hill.

Guison, R. K. (2022, September 22). 'Should I stay or should I go?': 7 cultural observations about living abroad. *RAPPLER*. <https://www.rappler.com/life-and-style/travel/cultural-observations-about-living-abroad-as-a-filipino/>

Günther, F., & Folke, C. (1993). CHARACTERISTICS OF NESTED LIVING SYSTEMS. *Journal of Biological Systems*, 01(03), 257–274.

<https://doi.org/10.1142/s0218339093000173>

Guest, G., MacQueen, K. M., & Namey, E. (2012). *Applied Thematic Analysis*.

<https://doi.org/10.4135/9781483384436>

Hall, B. J., Garabiles, M. R., & Latkin, C. A. (2019). Work life, relationship, and policy determinants of health and well-being among Filipino domestic Workers in China: a qualitative study. *BMC public health*, 19(1), 1-14.

Halverson, E. R. (2010). Film as Identity Exploration: A Multimodal Analysis of Youth-Produced Films. *Teachers College Record*, 112(9), 2352–2378.

<https://doi.org/10.1177/016146811011200903>

- Hasnan, L. (2019, October 14). Youth in Philippines prefer working overseas. The ASEAN Post. <https://theaseanpost.com/article/youth-philippines-prefer-workingoverseas#:~:text=In%20the%20past%20ten%20years,the%20issues%20that%20poverty%20brings.>
- Hechanova, M., Regina, A., Tuliao, A. P., & Hwa, A. P. (2011). *If you build it, will they come?* Media Asia, 38(1).
- Hokkanen, S. (2017). Analyzing personal embodied experiences: Autoethnography, feelings, and fieldwork. Translation & Interpreting, 9(1).
<https://doi.org/10.12807/ti.109201.2017.a03>
- Ichimura, A. (2019, August 16). The curious case of Filipino third culture kids. Esquiremag.ph. <https://www.esquiremag.ph/culture/the-curious-case-of-filipino-third-culture-kids-a1926-20190816-lfrm#:~:text=As%20products%20of%20an%20increasingly,culture%20kids%20in%20your%20lifetime.>
- Jalagat, R. & Dalluay, V. (2016). Managing Financial Resources: A Never Ending Challenge to Overseas Filipino Workers (OFWs). Global Journal of Advance Research. 3. 1031-1037.
- Jance, M. C. G. (2022). Understanding Communication Dynamics During Social Isolation – A Hermeneutical Study of Filipino Domestic Workers during COVID-19. *University of the Philippines Open University. Master of Development Communication.*
- Janson, S. (2014). Children left behind. Acta Paediatrica, 103(6), 572–573.
<https://doi.org/10.1111/apa.12649>

- Jamieson, M., Govaart, G., & Pownall, M. (2023). Reflexivity in quantitative research: A rationale and beginner's guide. *Social and Personality Psychology Compass*, 17(4). <https://doi.org/10.1111/spc3.12735>
- Jampaklay, A., & Vapattanawong, P. (2013). The Subjective Well-Being of children in transnational and non-migrant households: Evidence from Thailand. *Asian and Pacific Migration Journal*, 22(3), 377– 400.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/011719681302200304>.
- Jimenez, J. (2010, December 18). How do OFWs cope with homesickness. *Philstar.com*. <https://www.philstar.com/opinion/2010/12/18/640026/how-do-ofws-cope-homesickness>
- Jones, E. M., Reed, M., Gaab, J., & Ooi, Y. P. (2022). Adjustment in third culture kids: A systematic review of literature. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 13.
doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2022.939044
- Kim, J. (2016). *Understanding Narrative Inquiry: The crafting and analysis of stories as research*. <https://doi.org/10.4135/9781071802861>
- Koopman, W. J., Watling, C., & LaDonna, K. A. (2020). Autoethnography as a strategy for engaging in reflexivity. *Global Qualitative Nursing Research*, 7, 233339362097050. <https://doi.org/10.1177/2333393620970508>
- Lam, T., & Yeoh, B. S. A. (2019). Parental migration and disruptions in everyday life: reactions of left-behind children in Southeast Asia. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 45(16), 3085–3104.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/1369183x.2018.1547022>

- Lijadi, A. A., & Van Schalkwyk, G. J. (2014b). Narratives of Third Culture Kids: Commitment and reticence in social relationships. *The Qualitative Report*. doi.org/10.46743/2160-3715/2014.1213
- Lijadi, A. A., & Van Schalkwyk, G. J. (2017). Place identity construction of Third Culture Kids: Eliciting voices of children with high mobility lifestyle. *Geoforum*, 81, 120–128. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.geoforum.2017.02.015>
- Littlejohn, S. W. & Foss, K. A. (2008). *Theories of Human Communication*. Wadsworth Publishing Company.
- Littlejohn, S., & Foss, K. (2011). *Theories of human communication* (10th ed.). Boston: Wadsworth/Cengage.
- Lucero, M.L. & Muscente, M. M. (2021, July 20). *Autoethnography: When Should I Submit My Self-Study to the IRB*. Teachers College - Columbia University. <https://www.tc.columbia.edu/institutional-review-board/irb-blog/autoethnography-when-should-i-submit-my-self-study-to-the-irb/>
- Lutz, H. (2008). *Migration and Domestic Work: A European perspective on a global theme*. <http://ci.nii.ac.jp/ncid/BA85196480>
- Magut, Z. (2016). Socio-cultural Tradition: From Theory to Research. *Journal of Language, Technology, & Entrepreneurship in Africa*, 7(2), eISSN: 1998-1279.
- Mandigma, M. B. S. (2016). Retirement preparedness of middle-income Filipinos. *World*, 6(1), 45-67.
- Martínez, A., Calsado, C., Lau, J. Y. F., & Brown, J. (2022). 'I don't know where to seek for help, so I just kept my silence': A qualitative study on psychological help-seeking among Filipino domestic workers in the United Kingdom. *SSM -*

Qualitative Research in Health, 2, 100125.

<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ssmqr.2022.100125>

Marcus, R., Leon-Himmelstine, C., De Carvalho, T., Jiménez, D., & Rodríguez, T. (2023). Children who stay behind in Latin America and the Caribbean while parents migrate. *UNICEF*. <https://www.unicef.org/lac/en/reports/children-on-the-move-in-latin-america-and-the-caribbean>

Margulies, S. (2021). *¿De dónde eres?: Negotiating identity as third culture kids* [PhD Dissertation]. University of South Florida.

Mayberry, K. (2016, November 19). Third Culture Kids: Citizens of everywhere and nowhere. *BBC News*. <https://www.bbc.com/worklife/article/20161117-third-culture-kids-citizens-of-everywhere-and-nowhere>

McAdams, D. P. (2001). The psychology of life stories. *Review of General Psychology*, 5(2), 100–122. <https://doi.org/10.1037/1089-2680.5.2.100>

McCaig, N. (1994). Third culture kids: the experience of growing up among worlds. *Foreign Service Journal*, 32–41.

Mclachlan, D. A. (2007). Global nomads in an international school: Families in transition. *Journal of Research in International Education*, 6(2), 233-249. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1475240907078615>

McIlveen, P. (2008). Autoethnography as a method for reflexive research and practice in vocational psychology. *Australian Journal of Career Development*, 17(2), 13–20. <https://doi.org/10.1177/103841620801700204>

Meier, C.R. (2015). Third culture kids and socialmedia: Identity development and transition in the 21st century (doctoral dissertation). Retrieved from ProQuest Dissertations and Theses data-base.

- Méndez, M. G. (2014). Autoethnography as a research method: Advantages, limitations and criticisms. *Colombian Applied Linguistics Journal*, 15(2), 279. <https://doi.org/10.14483/udistrital.jour.calj.2013.2.a09>
- Meniado, J. C. (2019). Second language acquisition: the case of Filipino migrant workers. *Advances in Language and Literary Studies*, 10(1), 47. <https://doi.org/10.7575/aiac.all.v.10n.1p.47>
- Middlebury Language Schools. (n.d.). *Language Learning: Why Is Intercultural Communication Important? | Middlebury Language Schools*. <https://www.middlebury.edu/language-schools/blog/language-learning-why-intercultural-communication-important>
- Morrow, R., Rodriguez, A. & King, N. (2015). Colaizzi's descriptive phenomenological method. *The Psychologist*, 28(8), 643-644.
- Morokvasic, M. (1994) 'Pendeln Statt Auswandern. Das Beispiel der Polen' ['Commute or Emigrate? The Case of Poland'], pp. 166-187 in M. Morokvasic and H. Rudolph (eds) *Wanderungsraum Europa. Menschen und Grenzen in Bewegung*. [Migration Space Europe. People and Borders on the Move.] Berlin: Edition Sigma.
- Munodawafa, D. (2008). Communication: concepts, practice and challenges. *Health Education Research*, 23(3), 369–370. <https://doi.org/10.1093/her/cyn024>
- Nassaji, H. (2020). Good qualitative research. *Language Teaching Research*, 24(4), 427–431. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1362168820941288>
- Neely, H. C. (2019). *Life Between Nations: Third Culture Kids* [Honors Theses]. Eastern Kentucky University.

- Ochoa, R. (2011). *Facebook as a tool in relationship maintenance between Overseas Filipino Workers and their families*. College, Laguna: College of Development Communication, University of the Philippines Los Banos.
- Ofreneo, R. E., & Samonte, I. A. (2005). International migration papers 64: *Empowering Filipino migrant workers: Policy issues and challenges*. Geneva, Switzerland: International Labor Organization.
- Olobia, L. P. (2023). Understanding autoethnography. *International Journal of Research Publications*, 118(1).
<https://doi.org/10.47119/ijrp1001181220234451>
- Ortico, C. O. (2017). Social Media as a Tool for Freedom of Expression Among Overseas Filipino Sales Workers in Abu Dhabi, UAE. *University of the Philippines Open University. Master of Development Communication*.
- Osborne, J. W. (2012). Psychological Effects of the Transition to Retirement. *Canadian Journal of Counselling and Psychotherapy*, 46(1), 45–58.
- Pang, K., & Hutchinson, C. (2018). An application of the Communication Theory of Identity: Third Culture Kids. *Journal of Communication Research*, 6(1), 5.
<https://digitalcommons.pepperdine.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1082&context=pjcr>
- Parks, P. (2023). Story Circles: A New Method of Narrative Research. *American Journal of Qualitative Research*, 7(1), 58–72.
<https://doi.org/10.29333/ajqr/12844>
- Papa, M. A. D. (2014). "Mothering Fathers! Fathers' 'Care' Identity in Mother Absent Filipino Transnational Families." Research Paper, The Hague.

- Pawelczyk, J. (2012). "No stories, no self": Co-constructing personal narratives in the psychotherapy session. *Papers and Studies in Contrastive Linguistics*, 48, 1–21. <https://doi.org/10.1515/psicl-2012-0002>
- Perlez, J. (2002, April 8). Educated Filipinos, Disillusioned at Home, Look Abroad for a Better Life. *The New York Times*. Retrieved November 3, 2023, from <https://www.nytimes.com/2002/04/08/world/educated-filipinos-disillusioned-at-home-look-abroad-for-a-better-life.html>
- Philippine Statistics Authority. (2022, December 2). *Overseas Filipino Workers are estimated at 1.96 million*. Retrieved March 19, 2023, from <https://psa.gov.ph/statistics/survey/labor-and-employment/survey-overseas-filipinos>
- Pinzon, M. J. L. (2021). Defamiliarized family: The "Anak ng OFWs" emergent narratives on mediated communication and parent-child relationships. *Plaridel*, 281–307. doi.org/10.52518/2021.18.2-04pnzon
- Pollock, D. C., & Van Reken, R. E. (2001). *Third culture kids: The experience of growing up among worlds*. London: Nicholas Brealey.
- Pollock, D. C., Van Reken, R. E., & Pollock, M. V. (2010). *Third Culture Kids: The Experience of Growing Up Among Worlds: The original, classic book on TCKs*. Hachette UK.
- Polkinghorne, D. (1995). Narrative configuration in qualitative analysis. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education*, 8(1), 5-23.
- Poulos, C. N. (2021). Conceptual foundations of autoethnography. In *American Psychological Association eBooks* (pp. 3–17). <https://doi.org/10.1037/0000222-001>

- Qureshi, H. (2018). Theoretical sampling in qualitative research: a Multi-Layered nested Sampling scheme. *International Journal of Contemporary Research and Review*, 9(08), 20218–20222. <https://doi.org/10.15520/ijcrr/2018/9/08/576>
- Rabiah, S. (2018, November 19). Language as a Tool for Communication and Cultural Reality Discloser. doi.org/10.31227/osf.io/nw94m
- Racasa, A., & Vargas, D. (2021). ANALYSIS OF COMMUNICATION PATTERNS AMONG COLLEGE STUDENT WITH OVERSEAS FOREIGN WORKERS (OFW) FAMILY THROUGH THE USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA. *Social Science Research Network*. <https://doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.3785383>
- Rashid, M. H. A. (2023, March 15). *Narrative analysis in qualitative research*. *Library & Information Management*. <https://limbd.org/narrative-analysis-in-qualitative-research/>
- Reynolds, K. (2023, January 31). *The Top 7 skills needed for success in international business*. Hult International Business School. <https://www.hult.edu/blog/skills-needed-in-international-business/>
- Riessman, C. K. (2008). *Narrative methods for the human sciences*. Sage Publications.
- Robinson, L. (2024b, February 5). *Effective communication*. HelpGuide.org. <https://www.helpguide.org/articles/relationships-communication/effective-communication.htm>
- Ronai, Carol R. (1995). Multiple reflections of child sex abuse. *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography*, 23(4), 395-426.
- Ronai, Carol R. (1996). My mother is mentally retarded. In Carolyn Ellis & Arthur P. Bochner (Eds.), *Composing ethnography: Alternative forms of qualitative writing* (pp.109-131). Walnut Creek, CA: AltaMira

- Rose-Wainstock, C. (2022, March 27). My Son is a Third Culture Kid - Crystal Rose-Wainstock - Medium. *Medium*. <https://crwainstock.medium.com/my-son-is-a-third-culture-kid-f33c15b587b4>
- Sanchez. (2022, July). *Why are OFWs Heroes of The Philippine Economy?* BRIA Homes. Retrieved March 19, 2023, from [.bria.com.ph/articles/why-are-ofws-heroes-of-the-philippine-economy](https://bria.com.ph/articles/why-are-ofws-heroes-of-the-philippine-economy)).
- Sandelowski, M., & Barroso, J. (2003). Classifying the findings in qualitative studies. *Qualitative Health Research*, 13(7), 905-923.
- Santiago, J. L. F. (2011). Parent-Child Communication Patterns, Bonding, and Emotional Intelligence, of Left-Behind Children of Overseas Filipino Workers in Roxas City. *Central Philippine University. Master of Science in Guidance and Counselling*.
- Silverman (2000). *Doing Qualitative Research: A Practical Handbook*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications Ltd.
- Simoy, L. F. (2022). Dramaturgical Framing of 'VA Hying' as Impression Management: An Autoethnographic Study of a Filipino 'Virtual Assistant' Practitioner [MA Thesis]. University of the Philippines Open University.
- Social Weather Stations (2023, April 23). *Social Weather Stations | SOCIAL WEATHER REPORT | 7% Filipino households have an OFW; Most (75%) reported that their household OFWs send/give money often*. https://www.sws.org.ph/swsmain/artclisppage/?artcsyscode=ART-20230419092946&mc_cid=3706e251e0&mc_eid=1e00026a57
- Sofaer S. (1999). Qualitative methods: what are they and why use them?. *Health services research*, 34(5 Pt 2), 1101–1118.

- Son, T. H. (2008). Personal Experience Narratives and Implications for Language Teaching. *Hawaii Pacific University TESOL Working Paper Series*, 6(1).
https://www.hpu.edu/research-publications/tesol-working-papers/spring-2008/6_1_04Son.pdf
- Steger, M. B., & James, P. (2019). *Globalization matters*.
<https://doi.org/10.1017/9781108557078>
- Sterle, M. F., Fontaine, J., De Mol, J., & Verhofstadt, L. (2018). Expatriate Family Adjustment: An overview of empirical evidence on challenges and resources. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 9. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2018.01207>
- Suárez-Orozco, C., Bang, H. J., & Kim, H. Y. (2011). I Felt Like My Heart Was Staying Behind: Psychological Implications of Family Separations & Reunifications for Immigrant Youth. *Journal of Adolescent Research*, 26(2), 222–257.
- Tarisayi, K. S. (2023). Autoethnography as a Qualitative Methodology: Conceptual Foundations, Techniques, Benefits and Limitations. *Encyclopaideia*, 27(67), 53–63. <https://doi.org/10.6092/issn.1825-8670/17815>
- Thurber, C. A., & Walton, E. A. (2012). Homesickness and adjustment in university students. *Journal of American College Health: J of ACH*, 60(5), 415-419.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/07448481.2012.673520>
- Tolley, G. (2020, October 22). *When you can't return home*. Wellcome Collection.
<https://wellcomecollection.org/articles/X3sHRxAAACcAWFfA>
- Tyner-Mullings, A. R., Gatta, M. & Coughlan, R. (2019). *Ethnography Made Simple*. Manifold Open Access Platform.
- Unay, T.A. & Villosino, R. P. (2023). *ABANDONED BUT NOT FORSAKEN: FROM THE STORIES OF PUPILS WITH PARENTS WORKING ABROAD*. EPRA

- International Journal of Research and Development (IJRD), 8(7), 245–252.
Retrieved from <https://eprajournals.net/index.php/IJRD/article/view/2501>
- UNICEF (2020). Children “Left Behind”. <https://www.unicef.org/documents/children-left-behind>
- Useem, R. H. (1966). The American family in India. *The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 368(1), 132–145.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/000271626636800113>
- Ugwu, C. N., & Eze, V. H. U. (2023). Qualitative Research. IDOSR JOURNAL OF COMPUTER AND APPLIED SCIENCES, (8(1), 20–35.
<https://www.idosr.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/01/IDOSR-JCAS-8120-35-2023.docx.pdf>
- Uy, G. (2023, January 12). Coping with homesickness: How Pinoy food becomes my source of comfort, my way of bonding with friends. *Philsta Life*.
<https://philstarlife.com/living/292125-coping-homesickness-pinoy-food-source-comfort-bonding-friends?page=3>
- Uy-Tioco, C. (2007) Overseas Filipino Workers and Text Messaging: Reinventing Transnational Mothering. *Journal of Media & Cultural Studies*, 21, 253-265.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/10304310701269081>
- Virupaksha, H. G., Kumar, A., & Nirmala, B. P. (2014). Migration and mental health: An interface. *Journal of Natural Science, Biology, and Medicine*, 5(2), 233.
<https://doi.org/10.4103/0976-9668.136141>
- Wall, S. (2006). An Autoethnography on Learning About Autoethnography. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/160940690600500205>

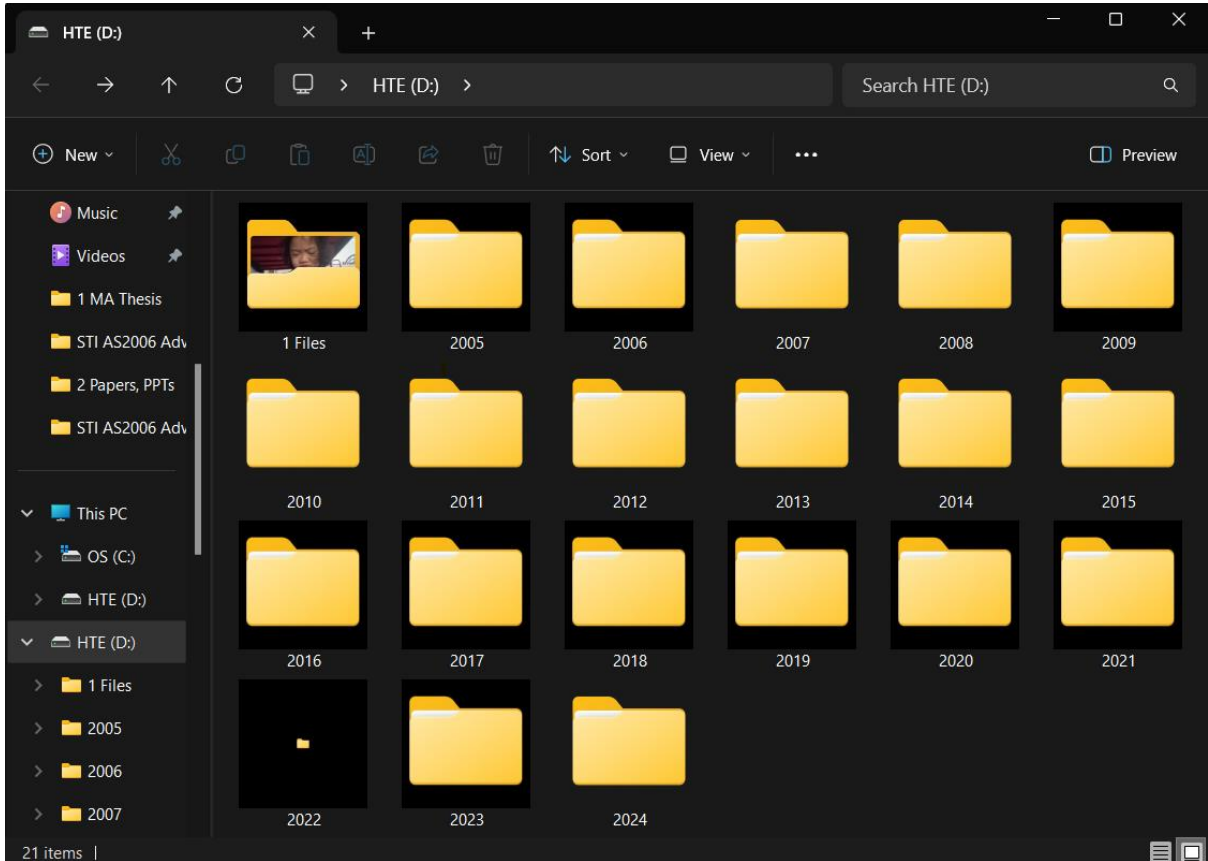
- Wallace, S., Nazroo, J., & Bécarea, L. (2016). Cumulative effect of racial discrimination on the mental health of ethnic minorities in the United Kingdom. *American Journal of Public Health*, 106(7), 1294–1300. <https://doi.org/10.2105/ajph.2016.303121>
- Wang, W., Lin, C., & Ying-Chien, C. (2011). Creating Radiant Thinking of Young Children through Mind Mapping. *International Education Studies*, 4(2). <https://doi.org/10.5539/ies.v4n2p111>
- Watts, L. (2023). Inward and Onward: An Autoethnography on the Lived Experience of Love, Loss, and Grief in a Doctoral Program [PhD Dissertation, University of Northern Colorado]. <https://digscholarship.unco.edu/dissertations/939>
- Wells, L. (2020). *Raising Up a Generation of Healthy Third Culture Kids: A Practical Guide to Preventive Care*.
- Williams, A. (2022, August 2). *Becoming other: environment, belonging and identity*. Meer. <https://www.meer.com/en/69857-becoming-other-environment-belonging-and-identity>
- Wiseman, R.L. (2002). Intercultural communication competence. In W. B. Gudykunst, & B. Mody (Eds.), *Handbook of international and intercultural communication* (2nd ed), (pp. 207-224). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Wiseman, V., Conteh, L., & Matovu, F. (2005). Using diaries to collect data in resource-poor settings: questions on design and implementation. *Health Policy and Planning*, 20(6), 394–404. <https://doi.org/10.1093/heapol/czi042>
- Wua, T. D., Rorimpandey, W. H. F., Ratu, J. A., Mantiri, J., & Umbase, R. S. (2022). Student Self Concept (Case Study at SMP N 1 Kawangkoan). *SHS Web of Conferences*, 149, 01052. <https://doi.org/10.1051/shsconf/202214901052>

- Yu, J. A. (2023, April 19). *What Is A Homeland Without A “Home”?* Reflections From A *Balikbayan*. Cambio & Co. <https://www.shopcambio.co/blogs/news/what-is-a-homeland-without-a-home-reflections-from-a-balikbayan>
- Yu, X. (2015). The sociocultural effects of returnee overseas Filipino workers in the Philippines. *Norsk Geografisk Tidsskrift-Norwegian Journal of Geography*, 69(1), 47–58. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00291951.2014.995216>
- Yusof, A. M. (1984). The Relationships between Family Communication, Self-Concept, and Academic Achievement of Adolescents in Some Schools of Petaling Jaya, Malaysia. *Western Michigan University. Doctor of Education*.

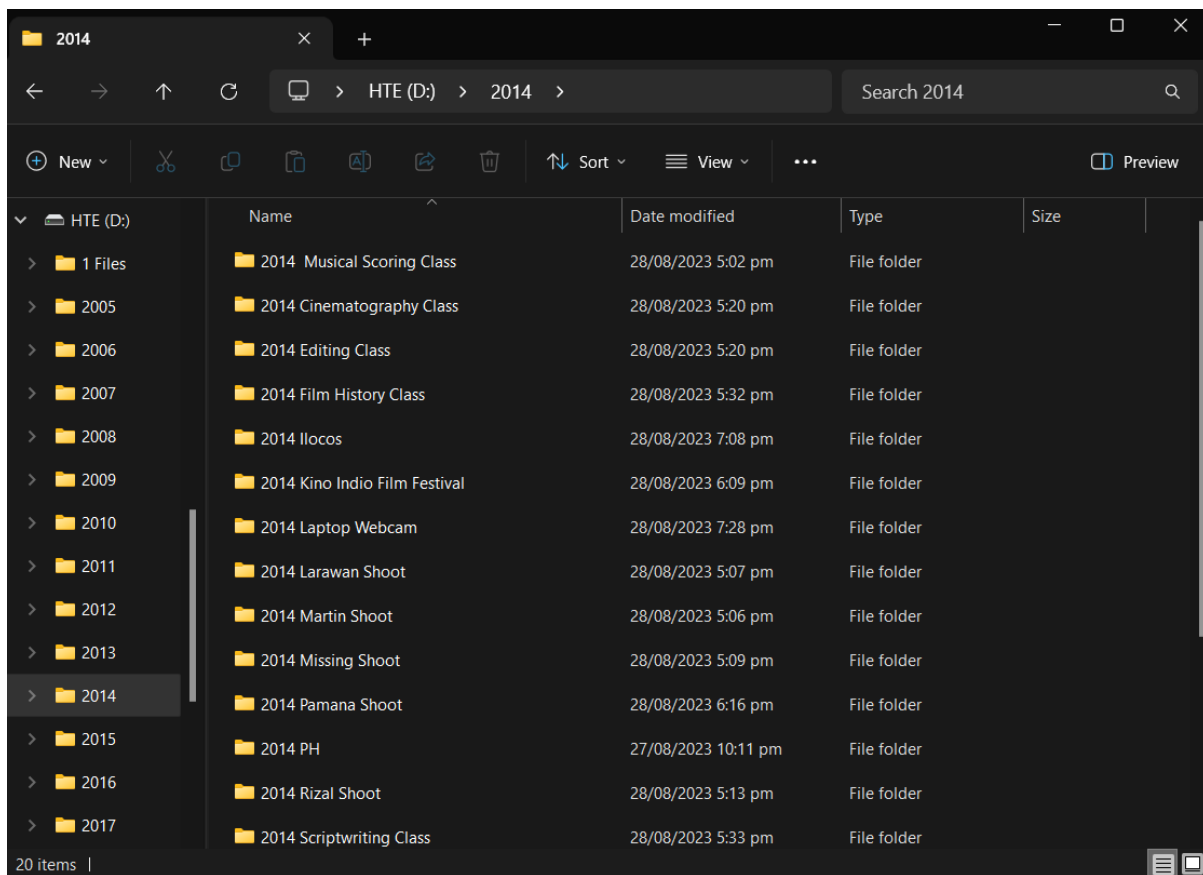
Appendices

APPENDIX A
COLLECTED HOME PHOTOS AND VIDEOS

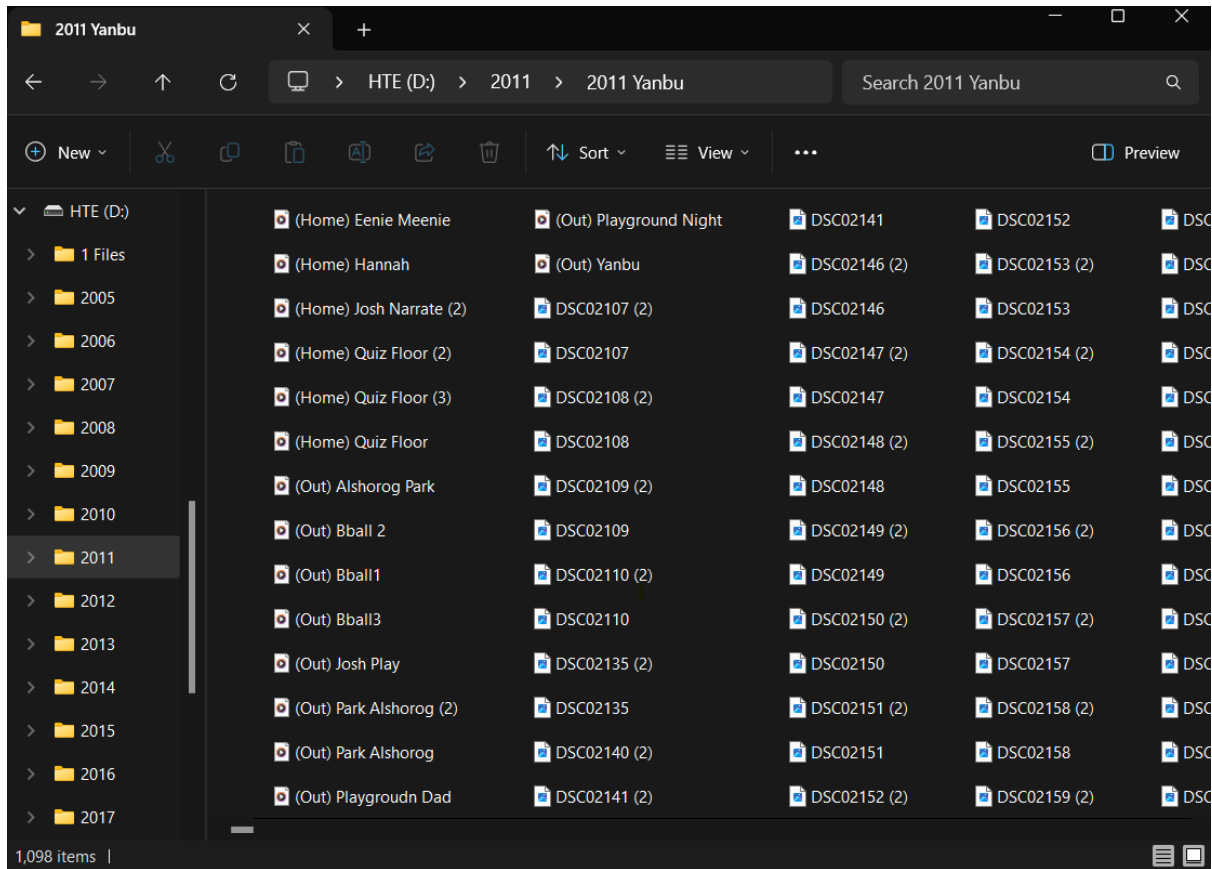
Sample Folder 1. Collected Home Photos and Videos (arranged by year).



Sample Folder 2. Collected Home Photos and Videos (2014).



Sample Folder 3. Collected Home Videos (2011). Total of 1,098 files.



APPENDIX B

COLLECTED DIARIES

Sample Folder 1. Diary #6 (2019). Total of 113 pages.

