



**UNIVERSITY OF THE PHILIPPINES
OPEN UNIVERSITY**

Master of ASEAN Studies

DESIREE CLARO-AZUCENA

**MOBILITY OF FILIPINOS TEACHING ENGLISH-MEDIATED SUBJECTS IN THE
BASIC EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS OF CAMBODIA, MYANMAR
AND THAILAND**

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**Date of Submission
10 October 2022**

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This thesis titled *Mobility of Filipinos Teaching English-Mediated Subjects in the Basic Education Institutions of Cambodia, Myanmar and Thailand* is hereby accepted by the Faculty of Management and Development Studies, U.P. Open University, in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree Master of ASEAN Studies.

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Biographical Sketch

The researcher is a graduate of the University of the Philippines College Baguio with a bachelor's degree in AB Social Sciences (double major in Psychology and Political Science).

She has been a Filipino ESL teacher since 2006 and has taught in Cambodia, Vietnam, and Thailand. She has experience in teaching English to students of different ages (including adult ESL), and with different nationalities (Thai, Khmer, Burmese, Korean, American, Australian, and British). She is currently teaching English to kindergarten students, and Math and Science to grade school students in an international school in the north of Thailand.

Her experience living in other Southeast Asian countries motivated her to pursue a master's degree in ASEAN Studies along with her belief in the potential of the ASEAN organization to provide more career opportunities for her.

Furthermore, her experience as a Filipino teaching in other Southeast Asian countries is the reason why she chose this study. It is her hope that this study will assist government and other policy makers to recognize that cultivating the talents and skills of Filipino teachers is a worthwhile investment.

Acknowledgement Page

I would like to thank the following people who have contributed to this study:

- My adviser, Dr. Joeefe Santarita, for his constant advice and encouragement.
- The other members of my thesis advisory committee, Dr. Emely Dicolon and Dr. Carolyn Sobritchea, for their advice and contributions.
- The program chair of ASEAN Studies Graduate Program, Dr. Jean Saludadez, and her secretary, Dona Piamonte, for the support they have given.
- The Filipino teacher respondents, for taking the time and effort to be part of this study.
- The schools in Thailand that have taken the time and effort to be a part of my study.
- The Department of Foreign Affairs, for giving me permission to gather data from the Philippine embassies in Thailand, Cambodia, and Myanmar.
- The Philippine embassies in Thailand and Cambodia, for taking time to answer the interview questions despite the challenges associated with the onset of the pandemic.
- The Ministry of Education – English Language Institute, for the time given for the interview.
- To Elite Editing, for editing my thesis as to grammar, word choice, and flow of the paper.

Dedicated to:

My Lord and Savior Jesus Christ to Whom I owe everything, and my family...especially Roger, my husband of 12 years. I would have given up had he not given his constant encouragement and support to finish this study.

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Chapter One

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Rationale

The discussion of the mobility of teachers particularly by the Filipinos does matter personally to me since I am one of the Filipinos who teaches English Mediated Subjects (EMS) in Cambodia, Myanmar, and Thailand. My current assignment as teacher of English to kindergarten students as well as Math and Science courses to grade school students in an international school in the north of Thailand further strengthened my interest to pursue this study.

Mobility is one of the important elements of regional integration especially in the realization of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) socio-economic community pillar. Currently, the ASEAN member states are facing several challenges in achieving the goal of greater mobility for the highly skilled professions including teachers in the region. These challenges include hurdles in recognizing professional qualifications, opening up access to certain jobs, and a limited willingness by professionals to move due to perceived cultural, language, and socioeconomic differences. The cost of these barriers delimits intra-ASEAN mobility of professionals and in the long run could reduce the region's competitiveness in the global market (Papademetrio, et al., 2015. pp. 10-11).

Education is seen as a key factor in preparing the citizens of the Member States for the increased integration and resulting competitiveness. Through improved educational systems, the ASEAN Member States hope to achieve the goals set out by the ASEAN related to the increased stability of political and economic systems and

social and cultural exchange. Closely related to the importance of education, the reduction of education-related inequalities, and the necessity to prepare graduates and workers to compete effectively at a regional level is the importance of English language proficiency. English is seen as an essential tool for integration, along with other ASEAN languages. Along with an emphasis on the teaching and learning of the local languages of each member state, English has been chosen as the language of administration for ASEAN and is additionally often the language that users across ASEAN have in common. Yet challenges remain concerning the provision of effective language learning opportunities in resource-scarce contexts and the role and impact of English as an international language in general, and specifically as a tool in the development process. The development of a regional community necessitates the need for more frequent and effective communication between governments, businesses, and local populations. Improving the English language proficiency of government officials, business professionals, teacher trainers, teachers, and local students, has taken on a new importance. As a result, English language proficiency and the ability to utilize English to develop and make use of technical, business, and negotiation skills are areas in which capacity is being enhanced for the successful implementation of the ASEAN Community (Stroupe and Kimura, 2015. Pp. 3-5).

Enhancement of English capacity is on-going through the help of competent teachers in English as Second Language (ESL) in the region. These teachers are composed of Native English Speakers (NES) and non-native English Speakers (NNES) to include Filipinos. Through the years, these Filipinos were part of the intra-ASEAN mobility of professionals in Southeast Asia. Thus, this study focuses on the

mobility of Filipinos teaching English-mediated subjects in the basic educational institutions of Cambodia, Myanmar and Thailand.

It is widely perceived throughout Southeast Asia that there is currently an increasing number of English teachers from the Philippines who have found “greener pastures” in other ASEAN countries. Many ASEAN schools hire Filipino educators in preference to Native English speakers. Their salaries are more affordable for smaller and public schools, their English proficiency and skills in pedagogy are valued, and they have a reputation for being easier to work with than their Western counterparts. There is much potential for Filipino teachers to become catalysts in the development of English proficiency in the region.

Further, the Philippines education system has been of benefit to ASEAN for many years. ASEAN nationals have studied in various Philippine schools because those institutions use English as the medium of instruction, are more affordable, and are nearer to their home countries than institutions in English-speaking countries. Not only do Philippine institutions excel in English language usage, they have also built substantial learning infrastructure as evidenced by the establishment of Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs). Filipino institutions and educators such as UP Open University used MOOCs to reach out to teachers in order to upgrade their learning overseas. This researcher has personal knowledge of co-teachers who were able to obtain teaching licenses because they completed online teaching courses offered by Filipino schools.

When Filipino teachers choose to work within the ASEAN region, they should be able to move around the region without much impediments. Filipino teachers will surely decide to work in a country where their needs are met. These needs include (1)

adequate compensation to support their families, (2) favorable working conditions to optimal teaching performance, (3) easier visa processing for better mobility, (4) livable conditions, and (5) opportunities to upgrade qualifications for career growth.

The researcher hopes that this study will encourage leaders and policy makers to give more attention to a small but important and growing segment of the overseas Filipino worker (OFW) community in ASEAN—the Filipino educators. Developing our educators to their full potential will result in better communication within the region, thus resulting in better ASEAN integration.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Education is seen as a key factor in preparing the citizens of the Member States for the increased integration and resulting competitiveness. To realize this, the mobility of teachers in the region is seen as one of the instruments to improve the English language proficiency of the citizens of the ASEAN member states and cumulatively improve their ability to utilize English in enhancing their competency skills towards the successful realization of the ASEAN Community. Hence, it is imperative to pay attention to the relevance of mobility in the region. This study attempts to contribute to the said discussion by focusing on the challenges and opportunities encountered by Filipino teachers as part of the growing intra-ASEAN mobility of professionals in Southeast Asia. In particular, this study examines the personal and institutional factors of mobility of Filipinos teaching English mediated subjects in the basic education institutions of Cambodia, Myanmar and Thailand.

1.3 Research Questions

1.3.1 Main research question

What are the individual/personal and institutional factors of mobility that pushed Filipinos to teach English-mediated subjects in the basic education institutions of Cambodia, Myanmar, and Thailand?

1.3.2 Sub-questions:

1. What are the advantages and disadvantages of hiring Filipino teachers from the point of view of local school administrators?
2. What are the motivations of Filipino teachers in choosing to teach in these countries?
3. What mechanisms and policies are provided by the governments of these different ASEAN countries (through the ministries/departments of education and the Philippine embassies of these countries) to help Filipinos teaching English-mediated subjects?
4. What are other strategies that can be utilized to further improve/enhance Filipino teachers' participation in the intra-ASEAN mobility of professionals?

1.4 Objectives

1. Determine the advantages and disadvantages of hiring Filipino teachers from school administrators' perspectives.

2. Identify the motivations of Filipino teachers in choosing to teach in the three ASEAN countries.
3. Document the mechanisms and policies that have been implemented by officials in education ministries/departments and Philippine embassy officials to assist Filipino teachers.
4. Recommend strategies on how to improve further Filipino teachers' participation in the intra-ASEAN mobility of professionals.

1.5 Methodology

The researcher opted to conduct mixed methods research. It employed quantitative approach in profiling the respondents and in analyzing their responses. To triangulate and follow up on the points mentioned in their quantitative responses, this study also used the qualitative method through semi-structured interviews.

It should be noted that the Filipino teachers of English-mediated subjects are the focus of this study. They are the Filipino citizens who used English as their medium of instruction in the basic educational institutions of Cambodia, Myanmar, and Thailand. They are assigned to teach English as second language courses, as well as Math or Science subjects that are taught in English.

The data from this research came from three sources:

1. school administrators of the three previously mentioned ASEAN countries, and primary and secondary Filipino English teachers teaching in these countries;
2. those connected to the education ministry/department; and
3. The Philippine embassy from each of these ASEAN countries.

The method of data gathering was a combination of email interviews (for school administrators and embassy officers), voice messaging, and online interviews (for Filipinos teaching English mediated subjects depending on the convenience of the interviewee.) Face-to-face interviews were also employed for some respondents.

The first objective of this study is to determine the advantages and challenges of hiring Filipino teachers of English-mediated subjects from the perspective of an administrator. The first set of data were collected through interviews of school administrators of basic educational institutions. The chosen school administrators were either those who were in-charge of teacher recruitment, the principal, or the ESL coordinator. The researcher also interviewed school administrators from public private institutions. The main questions concentrated on why they decided to hire Filipino English teachers, and what advantages and/or challenges they have working with them. Only three school administrators in Thailand were interviewed. Two were interviewed through email, and the other was interviewed personally. The researcher emailed schools in Cambodia and Myanmar; however, they did not respond, or those who responded did not hire Filipino English teachers. Some school administrators declined to be interviewed because they felt that the study would compromise confidential information.

None of the respondents were the principals of their schools, however they were all in positions where they oversaw the foreign teachers in their respective schools. The first respondent was the head of foreign primary teachers in a private school. He is an NES; however, he answered the interview questions with objectivity despite knowledge that the researcher was a Filipina. The second respondent was the head of the foreign languages department at a secondary private school. The third

respondent claimed to have no special position, but nevertheless, was in charge of taking care of the foreign teachers in her public school. There were no respondents representing secondary public schools. At the time of data gathering, schools were attending to COVID-19 compliance requirements. At one point during the research period schools in Thailand moved to online learning, which became a factor in data gathering.

The researcher has contacted the ministries of education of the three countries of study. The researcher attempted to contact officers from the Ministry of Education in Cambodia and Myanmar. She was able to contact the Ministry of Education in Cambodia, however, the officer did not send a response to the questions. She was not able to get a response from the Ministry of Education in Myanmar. Only the Ministry of Education in Thailand has responded. The researcher has interviewed an official, Ms. Supphakant, one of the officials of the English Language Institute of the Office of the Basic Education Commission of the Ministry of Education of Thailand.

Variables that were investigated are as follows:

- Shifting trends towards ESL/EFL learning and teaching (e.g., “global Englishes, using of local language in teaching English”)
- Need for the ASEAN countries to improve English proficiency.
- Perceived advantages of Filipino English teachers over NES teachers
- Institutions’ academic standard and requirements.
- Continuous opportunities to upgrade qualifications

- Competitive compensation
- Ease of mobility and compliance to teaching qualifications and immigration requirements

Responses are compiled according to the variables.

The second objective of this study is to identify the motivations of Filipino English teachers in choosing to teach in the three ASEAN countries. The second set of data was collected through one-on-one online interviews. It was intended to choose five Filipino English teachers in basic institutional levels in bilingual schools in each of the three ASEAN countries. However, because of the difficulty in getting respondents, the researcher was only able to get five respondents in Thailand, three respondents in Cambodia and three in Myanmar.

Sampling method was purposive and snowballing. The Filipino English teachers were chosen for interview based on the following criteria:

- Must have taught in their respective country for at least 3 years, in order to have comprehensive experience.
- Must have taught at a basic institutional level (whether primary or secondary level).
- Must have had some teaching experience in the Philippines in order for them to make a comparison between working in the Philippines and in the ASEAN country.

From these three, the researcher has given more leeway as to the length of experience because of the difficulty of finding respondents.

The interview schedule used was attached as Appendix A.

The sampling method for Filipino English teachers and school administrators was snowballing, as the circumstances would make random sampling impossible.

The third objective of this study is to document the mechanisms and policies that have already been implemented by officials in education ministries/departments and Philippine embassy officials to assist Filipino English teachers. The third set of data came from ministry/department of education officials and Philippine embassy officials. For Philippine embassy officials, the researcher interviewed the official assigned by the respective embassies. The researcher enquired as to what laws, policies, and activities the government has used to help Filipino English teachers.

The sampling method for ministry officials and Philippine embassy officials was purposive.

Since going to these ASEAN countries would have been time-consuming and expensive, doing the interviews using the internet was the best alternative for both the school administrators and the Filipino English teachers. Interview methods utilized VoIP or private messaging (for Filipino English teachers, in order to capture the respondents' spontaneity), and email interviews (for school administrators and ministry officials, in order to put translations in, and for Philippine embassy officials in consideration of their time). Interviews in Thailand were done face-to-face as this researcher is currently residing in this country.

In the conduct of this research, the researcher has secured the permission of the respondents through their signed waivers of consent/letter of confidentiality before the interview was conducted.

The fourth objective of this study is to recommend strategies on how to improve the Filipino English teachers' mobility and conditions in the host country.

1.5.1 Using the internet in gathering data.

The use of the internet for gathering data is necessary in this kind of research. As the respondents are across several countries, this researcher has had to rely on this technology in order to minimize time and cost.

The data gathering methods used were: Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP), chat/private messaging, and email interviews.

1.5.1.1 Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP). VoIP facilitates telephone or video calls through the internet. Examples of applications that use VoIP are Skype, Viber, LINE, ZOOM and Facebook Messenger. These facilities and applications allowed the researcher to interview respondents from other ASEAN countries. Interviews in VoIP applications such as Skype were beneficial for the researcher as well as the participants, as they were done at the interviewee's convenience, and it was not necessary to meet face-to-face. (Lo Iacono et al., 2016)

This researcher used ZOOM in online interviews. Conversations undertaken in ZOOM may be recorded, permitting the researcher to later review the participant's responses.

1.5.1.2 Email interviews. Another method employed was email interview. Unlike email surveys, which use closed and structured questions, the questions in email interviews are open-ended and semi-structured. The questions are sent to the respondent in an email. The respondent should then send back the responses to the interviewer. The interviewer may send follow-up questions to the respondent, dependent on the replies received.

This method was employed for respondents such as those who work at the Philippine embassies, who did not have time for a sit-down interview. It was also used

for local school administrators who required time to gain a good understanding of the questions. It also saved time in transcribing the responses, as must be done in face-to-face and VoIP interviews (Hawkins, 2018, pp. 494–495). The main disadvantage of email interview is that the researcher cannot decipher visual cues, which is important in conducting interviews.

1.5.1.3 Private messaging. Another method that was employed is private messaging; a feature that is common in social media applications such as Facebook and Skype. It is non-threatening and is more advantageous to the respondent regarding time, since they can respond to their own pace and convenience. Emojis in private messaging partially compensate for the lack of visual cues when doing email interviews (Fontes & O'Mahoney, 2008, p. 2). The main disadvantage of this method is that it is inadequate when the questions require spontaneity as respondents have the chance to edit their messages before sending. (Fontes & O'Mahoney, 2008, p. 4) Some Filipino teacher respondents preferred private messaging to an interview requiring a camera.

The following data were gathered for this research:

1. The advantages and the challenges of hiring Filipino English teachers according to school administrators in three ASEAN countries.
2. Motivations of Filipino English teachers in choosing to teach in the three ASEAN countries.
3. Measures implemented by education ministry/department officials and Philippine embassy officials to assist Filipino English teachers.
4. Opinions of Filipino English teachers teaching in the three ASEAN countries on what can be done to improve their mobility and conditions.

All data gathering activities were completed using semi-structured interviews. The questions in the interview schedules for all four classes of respondents (officials of their respective ministries/departments of education, school administrators from the three ASEAN countries mentioned, Philippine embassies of the target ASEAN countries, and Filipino English teachers teaching at basic institutional level) were semi-structured to encourage respondents to expound on their answers.

1.5.2 Challenges in Data Gathering.

Data gathering for this research was undertaken towards the start of the COVID 19 pandemic. Initially, the researcher was confident that COVID would not be a hindrance, because of the data gathering method, however it became a major challenge for data gathering because of the following reasons:

- School calendars have been disrupted by the sudden closing and delayed opening of the academic year. Teachers were in the process of adjustment, either by rushing their academic requirements or by preparing for online learning.
- Philippine embassies were busy in coordinating efforts to repatriate Filipino tourists and overseas workers that were stranded in their respective countries of assignment. They also had to coordinate with their countries of assignment on other matters regarding the COVID 19 pandemic.
- Although the researcher has the opportunity to contact respondents personally (as was done when she contacted some schools and the Ministry of Education), this option was not possible for the ministries of education in Cambodia and Myanmar due to limited access to travel.

Other challenges with the data gathering process were:

- Schools prefer that they are contacted by phone rather than by email.
- Because the researcher had only a small number of contacts in Myanmar and Cambodia she had to resort to “cold messaging” in FB groups. Some contacts who were cooperative initially did not respond to further follow-up attempts.

1.5.3 Conceptual/Operational Framework

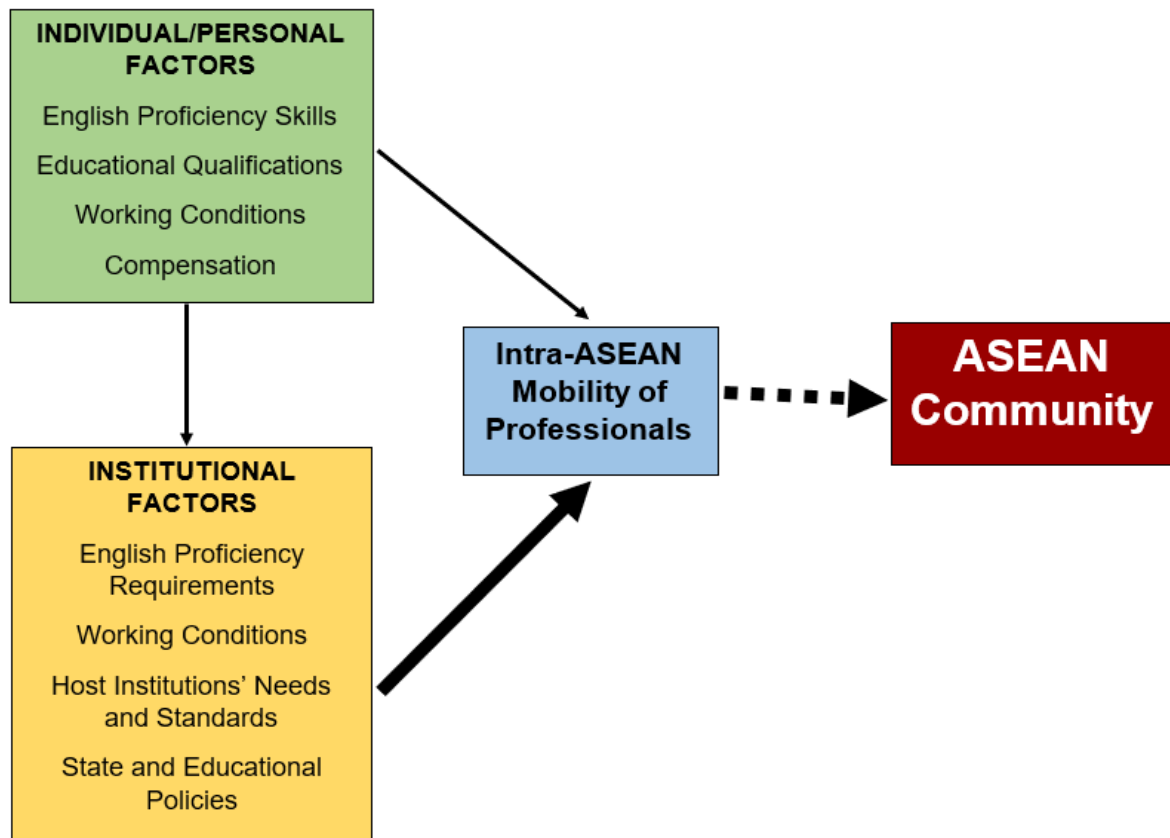
The realization of the ASEAN Community can be contributed by many factors including the intra-ASEAN mobility of professionals. One of them are the teachers, particularly those who are teaching English courses or those English mediated subjects in various schools in Southeast Asia. The presence of those teachers has enriched the curricula of the academic institutions and are expected to contribute to the improvement of skills/communication abilities of the citizens of ASEAN in their future jobs. In the long run, these capabilities will improve global competitiveness of the workers and of ASEAN in general. It should be noted that this thesis will not attempt to discuss the impact of intra-ASEAN mobility to integrate and realize the ASEAN Community per se. Instead, it focuses on the mobility of Filipinos teaching English mediated courses in the basic education institutions of Cambodia, Myanmar, and Thailand. This study is looking at the contribution of the Filipinos teaching in the intra-ASEAN mobility and the multiplicity of such development will further promote active mobility of other professionals in the region in the long years due to their English competency skills.

In particular, this study as shown in Figure 1, illustrates the relationship of the individual and personal factors as well as institutional factors. These factors among others are responsible in the seamless intra-ASEAN mobility of Filipinos teaching in Cambodia, Myanmar, and Thailand. The individual/personal factors, for instance,

include English proficiency skills, educational qualifications, personal working conditions (e.g., teaching and administrative loads), and of course compensation or entitlements. For institutional factors, these include the English proficiency requirement of the host country, working conditions (e.g., teaching load, etc.), host institutions' needs and standards as well as state policies (e.g., Philippine labor laws, receiving countries' labor policies, internal guidelines of the Philippine embassies on overseas workers) as well as the policy of the Ministry of Education (MOE) in Cambodia, Myanmar, and Thailand.

Figure 1. Conceptual Framework--Mobility of Filipinos Teaching English Mediated Subjects in ASEAN Countries

Figure 1: Conceptual Framework—Mobility of Filipino Teaching English Mediated Subjects of ASEAN Countries



In the diagram, the line between personal factors is thinner than the institutional factors indicating the researcher's belief that mobility is best facilitated by the latter. This does not mean, however, that the personal factors did not contribute much in the decision of the teachers to work abroad. On the contrary, the said individual factors of mobility served as push factors while the institutional factors as the pull factors. Such a relationship is best illustrated in Figure 1.

By and large, these factors cumulatively contributed to the growing intra-ASEAN mobility of Filipino teachers in the region along with other professionals who will in one way or the other help in realizing the ASEAN Community in the long run.

The conceptual framework illustrates the importance of Filipino English teachers in ASEAN integration. Reasons why Filipino English teachers will be motivated to teach in other ASEAN countries when the following conditions are met such as (1) competitive compensation, (2) favorable working conditions, (3) compliance to teaching qualifications and immigration requirements, (4) good living conditions, and (5) ease of mobility and compliance to teaching qualifications and immigration requirements

The conceptual framework illustrates this researcher's main hypothesis: that Filipino English teachers teaching primary and secondary schools with bilingual programs need the variables stated above to teach efficiently within the ASEAN region. When these variables are met through the support from the school administrators, the governments of the ASEAN countries where they work, the Philippine government, and ASEAN, mobility of the Filipino teachers within the ASEAN region will improve. Eventually, communication between citizens of ASEAN member states will advance, further strengthening ASEAN integration.

1.5.4 Methodology.

The variables are further indicative as to how the sub-questions that have arisen from the main question will be answered. This is shown in the table below:

Table 1.1

The variables to be measured to answer the sub-questions in the study.

Sub-questions	Variables
a. What are the advantages and disadvantages of hiring Filipino teachers teaching English-mediated courses from the point of view of local school administrators and the ministries of education? b. What are the motivations of Filipino teachers teaching English-mediated courses in choosing to teach in these countries? c. What measures does the Philippine government and ASEAN (through the Philippine embassies of these countries and ASEAN policies and declarations) have in place to help Filipino teachers teaching English-mediated courses? d. What are other strategies that can be utilized to further improve/enhance the mobility and working conditions of Filipino	Shifting trends towards ESL/EFL learning and teaching (e.g., “global Englishes, using of local language in teaching English”) Need for the ASEAN countries to improve English proficiency. Perceived advantages of Filipino teachers teaching English-mediated courses over NES teachers. Institutions’ academic standard and requirements. Perceived benefits of working abroad. Favorable working conditions Competitive compensation Improving socio-economic conditions of the ASEAN countries. Continuous opportunities to upgrade qualifications Ease of compliance to teaching qualifications and immigration requirements

Sub-questions	Variables
teachers of English mediated subjects towards ASEAN integration?	

The data from these variables was obtained from three sources: the Filipinos teaching English-mediated courses, the government officials (from the Philippine embassy and the education department), and the school administrators. Data gathered was based either on facts given by the respondents or by their opinion. The comparison between the policies and the opinion of the respondents toward these policies is important in order to achieve a more in-depth analysis.

Table 1.1

Individual/Personal Factors of Mobility and the Source of Data

Individual Factors	Data source
• Socio-economic (whether they have enough financial resources to support themselves and their families) • Work conditions (whether their work environment is conducive to productive teaching for the teachers and learning for the students) • Security (whether the place is safe and peaceful to live in) • Cost of living (whether the prices of basic commodities are affordable)	Filipinos teaching English-mediated courses (opinion-based) Filipinos teaching English-mediated courses (opinion-based) Filipinos teaching English-mediated courses (opinion-based) Filipinos teaching English-mediated courses (opinion-based)

Individual Factors	Data source
Professional Development (whether teachers get seminars and workshops that will help them improve their skills and options)	Filipinos teaching English-mediated courses (opinion-based)

Quantitative data from the Filipino English teachers (ranking of importance on their reasons why they wanted to work in their respective countries) was analyzed using the average method. Qualitative data from the Filipino English teachers was utilized for analysis of their answers.

All data from the ministry of education, school administrators, and Philippine embassies are qualitative. Data was gathered, and important points were analyzed.

Table 1.2

Institutional Factors of Mobility and the Source of Data.

Institutional Factors	Data source
Shifting trends towards ESL/EFL learning and teaching (e.g., “global Englishes, using of local language in teaching English”)	School administrators and education officials (as to their opinion).
Need for the ASEAN countries to improve English proficiency.	School administrators and education officials (opinion-based).
Perceived advantages of Filipino teachers teaching English-mediated courses over NES teachers	School administrators and education officials (opinion-based).
Perceived benefits of working abroad.	Filipinos teaching English-mediated courses (opinion-based)

Institutional Factors	Data source
• Improving socio-economic conditions of the ASEAN countries. • Institutions' academic standards and requirements. • Continuous opportunities to upgrade qualifications • Favorable working conditions • Competitive compensation • Ease of mobility and compliance to teaching qualifications and immigration requirements	Filipinos teaching English-mediated courses (opinion-based) School administrators and education officials (opinion-based). School administrators and education officials (information-based). Filipinos teaching English-mediated courses and Philippine embassy officials (opinion-based) School administrators and education officials (information-based); Filipinos teaching English-mediated courses (opinion-based). Education officials and Philippine embassy officials (information-based); school administrators and Filipinos teaching English-mediated courses (opinion-based).

1.6 Significance of the Study

The researcher hopes to achieve the following through this research:

That future researchers and scholars can find this research a fitting contribution to the body of knowledge on ASEANology research with regard to effects of language in ASEAN integration, human resources, intra-ASEAN mobility and migration, education, and ESL learning. Further, they can learn strategies on how to conduct an ASEANology research using the available technology at present.

This researcher also has noted that although there are a lot of studies and articles about ESL teaching and Filipino English teachers in Thailand, she was not

able to find studies of this nature in Cambodia and Myanmar. She hopes that this study can add to further understanding of Filipinos teaching English-mediated courses in these countries.

As mobility is essential to ASEAN integration, bureaucrats (especially in the immigration departments) can produce and implement rules and regulations that will facilitate the requirements of overseas Filipinos teaching English-mediated courses.

Labor agencies can use this research as a baseline study to find ways on capitalizing on the opportunity to develop Filipinos teaching English-mediated courses for manpower (locally and overseas).

Lastly, this researcher has hopes that this study can contribute to the determination of why Filipinos teaching English-mediated courses opt to leave the Philippines and move to other countries to teach. While it may be flattering that other countries recognize the ability and talents of the Filipinos teaching English-mediated courses, it continues to put the country at a major disadvantage. The ongoing migration of Filipinos teaching English-mediated courses to other countries has contributed to the “brain drain” affecting the Philippine educational system. This situation will only improve if Filipino teachers teaching English-mediated courses believe that staying in the country is a better alternative to living and working abroad. It is hoped that the results and recommendations in this study can assist policy makers and government officers in the fields of labor and education to find ways to arrest or mitigate the emigration of Filipinos teaching English-mediated courses.

1.7 Scope and Limitation

The study will be limited to three ASEAN countries: Cambodia, Myanmar, and Thailand. They have been chosen in consideration of the following factors: (1) they are the three lowest ASEAN countries in terms of English proficiency; (2) this researcher is currently residing in Thailand and the two other countries are adjacent; (3) and these countries have varied historical circumstances: Cambodia is a former French colony, Myanmar is a former British country, whereas Thailand has never been colonized by any foreign country.

Filipinos teaching English-mediated courses engaged at basic institution levels (elementary to secondary level) have been selected as respondents because they are assigned to teach in bilingual programs. Further, it is easier to obtain employment in basic level institutions than in universities.

As explained in the methodology part of the thesis, the sampling method for choosing the respondents was purposive and snowballing. As a consequence of using this sampling method, the results of this study do not claim to be representative of the situation that the majority of Filipinos teaching English-mediated courses in ASEAN are currently facing right now. The intention of this study is to document the challenges and opportunities encountered by the professionals that can serve as case studies of future policy research projects for the betterment of intra-ASEAN mobility of professionals in Southeast Asia. Some of these challenges are identified by various literatures and presented in the succeeding chapter.

Chapter Two

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

This chapter examines both online and offline materials on mobility and community integration, the need for higher English proficiency skills and the challenges of Filipinos teaching English mediated subjects in the region.

2.1 Mobility and regional integration

Mobility of human capital was slowly becoming a reality. After more than five decades of the ASEAN's establishment, regionalism and regionalization should have been working well by facilitating the free movement of professionals, skilled workers, and even tourists within the region. Santarita, however, lamented that this condition unfortunately has not been fully realized despite the institution and implementation of several mechanisms in the late 1990s such as the ASEAN Framework Agreement on Services (AFAS) in 1995 and of the Mutual Recognition Arrangements (MRAs) in 2014. Numerous restrictions created by various legal, constitutional, and cultural impediments also contributed to such failure. Moreover, governmental policies and regulations have also impeded the movement of professionals (Santarita, 2017, p. 1).

He further noted that the inability of workers to communicate with colleagues and employers better also affected job efficiency in the region. Most of the professionals and skilled workers who are produced by many universities in Southeast Asia are not fluent in English for communication. Hence, applications and even communications with co-employees and employers are quite difficult. As such, both higher education institutions and governments have their roles to play in ensuring the success of the MRAs by strengthening a good relationship between higher education and government, and they can also enhance diplomatic relations between countries. Such agreements bear

similarities to treaties among nations in the international arena so as to enhance diplomatic relations (Santarita, 2017, p. 8).

This observation has been highlighted by Demetrios Papademetriou, et. in this study, despite the clear aspiration of the ASEAN to facilitate movements of skilled professionals in the region, the progress was noticeably slow and uneven. This phenomenon is caused by three challenges. The first challenge is the complexity of the qualifications recognition process which essentially discourages professionals who move within the region from having their professional and academic credentials assessed and recognized. The second factor is the restricted access to the ASEAN labor market due to national-level barriers such as constitutional provisions reserving particular occupations for nationals, and complex and opaque requirements and procedures for employment visas. The third factor is the limited interest of many professionals in moving within the region due to perceived cultural, language, and socioeconomic differences (Papademetriou, et. al., 2015, p. 5).

Corollary to the third factor, the reduction of education-related inequalities, and the necessity to prepare graduates and workers to compete effectively at a regional level is the importance of English language proficiency. English is seen as an essential tool for integration, along with other ASEAN languages. Along with an emphasis on the teaching and learning of the local languages of each member state, English has been chosen as the language of administration for ASEAN and is additionally often the language that users across ASEAN have in common. The development of a regional community requires the need for more frequent and effective communication between governments, businesses, and local populations. Improving the English language proficiency of government officials, business professionals, teacher trainers, teachers,

and local students, has taken on a new importance. As a result, English language proficiency and the ability to utilize English to develop and make use of technical, business, and negotiation skills are areas in which capacity is being enhanced for the successful implementation of the AEC (Stroupe and Kimura, 2015, pp. 3-4).

2.2 The Growing Number of Filipino teachers teaching English-mediated courses in the ASEAN Region

Certain situations and conditions in ASEAN countries may have contributed to the growing number of Filipinos teaching in the region. First is the need of ASEAN countries to strengthen their English proficiency. Second is the shifting trends in English as a foreign language (EFL) or English as a second language (ESL) learning. Third is the perceived advantages of hiring Filipino teachers teaching English-mediated courses instead of NES teachers to teach English. Fourth is the perceived benefits of working abroad on the part of Filipinos as compared to working in the Philippines.

2.3 The Need for Higher English Proficiency in the ASEAN Region

The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) was initially formed by five countries from Southeast Asia on August 8, 1967 through the Bangkok Declaration. The declaration was written in English. Although the declaration did not mention a common language these countries need to use to communicate to each other, it was assumed that English will be the de facto lingua franca of the association. This was assumed, considering that Malay was the one of the official languages of Malaysia, Indonesia, and Singapore, three of the founding members of ASEAN. (Kirkpatrick, 2012, p. 1)

Before English became the official working of the language (as stated in Article 34 of the ASEAN Charter 2009), there were two instances where ASEAN countries suggested other working languages. The first instance was during the time when Vietnam's membership to ASEAN was considered (n.b. Vietnam became a member on July 28, 1995, and Vietnam asked if French will be adopted as one of its working languages. The second instance was when the Minister of Information in Malaysia suggested that ASEAN should adopt Malay as one of its working languages. Both of these suggestions were not considered. (Kirkpatrick, 2008, p.28).

As English is the working language of ASEAN, it is imperative that all ASEAN countries should improve in English proficiency to improve the clarity of communication between member organizations.

English proficiency in ASEAN varies in every country as illustrated in the table below:

Table 2.1

The EF English proficiency index (EPI) 2018 of the ASEAN countries.

ASEAN Country	EF English Proficiency Index (EPI) 2018
Brunei	No data
Cambodia	42.86
Indonesia	51.58
Laos	No data
Malaysia	59.32

ASEAN Country	EF English Proficiency Index (EPI) 2018
Myanmar	44.23
Philippines	61.84
Singapore	68.63
Thailand	48.54
Vietnam	53.12

As expected, the Southeast Asian countries that were previously colonized by Native English-speaking countries have an advantage in English proficiency over the other ASEAN countries. This includes Malaysia and Singapore (colonized by Britain) and the Philippines (colonized by the United States). An exception is Myanmar which, although a former British colony, has low English proficiency. This is a result of the political instability brought about by U Ne Win's policies of xenophobia in 1962 (Kirkpatrick, 2008, p.28) that has affected their education system. It was not until in 2010, when education in Myanmar began to modernize, that there was renewed interest in learning English in order to meet the needs of courses such as medicine. (Ireland & Benthuyssen, 2014, pp. 151–152)

Countries that prioritize English over their native languages are more proficient than those which do not. An example of this is Singapore, which has chosen to use English as its primary medium of instruction, while relegating Chinese and Malay to the status of school subjects. It is noteworthy that some people in other ASEAN countries (including the Philippines) are pushing for the use of the native language as the medium of instruction (Kirkpatrick, 2012, pp. 2–6)

ASEAN countries with low English proficiency have recognized the need to improve. Thailand, for example, has opened bilingual programs, using both English and their local language as the medium of instruction in their schools. ASEAN countries such as Cambodia, Laos, and Vietnam (previously French colonies) are also shifting to using bilingual instruction in their schools and have abandoned learning French for English (Kirkpatrick, 2012, p. 8).

2.4 The Advantages of the Filipinos as English teachers in the ASEAN Region

Filipino teachers teaching English-mediated courses have taken the opportunity to teach in these ASEAN countries. An estimated 15,000 to 18,000 Filipinos are currently working in Thailand as English teachers, including both documented and undocumented workers (Novio, 2018, pp. 52–54).

There are several reasons why the number of Filipino teachers teaching English-mediated courses working in ASEAN countries is rising. First is the well-known high English proficiency of Filipinos.

The English proficiency of Filipinos is considered to be almost comparable to Native English speakers. The testing of English as a foreign language (TOEFL) is used to determine academic English proficiency. According to data collected from January to December 2017 on those who have taken the test, the Philippines had an average score of 89 (out of 100) (Educational Testing Service (ETS), 2018, p.14). In terms of using English in a work setting, the TOEIC (Test of English in international communication) appears to be more widely used. The Philippines, with an average score of 727 (out of 1,000), has the seventh highest mean performance by a non-native English-speaking country. (Service, 2018, p. 5).

School districts in the United States, including in Las Vegas, Los Angeles, New York City (Iasevoli, 2017) and Arizona (Chua, 2014), have been recruiting teachers from the Philippines to fill in the vacancies in their area. This shows that even a native English-speaking country, such as the United States, trusts Filipinos to teach their citizens.

The Philippines' superiority in English is not confined to language usage. In addition to the potential in its work force there is also potential in its training and educational materials. Since the establishment of the Philippines' first MOOC, through the partnership of the University of the Philippines Open University (UPOU) and SMART communications, Philippine MOOCs have been getting stronger and more focused on the objectives of providing knowledge that is of high quality, free of charge, and easily accessible (Romualdo, 2017). The Philippines has the potential to take a leading role in providing quality education to the region.

Amy Chavez (2014) has provided some insight as to why the Philippines was able to develop and maintain its high English proficiency. Although the American colonists first taught the language to Filipinos during their colonization period, the Philippine government anticipated that developing and continuing to use English as the second language would have advantages long after American colonization ended. In contrast, Japan opted to abandon English after World War II, and is now struggling to improve English proficiency. Secondly, English is not just a subject taught in schools, but is used in society as an important means of communication. English signs are abundant, and universities use English as the mode of instruction. Because of the huge extent of the British Empire prior to WW2, in particular the colonization of North America and the subsequent economic power of the United States, English has

become the default language for science, business, the internet and other international interactions where a common language is needed. The use of English as a mode of communication in all aspects may be the reason why Filipinos have maintained high proficiency in English, in spite of its government actively pushing for the use of the mother tongue as the medium of instruction. Non-English-speaking people (like South Koreans and Nigerians) look to the Philippines as an alternative place to study rather than more expensive Native English-speaking countries.

Further, Philippine English has been included as one of the recognized variations of English in the world, which is also known as one of the “Global Englishes” (more details later in the “Global Englishes” section of this chapter). Dr. Danica Salazar, an editor of *World Englishes* for Oxford Languages, was a speaker at a webinar for the Philippine embassy said that “English is now a Filipino language, too,” emphasizing that “for over 100 years, we have been using English in our own country without the involvement of Americans... By using the language, by speaking it, by writing it, we have contextualized it, and made it our own, and made it work for us.” (*EDUCATORS SPEAK: Oxford Editor Looks into ‘Philippine English’* - *BusinessMirror*, n.d.)

Another factor is the motivation of Filipino teachers teaching English-mediated courses to seek employment outside of the country. Although Singapore and Malaysia are also very proficient in English, it is unlikely for their English teachers to seek employment elsewhere as they already receive sufficient compensation. Further discussion on the motivation of Filipinos to work in other countries is contained in this chapter of this thesis on Migration (under the section “Challenges Filipino Faced”).

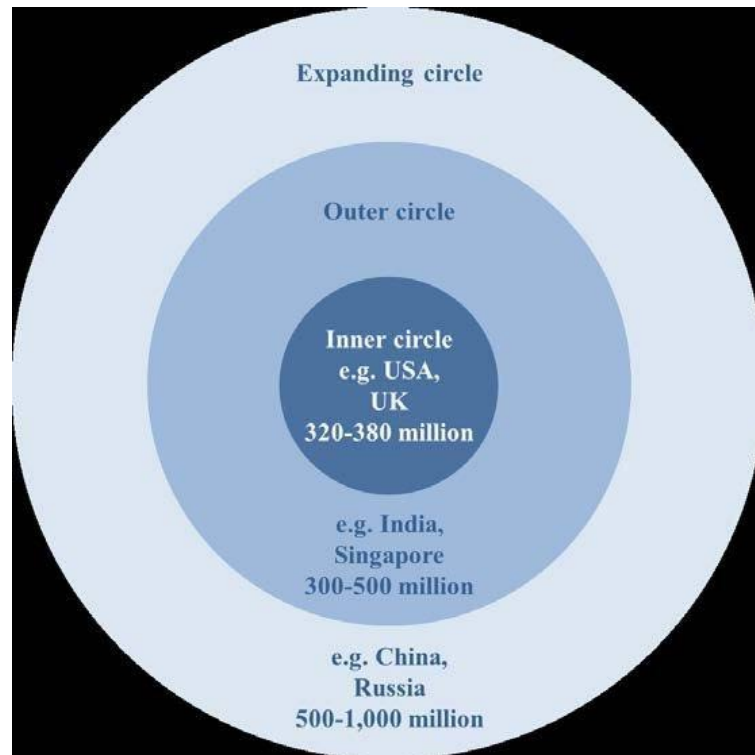
Lastly, as former ESL students themselves, Filipino teachers are more empathetic than Native English-speakers as to the challenges their Asian students face in learning a foreign language. Kirkpatrick (2016) has stated that, “EL teachers with knowledge of their students’ language(s) and who are familiar with the cultures of the region make ideal teachers for the lingua franca approach for at least 6 reasons: (i) they have empathy for their students; (ii) they are good role models; (iii) they are good linguistic models; (iv) they can instill/facilitate intercultural competence in their students; (v) they can exploit bilingual pedagogy; (vi) they can establish and promote a multilingual ethos.’ The main goal of ASEAN English learners is not to sound like a native English speaker, but to improve the ability to use the language to communicate effectively. Filipinos, as second language learners with a culture similar to their Southeast Asian neighbors, are therefore effective models.

2.5 Acknowledgment of “Global Englishes” in ESL/EFL Learning

Another trend in learning ESL/EFL learning is the emergence of the theory of “Global Englishes” (or World Englishes) in understanding English as a means of communication in the international scene. The previous regard of English from native speaking countries as the only standard of English has shifted; with recognition of the Englishes of other non-native English-speaking countries now apparent. It is necessary to take into account that the English used in other countries is influenced by the countries’ native language (affecting both pronunciation and grammar) and culture (influencing grammar, vocabulary usage, and idioms). The focus then in ESL/EFL teaching is to focus on how to use English so that learners can understand and be understood in English, and not in trying to sound like native speakers.

According to Braj Kachru, World Englishes are categorized into three groups. These groups are illustrated below:

Figure 2. Braj Kachru's three-circle model of "World Englishes"



Source: (Model, 2016).

Those in the Inner circle are the traditional native English-speaking countries. The standards as to what English should be are based mainly in these countries. Those in the Outer circle are countries that have learned English as a second language because of their colonial ties to countries in the Inner Circle (e.g., India, Singapore). Those in the Expanding Circle are those countries who have no colonial past involving countries in the Inner Circle or have no colonial history at all. They are currently learning English in order to communicate with the international community (Model, 2016).

Many learners of English are recognizing the need to be familiar with other types of Englishes, not just American and British. Sukanya Kaowiwattanakul undertook an analysis of Thai university students studying courses that are within the ASEAN free-flow of labor professions (professions that have mutual recognition agreements or MRAs to work in ASEAN countries with minimum restrictions. This study acknowledged that understanding the Englishes of their ASEAN neighbors would subsequently assist careers within the ASEAN community (Kaowiwattanakul, 2018, pp. 120–124).

Filipino English speakers are classified as part of the Outer Circle and can be viewed as having the same aspirations as English speakers in the Expanding Circle; to be proficient in both their native language and in English.

2.6 Challenges Filipino teachers teaching English-mediated courses face

With every opportunity there are associated challenges. A study was done by Peter Waterworth (2016) on the challenges and issues faced by ASEAN English teachers who are learners of a second language (L2). He distributed questionnaires to these teachers, and of the 108 teachers who replied he chose 28 as interview respondents. One of the issues that came out of this exercise was lack of confidence in teaching English. Most of them felt inferior compared to their native English (L1) counterparts and felt the need to further develop their English proficiency.

Filipinos often face discrimination from parents who prefer to have their children trained by Native English speakers. Although Filipino teachers teaching English-mediated courses are praised for their teaching skills and dependability, some of them are criticized for having grammar, pronunciation and fluency that is inferior to Native

English speakers. Such discriminating conditions may affect the bargaining power of Filipino teachers teaching English-mediated courses, leading them to accept lower offers than the standard salary for English teachers (Wongsamuth, 2015).

Further, with respect to engaging Filipino teachers teaching English-mediated courses there are no clear regulations regarding quality. The presence of some Filipino teachers teaching English-mediated courses who are not sufficiently proficient in English has influenced the general opinion of Filipino teachers teaching English-mediated courses held by many ASEAN nationals. This has resulted in some unscrupulous schools treating Filipino teachers teaching English-mediated courses unfairly, such as paying them much lower salaries than the usual rate for non-NES teachers. There was a story where there were Filipino teachers teaching English-mediated courses who were hired in Bangkok for 10,000 baht a month when the going rate then for a newly-hired Filipino teacher was 20,000 baht. There are other challenges that Filipino teachers teaching English-mediated courses face, such as having to comply with onerous visa requirements set by their host countries. Should the country fail to address these challenges, its potential to source good quality Filipino teachers teaching English-mediated courses could be impeded.

Another aspect that is challenging for Filipino teachers is the learning environment. Learning a foreign language is hard work. Students are not motivated to learn English because they took it at an age when they don't know if they will go abroad, or go to university, or into science etc. Lessons must be interactive in order for the students to use the language as there are few opportunities for students to use English outside the school (Ulla, 2018, pp. 1086–1087).

A further hurdle that Filipino teachers teaching English-mediated courses in ASEAN countries face is in complying with the immigration processes and requirements of their host countries. Unlike most OFWs who enter other countries through recruitment agencies, a majority of Filipino teachers teaching English-mediated courses enter ASEAN countries as tourists and then look for work. As citizens in an ASEAN member state traveling to an ASEAN country, they are given a one-month tourist visa upon arrival. They then look for schools where an application could be sent (Novio, 2018).

Should the one-month visa expire, they can go either to the immigration authority to extend the visa for another month, or to another country (such as Laos or Malaysia for those living in Thailand, or Cambodia for those who live in Vietnam). After securing employment and acquiring work visas, the teacher can return to the Philippines and register as OFWs. An advantage with this method is that prospective Filipino workers are not at the mercy of unscrupulous illegal recruiters and “loan sharks” and may be able to rely on Filipino friends and relatives living in the country to help them with accommodation and referrals. Low-budget travel, and the proximity of these countries, has made this process affordable. However, it is also prone to abuse. Because Filipinos enter these ASEAN countries as undocumented workers, they are vulnerable to human trafficking. On June 15, 2015, the Inter-Agency Council against Trafficking (IACAT) revised their Guidelines on Departure Formalities for International Bound Passengers (*Inter-Agency Council Against Trafficking (IACAT) Revised Guidelines on Departure Formalities for International-Bound Passengers*, 2015). When Filipinos do not have the necessary requirements, they are prevented from traveling. Bangkok, Thailand is noted as one of the hot spots for trafficking. (B.I., n.d).

This researcher has known first-hand of Filipinos who have been offloaded from their trips from Manila to Bangkok because of this policy.

Thai immigration has tightened its immigration policies in recent years. A foreigner who overstays in Thailand must pay a fine of 500 baht per day, up to a maximum of 20,000 baht. An overstay in Thailand of more than one-year results in the denial of permission to enter Thailand for a period of ten years (*Thailand Overstay New Rules 2019: What Happens If You Overstay?* 2019).

These disadvantages, and the challenges Filipino teachers teaching English-mediated courses face in teaching in ASEAN countries, will have a negative influence on the decisions of these teachers.

2.7 ASEAN's role in the Growing Demand of Filipinos teaching English-mediated courses

There are two areas where ASEAN has established policies and interventions to better facilitate Filipino teachers teaching English-mediated courses' ability to teach in its member countries. The first area is migration issues and the second is educational support.

2.8 Migration

The International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families was adopted 18 December 1990 and entered into force 1 July 2000. 2220 UNTS 3, Art. 2(1) states: a migrant worker is, "a person who is to be engaged, is engaged or has been engaged in a remunerated activity in a State of which he or she is not a national." (IOM, 2019). As the Filipino teachers teaching English-mediated courses in this research are migrant workers, an

appreciation of migration issues is vital to understanding as to why Filipino teachers teaching English-mediated courses are willing to uproot themselves and work in another country.

The first wave of migration of Filipinos to other countries has dated as far back as 1417, when Sultan Paduka Batara commenced trade between China and Sulu. Other instances of migration are the Filipino seafarers to Mexico as the result of the Acapulco trade; apple pickers to California; and plantation workers in Hawaii. The second wave occurred in the 1940s when there were approximately 100,000 Filipinos working in Hawaiian plantations and Alaskan canneries. The third wave was in the 1960s when, after the US relaxed immigration quotas, families were able to reunite in North America. At this time, Filipinos went to Western Europe to work as nurses and domestic helpers. (Migrant Advocacy, 2018)

The fourth, and most significant wave of migration started when President Ferdinand Marcos encouraged Filipinos to work overseas because of the scarcity of gainful employment. While this was originally intended to be temporary in nature, the migration of Filipinos has continued as a result of ongoing political instability (such as insurgency problems, and the declaration of Martial Law by President Marcos in 1972), economic instability brought about by changes in the international community, and changes in the immigration policies of other countries. Filipinos have continued to seek work abroad, with the country becoming more and more dependent on the value of remittances. (Migrant Advocacy, 2018)

ASEAN has made declarations aimed at protecting migrants' rights in both the sending countries and receiving countries, and to prevent undocumented migrants and human trafficking. On January 13, 2007, ASEAN released the "ASEAN

Declaration on the Protection and Promotion of the Rights of Migrant Workers”. Its aim is to encourage both sending and receiving countries to enact policies that will protect migrants (*ASEAN Declaration on the Protection and Promotion of the Rights of Migrant Workers*, 2012). On November 14, 2017, ASEAN established the “ASEAN Consensus on the Protection and Promotion of the Rights of Migrant Workers”. The aim is to instruct sending countries in the facilitation and preparation for the departure overseas of migrant workers and in their eventual reintegration back to the sending country. The agreement also requires the receiving country to protect migrant workers from unscrupulous employers and demeaning work practices, as well as ensure a conducive work environment (ASEAN Secretariat, 2018). It is important to note that both agreements were completed during ASEAN summits where the Philippines had been the host.

The researcher has identified five possible reasons as to why Filipino teachers teaching English-mediated courses migrate to other ASEAN countries for employment:

1. Socio-economic
2. Work conditions
3. Security
4. Cost of living
5. Professional Development.

2.8.1 Socio-economic.

An ordinary teacher in a public school in the Philippines is paid an average of PhP 19,600 a month, whereas an ordinary teacher teaching in a private school is paid an average of PhP 11,400. Teachers' salaries also vary according to region, as shown in this table:

Table 2.2

Average monthly salary of Public and Private Elementary & High School Teachers in the Philippines (in pesos)

Region	DEPED teachers (1)	Private ES/ HS teachers (2)	(1)/ (2)
Philippines	19,566	11,416	1.71
NCR	19,283	14,366	1.34
CAR	18,802	13,143	1.43
I - Ilocos Region	19,896	8,212	2.42
II - Cagayan Valley	20,454	10,181	2.01
III - Central Luzon	19,450	10,665	1.82
IVA - Calabarzon	19,690	10,451	1.88
IVB - Mimaropa	20,300	9,558	2.12
V - Bicol Region	19,449	11,584	1.68
VI - Western Visayas	19,401	10,423	1.86
VII - Central Visayas	19,416	12,148	1.6
VIII - Eastern Visayas	19,726	13,100	1.51
IX - Western Mindanao	19,542	8,085	2.42
X - Northern Mindanao	20,813	14,632	1.42
XI - Southern Mindanao	19,326	9,762	1.98
XII - Central Mindanao	20,710	9,235	2.24

Region	DEPED teachers (1)	Private ES/ HS teachers (2)	(1)/ (2)
CARAGA	18,947	8,157	2.32
ARMM	17,145	6,650	2.58

(Llego et al., 2019)

The cost of living in the Philippines in 2021 for an individual person, including rent, is \$601 (“Cost of Living in the Philippines: 86 Cities Compared [2021],” 2021), which is around 30,000 Philippine pesos. Many Filipinos have difficulty in maintaining what they would consider a “livable” lifestyle. This perpetuates the need for some teachers to borrow money to cover living expenses. This is a common occurrence for Filipino teachers teaching English-mediated courses, with the total of loans in 2019 being approximately 319 billion Philippine pesos (Report, 2019).

Further, the salary of teachers in the Philippines are smaller compared to its ASEAN counterparts. Sen. Sherwin Gatchalian has stated that the Philippines has the third lowest average annual salary of teachers (including benefits) in ASEAN. He has filed a bill seeking to increase the average annual salaries of the Filipino teachers from \$18,160 to \$21,547. At least, the salary proposed will be comparable to the average annual salary of the region, which is \$27,742.

A study was completed by Eunice Barbara Novio (2018, p.57-58) on the motivation of Filipino university teachers to teach in Thailand. The respondents were interviewed through internet chat, for those in far places, and through face-to-face interviews for those within the researcher’s area. They were asked what their motivations were in migrating to Thailand. Most of them responded that it was the low Philippine salaries and the perceived higher income opportunities in Thailand that

brought them to the country. Further, some equipment in Thailand is more affordable than in the Philippines.

2.8.2 Work conditions.

The nature of a teacher's job is result-oriented. The paid time for teaching does not account for the time involved in lesson preparation. Neither does it consider the amount of time spent in the assessment and evaluation of students. This study has identified two issues in addressing what ideal work conditions should be. First, work conditions should encourage an employee to be productive. In the case of teachers, it would assist to have an environment that would enable them to teach effectively. The Philippines has addressed this through the establishment of the Magna Carta for Public Teachers. This law has mandated that public school teachers should be given a teaching load of not more than six hours a day. However, with the additional administrative tasks assigned to teachers (such as paperwork and participation in activities) their workload has become too burdensome. A study by David, Albert, and Vizmanos showed that teachers would like to devote more time teaching and less time in administrative work (David et al., 2019).

A study completed by Dr. Elaine Adams identified factors that cause occupational stress in vocational teachers. These were: school systems (role ambiguity, role conflict, school stress, task stress, supervisory support, non-participation, peer support, role overload and management style); teacher internal characteristics (role preparation, job satisfaction, life satisfaction, illness symptoms, locus of control and self-esteem); and students (class size, student learning and student behavior). Her findings show a high correlation between these factors and the level of stress experienced by teachers (Adams, 2001).

Another concern is achieving an appropriate work-life balance. According to HRZone, work-life balance “refers to the level of prioritization between personal and professional activities in an individual’s life and the level to which activities related to their job are present in the home.” (Sift Media, 2013). It is having the time and the capability to work and still have time for personal interests outside of work, such as spending time with family and friends and pursuing other recreation and personal growth activities. Lack of work-life balance results in a stressful life, which eventually negatively affects the performance of the workers. (Sift Media, 2013). When teachers are forced to do overtime or to do some work at home, it can affect their work-life balance negatively.

If Filipino teachers teaching English-mediated courses believe that their workloads are too heavy for them to pursue quality teaching and a better work-life balance, then this is likely to be part of their motivation to move to other countries to teach.

2.8.3 Security.

People will work and reside in a place where they feel safe. This includes places where there is less crime.

According to Numbeo, the crime index and the safety index of the four ASEAN countries chosen for this study in 2019 are as follows:

Table 2.3

The crime and safety index of the four ASEAN countries as of 2019

Country	Crime Index	Safety Index
Cambodia	51.28	48.72
Myanmar	No data	No data
Philippines	40.83	59.17
Thailand	46.66	53.34

(Numbeo, 2021a).

There is no significant difference as to the crime index and the safety index of the three countries. Still, Cambodia is deemed the least safe and the Philippines as the safest. However, it could be because the Philippines has a freer press compared to the other countries (Freedom House, n.d). Less censorship means that there will be more coverage of crime news in the Philippines than in other countries. Because of this wider news coverage, Filipino teachers teaching English-mediated courses may believe that it is safer than in other countries than in the Philippines. This perception may be enhanced when they are out of the country in a locality with more restricted crime coverage.

2.8.4 Living conditions.

Living conditions can also be a factor in deciding to work in their chosen country. Every person desires a good quality of life, and that he or she can afford the kind of life they want.

It may be of the opinion of Filipino teachers teaching English-mediated courses wanting to work abroad that the quality of life is better in Cambodia, Thailand, and

Vietnam than in the Philippines. This perception may be grounded in reality. Below is the comparison of the quality of life of four major cities:

Table 2.4

Comparison on the Quality of Life according to the Numbeo website (as of September 2021)

Categories	Manila, Philippines		Chiang Mai, Thailand		Phnom Penh, Cambodia		Yangon, Myanmar	
<u>Purchasing Power Index</u>	19.34	Very Low	27.82	Very Low	13.76	Very Low	9.00	Very Low
<u>Health Care Index</u>	63.07	High	83.81	Very High	49.00	Moderate	47.47	Moderate
<u>Climate Index</u>	61.23	High	75.93	High	59.43	Moderate	57.78	Moderate
<u>Cost of Living Index</u>	41.93	Low	40.95	Very Low	46.83	Low	40.66	Very Low
<u>Property Price to Income Ratio</u>	34.41	Very High	16.66	Very High	31.11	Very High	15.44	High
<u>Traffic Commute Time Index</u>	54.36	High	25.75	Low	30.85	Low	55.00	High
<u>Pollution Index</u>	89.86	Very High	77.08	High	80.43	Very High	91.51	Very High
<u>Safety Index</u>	35.34	Low	76.30	High	47.05	Moderate	53.81	Moderate
<u>f Quality of Life Index:</u>	45.36	Very Low	123.09	High	63.51	Low	60.74	Very Low

(Numbeo, 2021b)

Further, in 2019, all the three ASEAN countries have lower inflation rates than the Philippines (O'Neill, 2021).

Despite the statistics, what people perceive becomes more important than reality. One of the objectives of this research is to measure the perceptions of the Filipino teachers teaching English-mediated courses as to the quality of life in the respective countries. This was done in this study.

2.9 Ease in immigration requirements

An important consideration in the decision to work abroad is whether or not the processing of the documents required for legal work and residency is convenient for the Filipino teachers teaching English-mediated courses. Below are the processes in different ASEAN countries:

2.9.1 Thailand

Foreign teachers in Thailand must obtain three documents in order to legally work in Thailand. First is a non-immigrant visa (non-B), second is a work permit, and the last is the teacher's license from the Ministry of Education.

There are two ways of obtaining a work visa in Thailand. The method with least risk is to apply for a teaching position before coming to Thailand. When the applicant is accepted in that position, the school sends the documents by mail. The teacher then applies for a non-B visa in the Thai embassy of their country, then presents the visa to the Thai immigration authorities upon entry to Thailand. Unfortunately, as of 2022, there is no memorandum of understanding (MOU) between the Philippines and

Thailand as to the employment of Filipino teachers teaching English-mediated courses. Both the Philippine embassy and the Ministry of Education in Thailand confirmed that the Philippine and Thai governments are currently working on an MOU regarding the employment of Filipino teachers teaching English-mediated courses in Thailand (Ciasico, 2019).

As stated earlier in the “Challenges Filipinos Faced” section of this chapter, the most common method used by Filipino teachers teaching English-mediated courses who plan to teach in Thailand is to go to Thailand as tourists (Filipinos can stay in Thailand for 30 days visa-free), apply for a teaching job in the country, and then change their visas from tourist to non-B. To do this change for the first time, the tourist must apply for a visa in a Thai embassy outside of Thailand (usually in neighboring countries such as Vientiane, Laos, Yangon, Myanmar, and Penang, Malaysia).

If the Filipino teacher is not able to find work in 30 days, he or she can extend his or her tourist visa. Tourist visas can be extended from 30 days to 60 days and are extended by: (1) applying for a visa extension at the Thai immigration office; (2) going to a neighboring country such as Laos or Myanmar to get stamped for a 30-day visa after going back to Thailand; or (3) applying for a 60-day visa extension at the Thai embassy in the neighboring country (Vientiane, Laos, Yangon, Myanmar, and Penang, Malaysia).

Once a Filipino teacher has been granted a work visa, the next process is to obtain a work permit. This is paid by the school however the cost of the work visa is borne by the foreign teacher.

One of the key documents needed in the processing of the work visa and the work permit is the teacher's license in Thailand. The school must submit documents that validate the foreign teacher's qualifications (transcript of records, diploma, certificates, etc.) to the Ministry of Education. The MOE will then issue a temporary teaching license of two years and send it to the school. If the foreign teacher remains at the school for the full two years, they may reapply for another two-year license or apply for a longer five-year license. The latter has more stringent conditions but is more beneficial as this is the permanent teacher's license.

2.9.2 Myanmar

There are two types of visas available: a tourist visa and a business visa. Teachers are issued business visas valid for 60 days, 6 months, or one year. Included in the requirements is an invitation letter from the employer in Myanmar that the applicant will be working for, and a statement that this company will be guarantor for the applicant (Thiha, 2020).

Applications for renewal of business visas must be lodged from outside of Myanmar. The most convenient location to renew is at the Myanmar embassy in Thailand.

2.9.3 Cambodia

For a Filipino to teach in Cambodia, he/she is required to have a type E visa (either obtained from the airport upon arrival or changed from a type T visa), and a work permit and employment card. The cost of applying for a work permit is around 125 USD, which includes application stamp, service fee, and medical check-up.

(Philippine embassy & Cambodia, 2015). There is no need to leave the country for visa renewal.

2.10 Professional Development

Mobility within the region has been given priority by ASEAN in support of the ASEAN Economic Community. The assumption is that greater mobility within the region will contribute to a better economy. One of the newest ASEAN agreements, in line with the main concerns in the ASEAN Capital Markets Forum (ACMF), facilitates the mobility of professionals engaged in managing capital markets. This is called the ACMF Professional Mobility Framework. There is a new MOU between Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, and Thailand wherein these professionals can make use of an ACMF Pass that permits the provision of “investment advice” in the host country (*Handbook on ACMF Pass under ASEAN Capital Market Professional Mobility Framework*, 2019).

An important policy in the ASEAN Agreement is the Movement of Natural Persons (AAMNP). This agreement is for facilitating the temporary stay of ASEAN businesspersons and investors within the region. This entails the transparency and efficiency of immigration rules for these people (*ASEAN Agreement on the Movement of Natural Persons*, n.d).

Another major policy is “The ASEAN Framework Agreement on Services (AFAS)” which was signed on December 15, 1995. The goal is to liberalize trade in services by removing existing discriminatory barriers and limitations and preventing the addition of new ones (*ASEAN Framework Agreement on Services*, 1995). The AFAS is one of the agreements that was initiated by the organization in order to back

the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC). The agreement is in support of a “single market and production base” for services within the region (*ASEAN Agreement on the Movement of Natural Persons*, n.d). It assumes that the whole region will benefit economically from enhanced mobility of skilled laborers and professionals.

Article V of AFAS states that ASEAN member states can enter into mutual recognition agreements (MRAs) where ASEAN member states recognize each other’s credentials and qualifications for licensing or certification purposes. Such agreements are to be entered into voluntarily and independently. The framework agreement is applicable only to ASEAN members. The agreement was amended on December 31, 2004 to include details on how MRAs are to be framed (*Protocol to Amend the ASEAN Framework Agreement on Services*, 2003).

As of 2022, (*ASEAN Free Trade Area Agreements: ASEAN Investment*) ASEAN has enacted MRAs in eight professions. These are:

- a. Engineering Services (2005)
- b. Nursing Services (2006)
- c. Architectural Services (2007)
- d. Surveying Qualifications (2007)
- e. Dental Practitioners (2009)
- f. Medical Practitioners (2009)
- g. Accountancy Services (2014), and
- h. Tourism Professionals (2012).

Despite the establishment of the MRAs a decade ago, much of the program is still to be implemented. The major challenge to the implementation of the MRAs is the standardization of requirements and qualifications across all ASEAN countries. Below are examples of these problems:

- Seven countries (five for dentistry) require their professionals to be proficient in either English or the local dialect;
 - Four countries require foreign professionals to be graduates from their accredited list of universities;
 - In the case of dentistry, seven countries require their dentists to have a minimum length of study, which is between four and seven years;
 - Five countries require their professionals to pass licensure examinations.
- (Mendoza & Sugiyarto, 2017, p. ix)

Architecture and engineering, on the other hand, have made the biggest strides in MRA implementation. Overall, this is considered slow-paced since only Malaysia and Singapore have functional systems operating. Further, out of the seven professions that are ASEAN accredited, none have yet ventured out of their home countries (Mendoza & Sugiyarto, 2017, p. viii).

As of 2022, there is no MRA for education services, nor are there proposals to develop one despite there have been some clamor for it. Dr. Roger Chao (2017), a consultant for UNESCO, has stated that creating an ASEAN MRA for teaching services would “improve human resource development in ASEAN developing nations, supporting the ASEAN initiative for narrowing the development gap and, in the

medium to long term, it can help to improve and sustain the ASEAN community's economic development." Abel Cadias (2014) from the ASEAN Center of Thaksin University, has also made the case for the creation of an ASEAN MRA for professional teachers, stating the following reasons: (1) it will facilitate the implementation of the other ASEAN MRAs, which have not been fully implemented to full capacity; (2) the teaching profession has more employment opportunities and mobility than the other professions with MRAs; (3) Filipino teachers teaching English-mediated courses can help ASEAN member states in being able to eventually provide English instruction to their own people.

2.11 Education

ASEAN has taken great strides in improving educational development in its region in recent years. One of the major instruments is the development of The ASEAN Qualifications Reference Framework (AQRF), which was endorsed in September 2014 by the economic, education, and labor ministers of all ASEAN countries (*ASEAN Qualifications Reference Framework*, 2015, p. 3).

The AQRF is a venture linked to the ASEAN-Australia-New Zealand Free Trade Area (AANZFTA) (*ASEAN Qualifications Reference Framework*, 2015, p. 4)(ILO, 2014). It is a qualification framework which standardizes qualifications across ASEAN countries by comparing them to existing national qualifications frameworks (NQFs). It bridges the gaps between the existing NQFs without the ASEAN states having to revise their existing NQFs (*ASEAN Qualifications Reference Framework*, 2015, p. 3).

The AQRF also serves as a tool for quality assurance. It is used by education administrators to evaluate educational institutions (both academic and training) if they adhere to its standards (*ASEAN Qualifications Reference Framework*, 2015, p. 4).

The AQRF has eight levels and is anchored in four level descriptors or competence: cognitive, functional, personal, and ethical. It measures two domains: knowledge and skills, and application and responsibility (*ASEAN Qualifications Reference Framework*, 2015, p. 5). This is illustrated in the table below:

Table 2.5

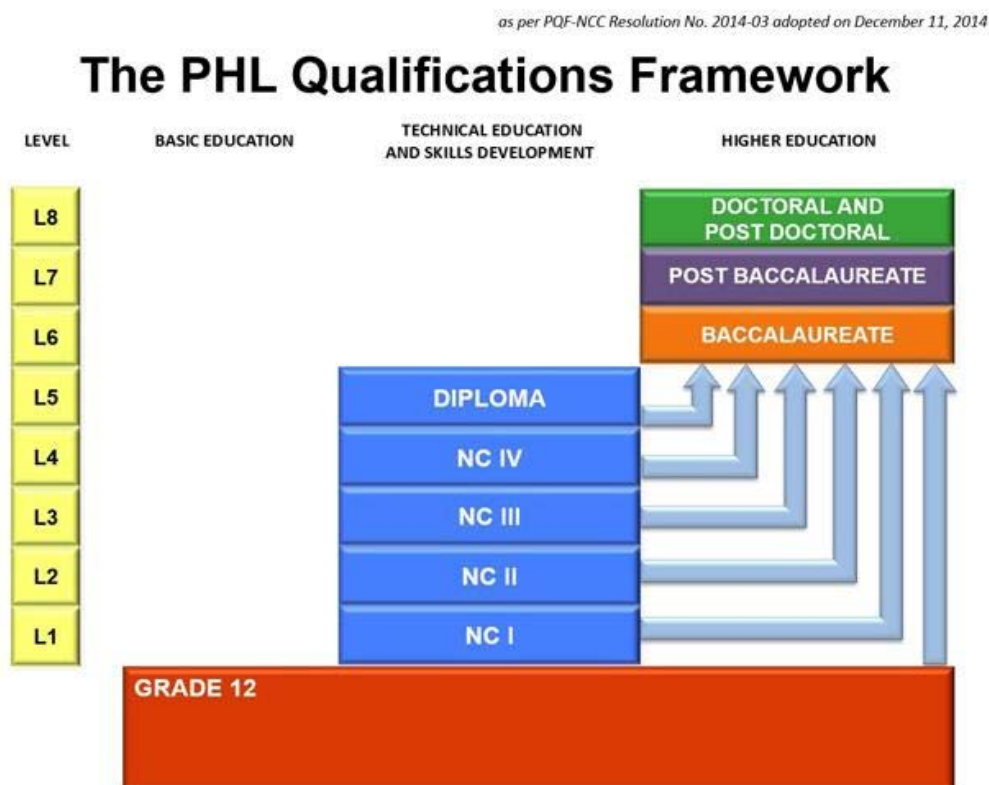
The eight levels of AQRF according to knowledge and skills, and application and responsibility

Knowledge and Skills		Application and Responsibility
Demonstration of knowledge and skills that:		The contexts in which knowledge and skills are demonstrated:
Level 8	• is at the most advanced and specialised level and at the frontier of a field • involve independent and original thinking and research, resulting in the creation of new knowledge or practice	• are highly specialised and complex involving the development and testing of new theories and new solutions to resolve complex, abstract issues • require authoritative and expert judgment in management of research or an organisation and significant responsibility for extending professional knowledge and practice and creation of new ideas and or processes.
Level 7	• is at the forefront of a field and show mastery of a body of knowledge • involve critical and independent thinking as the basis for research to extend or redefine knowledge or practice	• are complex and unpredictable and involve the development and testing of innovative solutions to resolve issues • require expert judgment and significant responsibility for professional knowledge, practice and management
Level 6	• is specialised technical and theoretical within a specific field • involve critical and analytical thinking	• are complex and changing • require initiative and adaptability as well as strategies to improve activities and to solve complex and abstract issues
Level 5	• is detailed technical and theoretical knowledge of a general field • involve analytical thinking	• are often subject to change • involve independent evaluation of activities to resolve complex and sometimes abstract issues
Level 4	• is technical and theoretical with general coverage of a field • involve adapting processes	• are generally predictable but subject to change • involve broad guidance requiring some self- direction and coordination to resolve unfamiliar issues
Level 3	• includes general principles and some conceptual aspects • involve selecting and applying basic methods, tools, materials and information	• are stable with some aspects subject to change • involve general guidance and require judgment and planning to resolve some issues independently
Level 2	• is general and factual • involve use of standard actions	• involve structured processes • involve supervision and some discretion for judgment on resolving familiar issues
Level 1	• is basic and general • involve simple, straightforward and routine actions	• involve structured routine processes • involve close levels of support and supervision

Source: (ASEAN Qualifications Reference Framework, 2015, p. 5)

The Philippines has made significant advancement in aligning its NQF with the AQRF. In 2012, President Benigno Aquino III created Executive Order 83, establishing the Philippine Qualifications Framework (PQF). To administer the creation, implementation, and compliance of the framework, the PQF-National Coordinating Committee was also established. The committee was made up of the following government agencies: The Department of Education (DepEd), the Commission on Higher Education (CHED), the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA), the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) and the Professional Regulation Commission (PRC). Below is the framework:

Figure 2.2. The Philippine Qualifications Framework

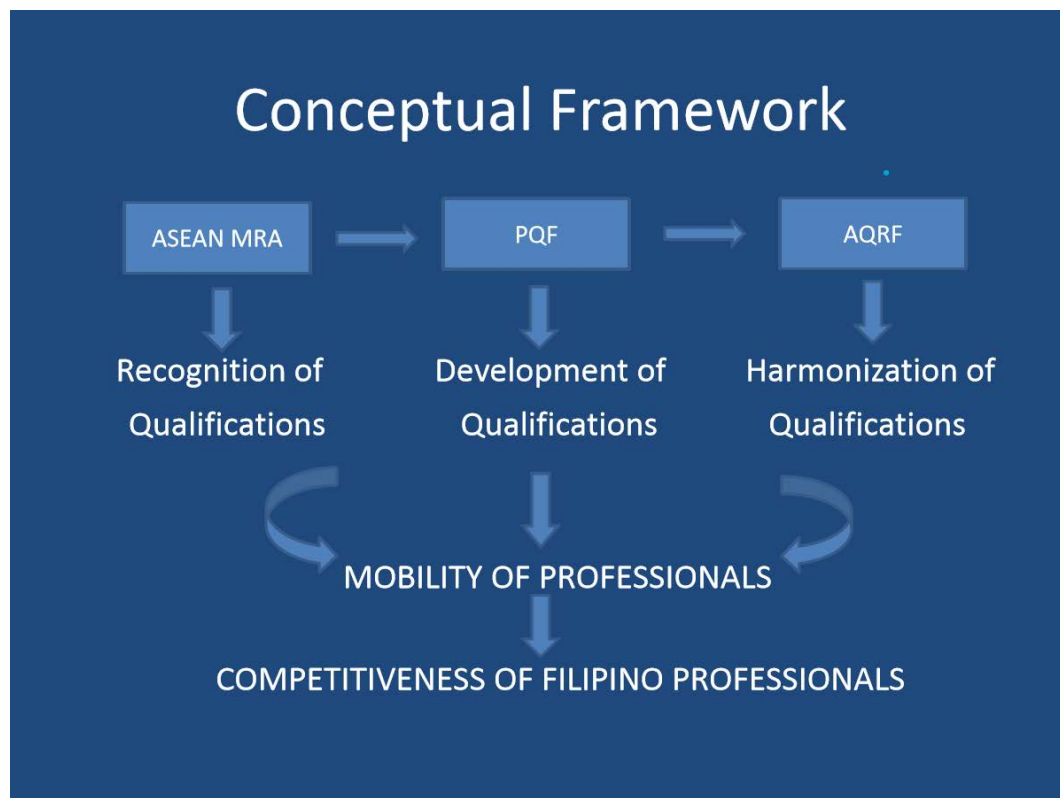


Source: (GovPh, n.d.)

Although the AQRF is intended to be used for all professional and skilled work force within ASEAN, it is essential in the implementation of the ASEAN MRA. With the AQRF, ASEAN professionals that have MRAs are assured that they are qualified to practice their profession in all ASEAN countries. For example, an Indonesian dentist who is accredited under the ASEAN MRA should be able to practice his/her profession in Thailand without much trouble because he/she is qualified to practice in both countries.

Teresa Manzala, the chairperson of the PRC, has presented the conceptual framework on how the PQF and the AQRF works with the ASEAN MRA:

Figure 2.3 A conceptual framework on the dynamics between the PQF, AQRF, and the ASEAN MRA



Source: (BusinessMirror, 2017).

The PQF has been used in reference to the AQRF since 2018 (BusinessMirror, 2017).

ASEAN has further enhanced linkages within its member states and countries outside of the association. It is important to note that the three ASEAN countries in this study have recognized the academic institutions in the Philippines. Therefore, the degrees and teaching licenses of Filipinos obtained in the Philippines were honored in these countries.

One of the ways in which ASEAN is strengthening the educational sector is the establishment of the ASEAN University Network (AUN). The network began in November 1995, comprising 11 universities from six ASEAN countries. It has since grown to 30 universities in all 10 ASEAN universities. The goal of AUN is to strengthen linkages within the region. With the establishment of the ASEAN Charter in 2007, AUN was tasked with implementation of the following activities in the socio-cultural area of the ASEAN community: (1) Youth Mobility, (2) Academic Collaboration, (3) Standards, Mechanisms, Systems and Policies of Higher Education Collaboration, (4) Courses and Programs Development and (5) Regional and Global Policy Platforms (*ASEAN University Network: History and Background*, 2012). Since 2012, the Philippines has had three university members of the network (Ateneo University, De la Salle University, and University of the Philippines). Cambodia has two (Royal University of Phnom Penh and Royal University of Law and Economics). Myanmar has three (University of Yangon, Institute of Economics, Yangon, and University of Mandalay), and Thailand has five (Burapha University, Chulalongkorn University, Chiang Mai University, Mahidol University, and Prince of Songkla University) (*ASEAN University Network: History and Background*, 2012). These universities are considered some of the best in their respective countries.

AUN has been accrediting universities in ASEAN through its quality assurance program (AUN-QA). Ong Johnson has studied 37 programs in ASEAN University in a period of 6 years based on the 15 point-criteria in the AUN-QA program. The conclusion was that there was a significant improvement in quality of instruction, as programs that are considered to be “better than adequate” are rated from one in 2007 to 14 in 2012 (Ong, 2017).

As well as linking ASEAN universities AUN is also engaging with universities in countries outside of ASEAN. AUN has formed links with Japan, China, and South Korea and has agreed to establish an ASEAN Plus Three University Network for further linkages and technological transfers (*Recommendations of the ASEAN 3 Higher Education Policy Dialogue 2009: "Intellectual Contribution to Enhancing the Future of Higher Education in the East Asian Community, 2009*). In October 8, 2003, ASEAN and China signed a “Joint Declaration on ASEAN-China Strategic Partnership for Peace and Prosperity”. Under this agreement AUN and China jointly undertake research, student exchanges, scholarships, recognition of degrees, and visa facilitation for Chinese students who wish to study in ASEAN countries. (*Plan of Action to Implement the Joint Declaration on ASEAN-China Strategic Partnership for Peace and Prosperity - ASEAN: One Vision One Identity One Community, 2016*).

Although AUN has no direct intervention within ASEAN education institutions, it indirectly benefits these institutions in the following aspects:

- Strengthening ASEAN universities, which will produce graduates who are potential teachers of basic education institutions.

- Coordinating programs with the Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organization (SEAMEO), especially in terms of human resource development. SEAMEO has more direct influence with basic education institutions (*ASEAN Education Ministers Meeting, 2012*).

The main policy in AUN that can facilitate human resource migration is the ASEAN Credit Transfer System (ACTS), wherein students in the AUN can have their units and courses accredited within the network (ASEAN University Network, 2012). This implies that accrediting degrees within ASEAN will be much easier.

A network of this nature presupposes that a common language will be needed for communication with each other. As English is the designated working language of ASEAN, it is then imperative that all AUN members use English as the mode of communication within the network, and is also the means by which to empower their academics and students that are within the network. As English is now the lingua franca of the world it is also the mode of communication used when AUN is linking with other universities and networks outside ASEAN. Advance proficiency in English is therefore encouraged within AUN.

The linkage, policies, and activities undertaken by AUN empowers their academics and future graduates, and prospective English teachers within ASEAN will benefit from its interventions.

The extensive activities invoked by ASEAN to strengthen English teaching gives rise to the future possibility that local English teachers will become so proficient that ASEAN countries will no longer need foreign teachers, either NES or non-NES. This has already happened to the Philippines, where locals learned the language

through the American Thomasites (Alberca, 1994) and are now capable of teaching English without foreign assistance. It is also possible therefore that Filipino teachers teaching English-mediated courses might eventually be phased out of Cambodia, Myanmar, and Thailand and be replaced with local teachers. However, through higher quality of education in the region, the socio-economic conditions of ASEAN will continue to progress, and the increased opportunities this will create may leave room for Filipino teachers teaching English-mediated courses in these countries. Filipino teachers teaching English-mediated courses who benefit from the AUN interventions may have a renewed opportunity to work in the Philippines, with superior benefits accorded as a result of an improved economy. Filipino teachers teaching English-mediated courses can also teach outside ASEAN, or work within ASEAN countries in a different capacity.

In general, while there are materials that discuss the intra-ASEAN mobility of professionals in the region as well as few documentations on the important of English language proficiency in the regional integration of Southeast Asia, there is no study yet that basically focuses on the factors of mobility of teachers in the region with special emphasis on the personal and institutional aspects of mobility of the Filipino teachers. Much more, the study attempts to highlight the experience of Filipinos teaching English mediated subjects in developing countries of Cambodia and Myanmar and of Thailand as case studies.

Chapter Three

RESULTS OF THE STUDY

In this chapter, the results of the interviews are analyzed and discussed. In particular, profiles of the respondents are presented to put the discussion in the right context. Moreover, the personal/individual as well as institutional factors of mobility are also analyzed ranging from the host institutions' requirements to compensation, security, career development as well as policies and actions that might have an impact on mobility.

3.1 Profile of Respondents

A total of 11 teachers (five from Thailand, three from Cambodia, and three from Myanmar) were interviewed for this study. Two were interviewed through filling in all the interview questions (both from Thailand), two were interviewed through FB messenger (one from Thailand and one from Myanmar), one through FB messenger video chat (Myanmar), and the others through Zoom (two from Thailand and three from Cambodia). It was fortuitous that the researcher chose a variety of technological methods. Those who chose to be interviewed through Zoom or FB messenger preferred this method, mainly because it is easier for the respondents to express their opinions. Those who chose to be interviewed through FB messenger chat preferred this method because they were concerned about the poor internet connection. Others chose the email interview method because it was more convenient, and it gave them more time to think about their answers.

This researcher had no difficulty finding respondents in Thailand, where she was residing. However, the opposite was the case in obtaining respondents in Cambodia and Myanmar. Unfortunately, because of the limitations in traveling due to

COVID 19, the researcher was not able to travel to these countries to seek respondents personally.

Five Filipino teachers teaching English-mediated courses from Thailand were interviewed for this study. Three Filipino teachers were interviewed from Cambodia, and three Filipino teachers were interviewed from Myanmar. All interviews were completed between April 2020 and September 2020.

It should be noted that (1) the interviews were completed during the early stages of the COVID 19 pandemic; and (2) the respondents in Myanmar were interviewed before the retaking of the Myanmar government by the military junta.

3.1.1 Age

The youngest respondent was 35 years old and the oldest respondent was 51 years old. Average age of the eleven respondents was 42; hence the respondents could be described as “middle-aged”. This could be indicative of the maturity generally of the respondents who go abroad in search for better opportunities for themselves and their families.

3.1.2 Gender and Marital Status

Table 3.1				
<i>Gender</i>				
Gender	Cambodia	Myanmar	Thailand	Total
Male	0	2 (R1 and R3)	2 (R3 and R4)	4
Female	3 (All respondents)	1 (R3)	3 (R1, R2, R5)	7
<i>*R means respondent. Answers are classified according to respondent.</i>				

All respondents in Cambodia were females and singles. All of them were in Cambodia at the time of the interview.

Two of the respondents in Thailand were males and three of them were females. All were married. Four of the respondents were living with their family members in Thailand at the time of the interview. One of the respondents initially was on vacation in the Philippines with his family at the time of the interview. However, because of the COVID 19 pandemic, he and his family had decided not to return to Thailand.

Table 3.2				
<i>Marital Status</i>				
Status	Cambodia	Myanmar	Thailand	Total
Single	3 (All respondents)	1 (R3)	0	4
Married	0	2 (R2 and R3)	5 (all respondents)	7
<i>*R means respondent. Answers are classified according to respondent.</i>				

Two of the respondents in Myanmar were males and one was female. Two were married and one was single. The married man was in Myanmar at the time of the interview and his family was residing with him. The married woman was in the Philippines at the time of the interview and had recently moved back to the Philippines permanently. The single man is soon to retire and was preparing to move back to the Philippines permanently at the time of the interview.

3.1.3 Qualification of teachers

Table 3.3				
<i>Qualification of Teachers</i>				
Qualifications	Cambodia	Myanmar	Thailand	Total
Graduated with Bachelor of education degrees	2	2	5 (all respondents)	9

Graduated with non-education degrees	1	1	0	2
<i>*R means respondent. Answers are classified according to respondent.</i>				

There are two types of teachers that come to ASEAN countries to teach. The first are those teachers who have bachelor degrees in education and/or licensed teachers in the Philippines, and the second type are those graduates of any bachelor degrees other than education. It should be noted that ASEAN countries in recent years do not accept teachers with no bachelor degrees.

Nine Filipino teachers (two from Cambodia, two from Myanmar, and five from Thailand) graduated with bachelor in education degrees. Two respondents (one in Cambodia and one in Myanmar) graduated with non-education related degrees. However, the respondent in Cambodia has a certificate in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL), and the respondent in Myanmar has extensive experience in teaching and facilitating test-takers for the International English Language Testing System (IELTS) in the Philippines.

3.1.4 Teaching positions of the respondents

One of the Filipino teachers in Thailand was a secondary school teacher. The others were primary school teachers. Three of them were also teaching English while two were teaching English mediated courses (Science and Music).

All of the teachers in Cambodia taught primary students. Two of them taught English class and one taught Science course.

One of the teachers in Myanmar taught primary students. Two were teaching high school level students and also served as administrators in the schools at which

they were teaching. One of the respondents had a long and extensive 10-year experience. Aside from teaching, he is also experienced in establishing schools.

Table 3.4				
Teaching Positions				
Nature	Cambodia	Myanmar	Thailand	Total
Primary	3 (All respondents)	1 (R2)	3 (R2, R4, R5-English)	7
Secondary			1 (R1-Science)	1
Both		1 (R1)	1 (R3-Music)	2
Administrative		1 (R3)		1
*R means respondent. Answers are classified according to respondent.				

3.1.5 Nature of schools they were teaching

Table 3.5				
Nature of school where they teach				
Nature	Cambodia	Myanmar	Thailand	Total
Government	3 (all respondents)	3 (All respondents)	2 (R1, R5)	2
Private - Bilingual			2 (R2, R4)	5
Private - International			1 (R3)	4
*R means respondent. Answers are classified according to respondent.				

Two of the teachers found jobs in government schools, two others teaching at Christian schools, and one in an international school. All were teaching at the bilingual programs, where both English and Thai language was used as the medium for instruction.

Moreover, all of the respondents in Cambodia taught at bilingual schools. All respondents in Myanmar taught at international schools.

3.1.6 Number of years teaching in the Philippines

Table 3.6				
<i>No of Years Teaching (Philippines)</i>				
Years of Teaching	Cambodia	Myanmar	Thailand	Total
0-5	3 (All respondents)	2 (R1 and R2)	4 (R2, R3, R4, R5)	9
6-10			1 (R1)	1
11-20		1 (R3)		1
<i>*R means respondent. Answers are classified according to respondent.</i>				

The longest experience among the Filipino teachers who had taught in the Philippines was 11 years, with the shortest being three years. The average length of teaching experience was 4.4 years.

3.1.7 Number of years teaching in their respective countries

Table 3.7				
<i>No of Years Teaching (Respective ASEAN Countries)</i>				
Years of Teaching	Cambodia	Myanmar	Thailand	Total
0-5	2 (R1, R3)		3 (R2, R3, and R5)	5
6-10	1 (R2)	1 (R1)	2 (R1 and R4)	4
11-20		2 (R2 and R3)		2
<i>*R means respondent. Answers are classified according to respondent.</i>				

The longest teaching experience among the respondents was 20 years while the shortest was two years. The average length of teaching experience for all respondents in the three countries was six years.

3.2. Individual/Personal Factors of Mobility

Four individual/personal factors of mobility are explored in this study. These are (1) whether the Filipino teachers are better equipped in their English proficiency skills, (2) whether they believe they have sufficient educational qualifications, (3) whether they are happy or not happy with their working conditions, and (4) whether they are satisfied with their compensation.

3.2.1 English proficiency

An ordinary Filipino is taught English as early as kindergarten. English is used as a medium of instruction in primary and secondary schooling. English is extensively used in universities and colleges, and is used in government and business transactions. English is also used in informal conversations, and in media and social media. Filipinos who are not conversant in English are usually those who did not have formal education. Therefore, it can be assumed that all Filipinos who go overseas for work are confident in their English skills. All applicants are required to submit their documents to eligibility including the acquisition of their bachelor degrees.

Further, Filipino teachers before hiring were all interviewed by the host academic institution to test their English proficiency. Some of them were required to pass tests such as Test of English for International Communication (TOEIC). Thus, they believed that it was unfair to give NES teachers higher salaries when they

themselves passed the rigorous process of vetting. One respondent sarcastically said that NES teachers are only good at their “slang” pronunciation and so far, has not heard of any complaints from the parents about their pronunciation. Further discussion on the Filipino teachers’ belief that they are discriminated are discussed in section 3.3.10.

3.2.2 Educational Qualifications

All respondents are armed with their bachelor degrees and are confident in their ability to teach using English as medium of instruction. This belief is further reinforced when hearing other OFWs success stories abroad. Because of this, Filipino teachers are subsequently motivated to work abroad.

Same feeling with regards to their English proficiency. With their qualifications, they believed that they are competent or even better than their NES counterparts when delivering their courses to students.

Another reason why Filipino teachers want to work overseas is because they believed that working overseas in an international environment will improve their academic profile. This was mentioned by one respondent from Thailand and another one from Myanmar who were both teaching in international schools.

Moreover, another major consideration of Filipino teachers in working abroad is the opportunity to upgrade further their qualifications. These developments include (1) establishment of MOOCs (from universities, learning centers, and government centers like TESDA); and (2) the designation of Thailand as one of the testing centers of the Licensure Examination for Teachers (LET). Such designation makes the test accessible to prospective Filipino teachers who are currently employed in neighboring

countries. With these opportunities in place, Filipino teachers will have no qualms of teaching overseas.

3.2.3 Working Conditions

One major factor why Filipino teachers leave the Philippines to work abroad was due to the heavy workload. As stated in the review of literature earlier, most of the work (e.g., preparing for lessons, preparing assessment tools, and computing grades) are done outside of working hours. The demands of teaching in the Philippines have worn off some teachers over time. This is clearly shared by one respondent in Cambodia.

“I think living here in Cambodia does not make a big difference than living in the Philippines... but working here as a teacher is so much better. Way back 2018, when I was teaching senior high school in a public school (in the Philippines) I never had so much time for myself and for my family. There was infinite work and I was quite overloaded in school. I taught 4 different subjects and I had to prepare 4 different lessons weekly. I was an adviser teacher and so I had to prepare more than 12 forms/reports at the end of the month, also sometimes we had to stay late in the afternoon until evening time with some of my students to do the gardening as part of the school activities (which is unpaid overtime). Moreover, not only teachers were overloaded but also students. Because of the ambitious curriculum guide from the DepEd, teachers had to compress 5-8 lessons in a week and that puts pressure to students. There's so much lesson weekly in the new guidelines and most are not even attainable due to lack of facilities and materials of the school. On top of that, we had a rude and mean principal who never showed support to teachers he dislikes (and I was of one them).

Another push factor is the working environment especially for public teachers. The lack of support from the Philippine government particularly the policies of the Department of Education (DepEd). Another respondent lamented that she did not receive enough support from the Philippines.

In the Philippines, I think teachers are not given enough support and assistance from the government. In fact, when the teacher's salary

increased, the workloads had been doubled...it didn't make sense. So instead of spending time learning new teaching techniques in a classroom, teachers are pressured spending most of their time doing portfolios and hundreds of documentations that are being required by the Department of Education. No portfolio in DepEd means no year-end bonus. I think this system should be abandoned; mental health of teachers should be the priority.

Further, as cited in the review of literature, too much work outside the official working hours takes away the time needed for the body to recharge, and quality time with family and friends. Deprivation of quality time affects the mental health of the person. One respondent in Thailand described the situation as follows:

I worked for 6 years in the Philippines in a private school. I experienced bringing work at home, had sleepless nights to do paperwork, sometimes even weekends I have to do schoolwork, which took away my time not only for myself but also for my family. In short, teaching in Philippines is exhausting."

Another factor is the provision of more modern technology as teaching support in many schools in Southeast Asia than in the Philippines. Here is a comment from one of the respondents:

Living and working in Thailand is better for me...In terms of working in Thailand it is also way better. I don't have to deal with a lot of paper work, instead I'm more focused on my teaching. I also use digital materials in my teaching. We have smart board for interactive activities provided by our school and all classrooms have it. Unlike in the Philippines you have to provide your own projector or LED TV if you want to upgrade your teaching.

The use of modern technology is important since it lightens the teachers' workload. Another respondent in Thailand has given the following response:

It's more systematic and it's more advanced in terms of technology...records. Because in the Philippines they're still doing lots of forms...very conventional type of system. For the past three years, I've never used a hard copy of lesson plans...never used a hard copy of class records. And I've never filled out a number of forms for my

students, it's all on the computer, it's all online. And it's easy to collaborate, easy to check. So that's it, yeah. So, it's very technically and technologically advanced, more systematic.

3.2.4 Compensation

Last, but not the least is the competitive compensation. As stated in the review of literature, the salary for teachers in the Philippines is lower comparable to the compensation given to their ASEAN counterparts.

Compensation includes other benefits on top of salary. One respondent from Thailand particularly commented regarding the health care benefits.

Another thing is, health insurance, yes. I think health insurance is the best part, compared to PhilHealth (laughing) (In context, this interview was done during the PhilHealth issue where there was a memorandum on the increase of premiums to be paid by OFWs). I would say this straight, but never experienced a good record from PhilHealth, just paying for it. I don't see it...I don't feel it's very beneficial. Like, I got sick and I got hospitalized for a number of times and...never...never feel any assistance from PhilHealth. But yes, the health care in Thailand is way way better.

However, he also admitted that unlike in the Philippines, teachers do not get retirement benefits. This is something that all teachers should carefully consider when planning their career abroad.

When you are doing your work as a teacher at present, you get all the benefits, all the good compensation, and a good working environment, but when it comes to the future, I don't think so. Like, you don't get retirement here. I mean, you don't get retirement benefits here in a foreign land as Filipino teachers. But if you work in the Philippines as a teacher, you get benefits as a public servant, as a good employee.

It is also due to this reason that Filipino teachers prefer not to work overseas or go back to the Philippines as soon as they have acquired enough money. Two

respondents from Myanmar have, as of this time, went back to the Philippines. One retired teacher after a fruitful career abroad is planning to go back into consultancy. The other went back and helped her husband in their business.

3.3 Institutional Factors of Mobility

In this section, the institutional factors of mobility are examined using the responses of the Filipino teachers who were assigned to handle English mediated courses as well as of the administrators of schools in Cambodia, Myanmar, and Thailand. The responses of the officials of the Philippine embassies in Myanmar and Thailand also enriched the discussion. Among the topics deliberated are the perceptions on Filipino teachers, the impact of the shifting trends to learning and teaching of ESL/ELF, upgrade qualifications, ease of mobility and compliance to teaching qualifications and immigration requirements, competitive compensation, favorable working conditions and many more.

3.3.1 Perceptions on Filipinos teaching English-mediated courses

All of the school administrators who were interviewed had found that Filipinos teaching English-mediated courses were easy to work with. They considered them to be respectful, compliant, professional and have good empathy with students. The Filipinos teaching English-mediated courses were also considered easy to please, were not demanding of expensive accommodation, and were noticeably very focused on their work. One administrator believed that because Filipinos are Asians and imbibed the Asian culture, they understand Thais better than NES who are Westerners. The NES respondent did say that one disadvantage of Filipinos teaching English-mediated courses is that “they are sometimes unable to ‘get ’ the western ideas and cultural idiosyncrasies.”

When asked if the parents of their students were satisfied with their Filipino teachers who are handling English-mediated courses, all of them answered affirmatively. Parents did not discriminate and were happy with the teacher's performance despite the fact that most communication was done through the intercession of Thai teachers.

For Ms. Supphakant, the main advantage of hiring Filipinos teaching English-mediated courses over NES teachers was the lower salary, as Filipinos teaching English-mediated courses are generally paid less than their NES counterparts. She considered an advantage that Filipinos have a culture that is closer to Thais.

She also preferred to hire Filipinos teaching English-mediated courses, as compared to Thai teachers. She believed that Filipinos are more fluent in English because English in Thailand is treated simply as "just a foreign language" whereas in the Philippines it is considered the second language.

She pointed out further the advantage of hiring Filipinos teaching English-mediated courses because Thai teachers would often speak Thai when teaching English, whereas Filipinos teaching English-mediated courses speak only English in the classroom. The opinion of the official was that it was better for teachers to speak only English to their class, rather than translating English words to Thai. This meant that if English was spoken to students most of the time, they are compelled to learn the language faster.

Furthermore, it is also observed that both NES teachers and Filipino teachers speak English in class always or most of the time. However, Filipino teachers are observed to pronounce the words differently from the way they are said by native

English speakers. For example, the sound of /t/ in “Thailand” is similar to the /t/ sound of NES speakers (which is a crisp sound made when the tongue touches the tooth ridge) and is aspirated. However, the Filipino way of producing the /t/ sound is the flat tongue touching the palate. It then produces a hard /t/ sound, sounding as “Tailand”. Filipinos may be more fluent in English than Thais. However, the latter can easily determine whether a teacher speaks good English or not.

3.3.2 Shifting trends towards ESL/EFL learning and teaching (e.g., “global Englishes, using of local language in teaching English”)

Two respondents, both from Thailand, agreed that other speakers of English, aside from the NES, should be recognized. One administrator believed that while the school administration believes that it is better to have an NES, it is still good to expose the students to various kinds of English speakers with different accents and pronunciations. This would be helpful for better communication.

The NES respondent, on the other hand, believed that there should be standards of both written and spoken English. He believed that written English should be of a higher standard, with less informal content than spoken English. He contended that English was an important means of communication and if some variations were too far from NES values, they become less useful.

Moreover, the official at the Ministry of Education (MOE) said that the Thai Government has acknowledged the importance of taking into consideration ‘global Englishes’ for two reasons. The first is that Thai English learners should be exposed to different kinds of English in order to communicate efficiently. The second reason is the country has recognized that NNES who use English as a second language (such

as India and the Philippines) have developed enough fluency at par with NES teachers.

3.3.3 Need for the ASEAN countries to improve English proficiency

The official at the MOE thought that Thailand had recognized its need to improve English proficiency. The government is currently developing a project to expand the bilingual programs of its public schools by hiring more teachers. The country plans to hire around 10,000 English teachers (both NES and NNES) for this project.

3.3.4 Institutions' academic standard and requirements

All respondents said that their school required foreign teachers to be equipped with qualifications in order to smoothly facilitate the processing of their visas.

One administrator even mentioned that they have assessed the foreign teacher's pronunciation during the interview before hiring. They want to ensure that pronunciation is clearer and understandable to please those parents who paid extra for the teacher's salary.

For the MOE, it is a strict requirement that Filipinos teaching English-mediated courses who want to teach in Thailand must have a bachelor's degree. A degree in education is the most ideal, but any bachelor's degree is acceptable. Teachers who are not education majors are expected to get a teaching certificate, or 28 units of teaching, in order to get a teaching license in Thailand. It is worthy to note here that those teaching certificates are no longer acceptable for non-teaching degrees as of 2022. They must complete at least a diploma in teaching or get a **Thai** teaching license.

3.3.5 Continuous opportunities to upgrade qualifications

All administrators have said that they have helped their Filipino teachers in upgrading their skills. The NES head said that they offered support services to their Filipino teachers. In fact, they encouraged sharing and discussing teaching ideas and lesson plans in our kindergarten meetings. Furthermore, they observed their classes and also gave feedback (for new Filipino teachers teaching English-mediated courses). They also gave them advice about behavior management and entrusted to them the tasks involving planning school events. One respondent said that teachers at the start of their classes tested their students on whether they understood their lessons regularly. The other respondent said that they provided teachers with seminars and needed technology.

The official wanted to develop all teachers in Thailand, to better train them to handle students effectively. As one of the requirements for renewal are seminars and training certificates, it can be implied that the government encourages the foreign teachers to upgrade their qualifications.

3.3.6 Competitive compensation

All respondents admitted that they hired Filipinos because they accepted lower salaries than NES teachers. One respondent from a public school said that because their school is small, located in a remote area, and mostly caters to children from the hill tribes, they cannot afford to hire the NES teacher. Instead, they asked parents to pay an extra 700 baht per student (around 900 Philippine pesos) or 1,400 baht (around 1,800 Philippine pesos) per semester if they have more than two children studying at the school to hire and maintain two Filipino teachers that will handle English-mediated courses in the school.

The officer at the MOE in Thailand also admitted that salaries of NNEST teachers are lower compared to the compensation received by NES teachers. While it is still advantageous to hire NES teachers because of their fluency and “correct” pronunciation, Thailand still encounters difficulty in employing NES teachers despite the offer of higher pay. Hence, it is not surprising that more schools, especially small or medium-sized schools continuously employed NNEST teachers for many years.

3.3.7 Ease of mobility and compliance to teaching qualifications and immigration requirements

All administrators strictly adhered to the government policy by requiring a bachelor’s degree and teaching experience to all teaching applicants. All of them said that they have had no difficulty obtaining these documents from applicants to comply with schools’ requirements or for visa processing.

The official believes that it is not difficult for teachers to comply with the requirements of the MOE. She believed that teachers should find it easy to comply with the documents as long as they secured the appropriate certificate/s (diploma or teaching certificate).

The utilization of the AQRF in judging qualifications, however, was not discussed in the interview. Nevertheless, it is obvious that the concept is applied in Thailand, because it has recognized educational attainment in the Philippines.

Overall, the opinions of the school administrators and the MOE toward Filipinos teaching English-mediated courses are generally positive. However, they emphasized that fluency and good pronunciation are still important in teaching English and accent reduction are imperative.

3.3.8 Teacher's opinions

As stated earlier in the conceptual framework, the researcher has focused on five areas for the interview: (1) competitive compensation, (2) easy visa processing (which includes the process of getting a work/business permit), (3) favorable working conditions, (4) living conditions compared to the Philippines, and (5) Opportunity to upgrade qualifications.

One of the questions in the interview was to rank these factors on what the respondents liked about their host country (with 1 as the highest and 5 as the lowest). The results have been tabulated as follows:

Table 3.8

Ranking of factors as to why they like teaching in their host country

Variables	Thailand						Cambodia				Myanmar				Total
	R 1	R 2	R 3	R 4	R5 *	Ave	R 1	R 2	R 3	Ave	R 1	R 2	R 3	Ave	Ave
Competitive compensation	2	4	4	1		2.75	3	2	1	2	1	1	1	1	2
Easy visa processing	3	5	5	5		4.5	1	1	3	1.67	4	3	5	4	3.5
Favorable working conditions	1	1	1	3		1.5	2	3	2	2.3	2	4	3	3	2.2
Living conditions compared to the Philippines	4	2	2	2		2.5	4	4	5	4.3	5	5	2	4	3.5
Opportunities to upgrade qualifications	5	3	3	4		3.75	5	5	4	4.6	3	2	4	3	3.8
*R5 did not answer the question regarding the ranking correctly, but some of her answers have been mentioned in this research.															

For the teachers in Thailand, the highest rating was favorable working conditions (1.5). Second was living conditions compared to the Philippines (2.5). Third was competitive compensation (2.75). Fourth was opportunities to upgrade qualifications (3.75), and last was easy visa processing (4.5).

For the teachers in Cambodia, the highest rating was easy visa processing (1.67). The second rank went to competitive compensation (2) while the third was favorable working conditions (2.3). The fourth rank was living conditions compared to the Philippines (4.3), and last was opportunities to upgrade qualifications (4.6).

For the teachers in Myanmar, the highest rating was competitive compensation (1). Second was equal between favorable working conditions and opportunities to upgrade qualifications. Last was equal between easy visa processing and living conditions compared to the Philippines (4).

In terms of compensation, the respondents felt that Cambodia and Myanmar were much more competitive than Thailand. Such a response is pretty obvious since all respondents in Cambodia were employed in private bilingual schools while all the respondents in Myanmar taught in international schools. It should be noted that Cambodia facilitates easier visa processing than the two other countries. This is understandable because in Cambodia teachers need only an agent to process the visa, whereas in Thailand personal appearance is necessary, and in Myanmar, it is necessary to go out of the country every three months. Thailand has the highest rating regarding favorable working and living conditions compared to the Philippines. This is mainly because Thailand has a higher GDP (501.71) than the Philippines (361.49), while Cambodia (25.19) and Myanmar (81.26) both have lower GDP than the Philippines (*ASEAN Countries GDP 2021*, 2021). Lastly, Myanmar has the highest

rating regarding opportunities to upgrade qualifications. The teachers who taught in international schools had more resources to facilitate training outside of the school—even overseas.

In averaging the responses of all respondents, the highest rating was compensation (2.0), followed by favorable working conditions (2.2), then a tie between easy visa processing and living conditions compared to the Philippines (3.5). The lowest rating was opportunities to upgrade qualifications (3.8).

In the analysis of results, as shown in Table 15, the order of discussion for each factor was based on the overall rating of the respondents.

3.3.9 Competitive compensation

All respondents said in their interviews that higher compensation compared to the Philippines was the main reason why they enjoyed working in their respective countries. All of the teachers were in agreement that compensation is competitive in the ASEAN countries where they are teaching. All Filipino teachers teaching English-mediated courses in all three ASEAN countries in this study, except one, were paid more than US \$1,000 per month. As stated earlier in Chapter 2 (Review of Literature), a teacher teaching in a public school must be a Master Teacher II (with salary grade level 19) or Principal II (with salary grade level 19) in order to receive similar compensation in the Philippines (Llego et al., 2019).

All teachers in Thailand receive other benefits in addition to their basic compensation. Additional benefits vary but all included free lunch and health insurance. One of the teachers, from a prominent government secondary school, had Social Security. Two respondents had their own children studying at the schools

where they were teaching, and received discounted or free tuition. Two respondents were given extra tutorial classes to handle after regular class hours. One said that he taught for an hour three times a week and received an additional 3,000 baht (around US \$100) a month. One of the respondents, who worked at one of the prestigious schools in the city, had the best compensation package among the respondents teaching in Thailand. She is entitled to an annual bonus, a yearly salary increase based on performance, a Christmas bonus, ten days of personal leave, 15 days of sick leave, and a budget of 25,000 baht for a round trip plane ticket to home country every three years.

The teachers in Myanmar, on the other hand, gave the highest rating to compensation because all the respondents taught in international schools where salaries and benefits are higher than other schools. They were also paid to visit their home countries during summer break. The school also paid for their travel going in and out of the country for visa purposes.

In Cambodia health insurance is mandatory, so all teachers had health insurance.

3.3.10 Favorable working conditions

All teachers agreed that the working conditions in their host countries were better than the Philippines. A principal theme in all of the discussions was that the workload in the countries where they are teaching at present was lighter than in the Philippines. When they were in the Philippines all of them were encumbered with a large amount of paper works and administrative requirements from the school. Because of these requirements, they believed that they did not have sufficient time for

teaching preparation, and eventually deprived quality time for their families or for themselves.

In addition, one of the respondents came to Thailand in 2009 and taught in a public school for two years. She then went back to the Philippines and taught in a government school for three years; subsequently returning to Thailand where she is currently teaching in a private school. It is worth noting that despite the security of tenure and the benefits accorded to public school teachers in the Philippines, she still chose to return to Thailand because of better work conditions and compensation.

One respondent in Thailand described the situation as follows:

“For me, living in the Philippines is better than here in Thailand. You can be yourself without worrying anything like you don’t need to adjust to almost everything like language, way of living, culture, customs, beliefs, foods etc. And you are always near your family and friends (physically). That’s why I am still wishing that one day soon, I can go back home.

On the other hand, the reason why I am still working here in Thailand is that my workload here as a foreign teacher is much lighter and easier than in Philippines. Thai people have a saying called “sabai-sabai” which means enjoy life. Seldom I bring home paperwork at home. Thus, I always have a weekend-family time.”

Another respondent in Thailand also commented about the burdensome paperwork in the Philippines, but has offered a suggestion, which is to take advantage of technology. She has said the following:

“It’s more systematic and it’s more advanced in terms of technology...records. Because in the Philippines they’re still doing lots of forms...very conventional type of system. For the past three years, I’ve never used a hard copy of lesson plans...never used a hard copy of class records. And I’ve never filled out a number of forms for my students, it’s all in the computer, it’s all online. And it’s easy to collaborate, easy to check. So that’s it, yeah. So, it’s very technically and technologically advanced, more systematic.”

Further, one of the respondents in Thailand said “I can prepare well and have more time in lesson planning since the school is not giving us a lot of paperwork to do”.

A respondent in Cambodia had the following response:

While here in Cambodia, I only have 1-2 different lesson preparation in a semester. I work in school only during the working hours with a flexible time and do not have to bring home school works. I work in a school that has one of the best curriculums in the country. We practice constructivist approach that allows the learners to learn in different ways based on their learning needs and abilities. A real-world transfer activities are integrated into our lessons so students can learn and experience new things by doing them on their own. Furthermore, I don't have to worry about my mental health because I work with enthusiastic and supportive colleagues, especially our coordinator who had been encouraging us to give our best in everything we do.”

One of the respondents in Thailand said “while I don't prefer a particular environment, I really like working with people who are committed to getting things done and who are passionate about their work. Thus, these are the working attitude that I like most with Thai people which also gives me a reason to like teaching in Thailand.” Another respondent said that he preferred working in Thailand because he liked teaching in an international environment.

However, one of the respondents experienced “culture shock” when he worked in Thailand (where he worked in public and private bilingual schools). Unlike in the Philippines, where most students can comprehend English, only a few students in Thailand are proficient in English. Further, he had to adjust to the school system in the country. He said that he was able to adjust and overcome his difficulties because of his passion for teaching.

One respondent from each country (Cambodia, Myanmar, and Thailand,) said that they appreciated the fact that all of the resources they needed for teaching were provided and they did not need to pay for teaching materials out of their own pocket.

With regard to the question of discrimination by school administrators against NES and Filipinos, none had experienced it in their working relationship. The school administrators appeared to get along well with the Filipino teachers and often praised them for being hard workers and easier to work with than their NES counterparts. Most school administrators gave Filipino teachers responsibilities such as organizing English summer camps. They have also supported the Filipino teachers against complaints from parents. A main factor arising from the responses was that respondents worked hard to build the trust of their school administrators.

The researcher had the opportunity to interview a respondent who had worked in Yangon, Myanmar for 20 years. He had pioneered schools in Myanmar and had also been employed as principal. He affirmed that school administrators in Myanmar were satisfied with the performance of Filipino teachers, and that he and his co-teachers had previously formed the opinion that Filipino teachers were excellent teachers. However, new Filipino teachers came in large numbers in recent years that demonstrated poor competence which consequently diminished the good reputation of Filipino teachers.

Although there was minimal discrimination as far as relationships with school supervisors were concerned, there was reported discrimination regarding salary. Three respondents in Thailand had complained of the wage gap between NES and the Filipinos. One of the respondents estimated the gap between the NES teacher and the Filipino teacher to be around 5,000 baht (approximately 7,000 PHP) per month. In

fact, one of the respondents in Thailand had the following experience in her previous school:

“I was discriminated because of the color of my skin. The head of foreign teachers offered me 15 thousand to start, after the probation period I will get the basic salary. After my probation period I asked him about my salary raise he answered that I can't have the same salary as the Natives because I'm not white. Natives get 23-25 thousand. I even told him that I have a license from the Philippines and I'm a Professional Teacher. For him, only Natives deserve 23-25 thousand monthly salaries.

She has since moved to her present school, which pays her the same salary and benefits as NES teachers.

Furthermore, one of the respondents has commented that although he had the same pay as the NES teachers, he had superior teaching qualifications.

One respondent in Myanmar has the same sentiment. Newly hired NES teachers were paid US \$2,000 per month while Filipinos teaching English-mediated courses were paid less than US \$1,000 per month. His salary was larger than his NES counterparts, but only because he had taught in the school for 12 years.

No respondents had experienced discrimination from their colleagues, either NES or Thai staff. One respondent in Thailand has opined that she actually had more issues working with fellow Filipinos abroad. They are more competitive with their fellow Filipinos than with NES and Thai teachers. This sentiment was also shared by one respondent in Myanmar where he said that, “The most painful situation where your ‘kapwa pinoy’ (*fellow Filipino*) which has the attitude of crab mentality - ang sya pa ang sisira at hahatak sayo pababa (*are the ones who will pull you down*)”.

The respondents did not experience discrimination from students either. On the contrary, the teachers reported that they felt sincerity and love from their students.

Two respondents in Thailand thought that a significant challenge was teaching their students critical thinking skills. One of the respondents explained:

I can say it's more challenging to teach the learners here in Thailand because they use to have this spoon-feeding learning style and with this, I am encouraged to change the concept instead help them developed their critical thinking which I think the best method to prepare them for a bigger task in the future.

Moreover, one respondent from Thailand, Cambodia, and Myanmar respectively had experienced discrimination from parents. One of the respondents in Thailand intimated that he would hear school administrators promising parents that they will hire fewer Asian teachers because parents prefer that their children learn with NES teachers. One respondent in Cambodia had an experience where a parent, having discovered that her child's teacher was a Filipino, threatened to remove her child from the school. The school administrator defended the Filipino teacher, and the parent eventually accepted the situation.

There were instances that other parents who at first were apprehensive of Filipino teachers but would later on accept and trust them after they witnessed the capability of the latter. In fact, two teachers in Thailand have experienced being given gifts by the parents.

3.3.11 Visa processing

The respondents in Thailand were asked their opinion regarding visa processing. Almost all respondents except for one thought that their visa processing was relatively easy because their schools processed the visa for them, and they only had to attend for the personal appearance. For one respondent, the response of the officials in the immigration are varied—sometimes positive, sometimes negative, as what he has narrated:

Nasabi ko, pana-panahon. Masabi kong mahirap kung minsan kasi yung school namin kung minsan mabagal silang mag-ano...mabagal silang kumilos. At humahantong pag minsan na nagkaubusan na ng oras...yung ang pahirapan, unang-una. Tapos pag dumating ka naman sa opisina mismo ng immigration, may mga officers na medyo maselan sila. At konting kulang lang, isang kapisaso lang na papel na sabihin natin hindi gaanong importante kung minsan, pag sinumpong sila (laugh), medyo pinapabalik ka pa kinaumagahan o bukas makalawa. So yun yung pahirapan kung minsan na sinasabi ko. Sa eskwelahan mo mismo kung minsan, minsan doon mismo sa opisina ng immigration. Siguro sa labor, sa work permit, hindi ko pa nasubukan na naantala doon, so siguro mas madali sa labor.

Translation:

"I said, it depends on the situation. I can say that it is hard sometimes because our school sometimes is slow in...it is slow to act (referring to processing of papers). And then, when you go to the immigration office, there are some immigration officers that are too strict. If they feel like it, they would ask you to come back early tomorrow morning or the day after next just for an unimportant document. That is what I meant by the system making it hard for us (to get a visa). At times, it is because of the school, at times, it is because of the immigration office. I guess it is easier for the ministry of labor office (where the work permit is processed)."

The respondents in Thailand were also asked if they had any problems complying with the requirements. All respondents said that because they had all their required documents with them, they did not have any compliance problems. However, one of the respondents found validating his requirements to be a challenge. He graduated from a university in the southern part of the Philippines. He had to go back to his school and obtain a certified copy, get it stamped, and then have the documents authenticated—which meant getting red ribbon stamps from both the Department of Foreign Affairs in the Philippines and the Philippine embassy in Thailand. He narrated his experience as follows:

"No, it's not strict, but it's not that very fast and it's not convenient. Kasi, for example, in my case, I graduated in Southern Mindanao, I live in Cebu, and then the main office for the DFA is in Manila. So, I have to request to way back

Southern Mindanao, and then forward it to my recent education, which is my masters in Cebu, and then my school in Cebu will forward all the documents from my college to my masters to DFA Manila. And then, if you're living in Cebu, you have to ask for someone to claim it from Manila. So, a bit tricky, so...And there is like my experience last time was they issue my claim stub in Cebu, and then I have to pick it up in Manila. Weird, no? Very weird system (laughing). Usually, where you get your claim stub that's where you get your file. But it's not like that so...unless you're...if you're from Manila. So, you apply from Manila, you get your claim stub from Manila, then you get your documents in Manila. But if you're from other countries, I mean other regions or provinces, it's a totally different story."

Although teaching in Myanmar requires a regular process of going out of the country and processing of the business visa at the Myanmar embassy, the respondents had no specific complaints. Since the school paid their transportation expenses, they viewed this as an opportunity for relaxation and recreation (as they go to countries such as Thailand or back to the Philippines).

None of the respondents in Cambodia had complaints as to visa processing, since they need only to pay for a broker to do the visa processing for them. One respondent in Cambodia, who had visited Thailand several times, had been familiar with visa processing in Thailand. She considered the visa processing in Cambodia to be significantly easier than in Thailand as there was no requirement to personally appear at the Cambodian immigration office. They also had no problems complying with the requirements, and the visa expenses were paid by the school.

However, one respondent from Myanmar and two respondents in Cambodia said that their respective immigration offices had recently become stricter regarding the qualifications of the teachers. The education offices of these countries want to upgrade the standards of their teachers.

3.3.12 Living conditions

Except for two of the respondents in Myanmar, all respondents said that it was cheaper to live in the respective host country where they were teaching than in the Philippines.

The respondents also felt safer in their host countries than in the Philippines. In fact, one respondent in Myanmar said that people can put their money in plastic bags or freely wear jewelry without fear that a thief will snatch their belongings. Personal items accidentally left in the restaurant or on public transportation would be returned to the owner if they could be located. He also felt peaceful as there were no rallies or demonstrations. This opinion might, of course, have changed since the coup by the military junta.

However, there were respondents who, at the time of this study, had plans to go back to the Philippines. One respondent in Thailand was deciding whether to avail of the “Sa Pinas, Ikaw ang Ma’am at Sir (SPIMS) program” (roughly translated as “In the Philippines, you are the Ma’am and Sir”) of the Philippines’ Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) (owwamember, 2022). It is an OFW reintegration program wherein Filipino teachers who had worked abroad and went back to the Philippines can work again as elementary or secondary teachers in public schools. This respondent is a board passer (one of the requirements to avail of the program) and she wanted to take care of her aged mother. Further, she still prefers her children to get their education in the Philippines. Two respondents in Myanmar had definite plans to return to the Philippines. One of them will be helping her husband in their business, and another one will be retiring from teaching.

3.3.13 Opportunity to upgrade qualifications

All respondents said that the schools in their respective countries gave them in-house training and supported them in attending seminars out-of-town. One respondent in Myanmar had received regular training because his school is a human resources training provider in Yangon. He had also been to Singapore a number of times for training.

One respondent from Thailand and another from Myanmar have considered working overseas in an international school to upgrade their qualifications. The respondent in Thailand said that he considered it fortunate to be able to work with colleagues and teach students of different nationalities.

One respondent in Cambodia had also recognized the efforts of the Philippine embassy in organizing and sponsoring seminars for Filipino teachers.

In conclusion, the most important reason why Filipino teachers continue to work in other ASEAN countries was competitive compensation. It is expected that this is the main consideration when Filipinos decide to work abroad. Favorable working conditions were the second factor. Teachers would want to work in a school where they can teach well and where they can have a good work-life balance. Easy visa processing and better living conditions than the Philippines (3.5) came as the third factor respectively. Filipino teachers have their peace of mind when their visas have no complications, and when the place they are residing is livable. The lowest rank went to opportunities to upgrade qualifications (3.8). Upgrading qualifications will not only strengthen the pedagogical skills of the teachers but will further allow them to have more career prospects, better chances of teaching longer, and stronger qualifications to meet work and visa requirements.

3.4 Policies and Actions on Mobility

3.4.1. Mechanisms to protect Filipino English Teachers

To understand better mobility and the challenges attached to it, the researcher has decided to consult the officials of the Philippine missions. Before proceeding, the researcher had obtained permission from the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) before conducting interviews with the Philippine embassies. The Philippine embassies in Thailand and Cambodia sent responses to the interview questions. The Philippine embassy in Myanmar, unfortunately did not respond.

The questions included in the interview questions and later examined concentrate on the institutional factors of mobility such as: ease of mobility and compliance regarding teaching qualifications and immigration requirements; favorability of working conditions; existing policies pertaining to foreign teachers (from the government of their host country, from the Philippines, and from ASEAN); and receptivity of the Philippine government in responding to the problems faced by Filipino English teachers.

3.4.1.1 Ease of mobility and compliance to teaching qualifications and immigration requirements. As was said in the review of literature, most Filipino English teachers entered the country as tourists to look for work and then went back to the Philippines later to register as OFWs. The Philippines Government policy is to recommend against this, and there have been instances where Filipino tourists were offloaded because they were suspected of traveling to another country to seek work. The researcher asked the embassies what measures were undertaken by the government to fix this so that Filipinos can easily and safely look for work in other ASEAN countries.

The embassy in Cambodia has given the following response:

The prescribed procedure by POEA is to go through POEA-accredited agencies. Direct hires (i.e., not through an agency) are also allowed for skilled workers. They will need to get an Overseas

Employment Certificate (OEC) from POEA prior to departure from the Philippines. One of the requirements to get an OEC is the submission of an acknowledged/verified employment contract. This will help ensure that the OFW's contract includes the minimum provisions required by POEA, such as medical insurance, repatriation of remains, etc.

The embassy in Thailand has given the following response:

The Philippine Overseas Employment Administration issued MC-08-2018 (Implementing Guidelines on the Registration of Direct-Hire Overseas Filipino Workers) to provide a process for this modality.

3.4.1.2 Favorable working conditions. The first question was whether many Filipino English teachers come to the embassy for assistance and for what reasons.

The embassy in Cambodia gave the following response:

“The lack of medical insurance is one of the biggest problems faced by Filipinos in Cambodia. Companies are required by Cambodian labor law to enroll their workers in Cambodia’s National Social Security Fund (NSSF), which recently also covers healthcare. Unfortunately, not all companies comply with this requirement. When OFWs come to the Embassy to have their contracts acknowledged (which is one of the requirements in getting an Overseas Employment Certificate), the Embassy looks for provisions for healthcare. If the provision is not there, we ask the employer to enroll their workers in NSSF and/or get medical coverage for them. Additionally, we have encouraged the Samahan ng mga Pilipino sa Cambodia (SAMAPI) to offer medical insurance for their members, which it is doing right now. SAMAPI is the only formally-organized grouping of Filipinos in Cambodia.

One of the other problems faced by some, not many, Filipino teachers is indebtedness. Despite having a higher income, some of them do not save or invest. A sudden illness or an unfortunate accident brings them deep into indebtedness, resulting in the gradual sale or disposal of assets they have acquired during their stay in Cambodia. Some put up their passports as collateral. In this regard, time and again, the Embassy organizes financial literacy workshops for the Filipinos here.”

The embassy in Thailand has the following response:

Filipino teachers approach the Embassy to have their contracts notarized and their DFA-Apostilled degrees certified as part of the annual renewal of their work permits.

3.4.1.3 Existing policies pertaining to foreign teachers (from the government of the host countries, from the Philippines, and from ASEAN). The first policy that was discussed was the ASEAN declarations regarding migrant workers' rights such as contained in "The ASEAN Consensus on the Protection and Promotion of the Rights of Migrant Workers" and the "ASEAN Declaration on the Protection and Promotion of the Rights of Migrant Workers". The embassies were asked how these ASEAN declarations affect Filipinos teaching in their respective countries.

The response of the Philippine embassy in Cambodia was as follows:

Because Cambodia, like the Philippines, is also a labor-exporting country, it understands the situation of OFWs. This has helped us whenever we have had to make representations with government authorities here. The specific declarations you mentioned are not legally-binding, but they help in norms-setting.

The response of the Philippine embassy in Thailand was as follows:

The ASEAN Consensus on the Protection and Promotion of the Rights of Migrant Workers" and the ASEAN Declaration on the Protection and Promotion of the Rights of Migrant Workers reflect the growing importance of the need to uphold and promote the rights and welfare of migrant workers in the region. The said regional instruments are not legally binding among the parties. However, these laid out the regional standards and practices with which ASEAN Member States may align their national policies.

In the case of Filipino teachers in Thailand, the continuing challenge is the need to improve the welfare of teachers through better wages, provision of health insurance coverage, and social safety nets during extraordinary situations such as the occurrence of a pandemic.

Both embassies have recognized the importance of the ASEAN declarations. Although the declarations cannot be enforced on these ASEAN member states, they are used in determining which government policies should align with the expectations of ASEAN member states.

The next policy to be discussed was the possibility of establishing an MRA for education services, and whether this was necessary. The embassy in Cambodia's response was as follows:

The regulatory framework for education services in Cambodia is still developing. An MRA in education services would be ideal, but not necessary at this time.

The response from the embassy in Thailand was as follows:

The development of Mutual Recognition Arrangements for a particular professional service is oftentimes encouraged by the presence of demand and mutual benefit. Currently, these conditions do not exist for the initiation of the MRA development.

3.4.1.4 Receptivity of the Philippine government in responding to problems

encountered by Filipino English teachers. The embassies were also asked if there were other measures that are currently being developed to help Filipino English teachers. The embassy in Cambodia has given the following response:

We have tapped CHED's assistance in extending its adult education and professional development programs to Filipino teachers in Cambodia. We will soon be signing a Memorandum of Cooperation with CHED to implement the Developing Filipino Global Teachers Program. The program aims to help Filipino teachers in Cambodia, especially those who are not licensed teachers and/or did not graduate with an education degree.

The embassy in Thailand said that the Philippine government is undertaking initial steps towards a possible bilateral labor agreement with Thailand. This corroborated the answer given by the official in the ministry of education.

Lastly, suggestions were requested as to what the Government should do to help embassy officials to more effectively assist Filipino teachers. The embassy in Cambodia has suggested the following:

CHED or the Commission on Filipinos Overseas or the proposed Department of Overseas Filipinos can shepherd the development and offering of Massive Open Online Courses by Philippine Higher Education Institutions, which will cater to OFWs, including Filipino teachers abroad. Continuing education and capacity-development will help increase the competence and marketability of OFs. This will contribute to the Embassy's efforts to promote the "brand" of world-class global Filipino teachers.

Chapter Four

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1 Conclusion

Mobility within the Southeast Asian region is essential in strengthening ASEAN integration, which has always been the primary goal of ASEAN. Mobility enhances activities needed to enhance integration, especially in the area of socio-economic development, such as trade, knowledge-sharing, and cultural exchange. Another aspect that strengthens integration is effective communication. The effectiveness of communication depends on the quality of instruction. Therefore, education is the key to better integration.

Because of the need for ASEAN countries to improve English communication (as English became the lingua franca of the region), schools in Cambodia, Myanmar, and Thailand had to include English, either to be taught as a foreign language, or to be used as one of its medium of instruction. This created a demand for teachers who can teach English, or can teach other subjects in English. This need has been met by the thousands of Filipino teachers. There are no signs of this demand to decrease as of to date.

The willingness of Filipino teachers to work overseas and teach within the region should be encouraged. Their English proficient and excellent pedagogical skills have long been proven, and have continually been proven. Therefore, it is important to ensure the mobility of these teachers within the region. The mobility of Filipino teachers should be facilitated by the school administrators, the Philippine government, host ASEAN countries (such as Cambodia, Myanmar, and Thailand), and ASEAN accordingly.

The study aims to determine what are the personal and institutional factors of mobility of Filipinos teaching English mediated subjects in the basic education institutions of Cambodia, Myanmar and Thailand. This was done through interviews with Filipino teachers, with school administrators, with the MOE, and with the officials of their respective Philippine embassies.

The difficulties of data-gathering for this research, which was largely dependent on using online resources, has indicated that face-to-face data gathering is still the most appropriate method for interviewing respondents. However, the data gathered has shown some patterns that are generally consistent.

After completing the steps in the data gathering and measuring of the variables mentioned earlier, the following general conclusions can be inferred from the results of each variable identified earlier in the research method.

As recalled, the first objective of this study was to determine the advantages and challenges of hiring Filipino teachers from school administrators' perspectives. Basically, this objective operates on the question: 'What are the advantages and disadvantages of hiring Filipino teachers from the point of view of local school administrators?' The findings are briefly discussed per variable.

4.1.1 Shifting trends towards ESL/EFL learning and teaching (e.g., “global Englishes, using of local language in teaching English”).

The official in MOE and two school administrators expressed openness to different Englishes as long as that particular type of English is clear and understandable. Only one school administrator (a Native English speaker), believed that it should be standardized.

4.1.2 Need for the ASEAN countries to improve English proficiency.

The official in the ministry of education in Thailand saw the need for their country to improve on their English proficiency. A program is currently underway to employ around 10,000 English teachers to teach bilingual programs in government schools around the country.

4.1.3 Perceived advantages of Filipino teachers over NES teachers.

The official in the ministry of education in Thailand, and the various school administrators, believed that the main advantage in hiring Filipinos was the lower salary for non-NES compared to NES. Further, Filipinos had similar appearance to Thai people and have similarities in their shared Asian culture.

Therefore, shifting trends towards ESL/EFL learning and teaching (e.g., “global Englishes, use of local language in teaching English”) have made ASEAN countries welcoming to NNES teachers. However, NNES teachers are required to demonstrate a clear accent and good speaking skills.

Due to global competitiveness and in support of regional integration, ASEAN countries in recent years have recognized the need to improve English proficiency. Thus, Thailand has been working on a program to increase the hiring of English teachers for their government schools. Such a decision is based on the advantages and disadvantages of hiring them. The advantages include but are not limited to lower compensation than their NES counterparts; found to be easier to work with than their NES counterparts because of the similarities of culture of the two countries; and are deemed more professional than their NES teachers. The disadvantages, on the other hand, include the issues of their fluency, pronunciation, and grammar; and the preference of some parents to have NES speakers teaching their children.

The second objective was to identify the motivations of Filipino teachers in choosing to teach in three ASEAN countries. It basically touches on the following factors that motivate Filipino teachers to accept teaching jobs in the said countries. These factors were elaborately discussed in Chapter 3 and summarized below.

4.1.4 Perceived benefits of working abroad.

Filipino teachers believed that work conditions are better for the respective countries in which they teach compared to the Philippines. They have less paperwork and fewer administrative tasks, whereas the administrative work and extra-curricular activities required in the Philippines created stress and caused the teachers to feel that they had been robbed of time with their families. Further, they regarded their experience working with colleagues and teaching students from other cultures a valuable experience.

4.1.5 Improving socio-economic conditions of the ASEAN countries.

Most of the Filipino respondents enjoyed living in their respective host countries because of the affordable standard of living and that they felt safer in these locations than in the Philippines.

4.1.6 Institutions' academic standard and requirements.

Thailand has stricter visa requirements than Cambodia and Myanmar. Its government has been gradually enforcing the requirement for teachers to obtain a teacher's license from the ministry of education, however most respondents have not found this difficult.

Unfortunately, the researcher was not able to interview officials from the Ministries of Education in Cambodia and Myanmar. However, all Filipino respondents from these two countries said that they have not experienced difficulty in complying

with the work visa requirements. However, the respondents from these countries have acknowledged that the immigration offices have recently become stricter.

4.1.7 Continuous opportunities to upgrade qualifications.

Filipino teachers considered teaching in other countries as an upgrade of their qualifications because of the international experience it gives them. Further, they felt fortunate that their schools ran in-house training and sponsored them for seminars outside of the school.

4.1.8 Favorable working conditions.

Filipino teachers prefer the work conditions in their respective host countries because the administrative workload is less than in the Philippines. With less time devoted to administrative work and teaching preparation, Filipino teachers have more time to spend with their families, for themselves and in undertaking professional development.

4.1.9 Competitive compensation.

Except for one respondent in Thailand, all Filipino teachers who were interviewed had received more than US \$1,000 as basic compensation per month. The respondents expressed satisfaction with the amount of compensation and benefits they received. However, the majority of respondents in Thailand are not happy about the compensation that they received, which is lower than the salary given to NES teachers.

The third objective was to document the mechanisms and policies that were implemented by officials in education ministries/departments and the Philippine embassy officials to assist Filipino teachers. The following follow-up question was

asked: “What measures do the government of these different ASEAN countries have in place (through the ministries/department of education and the Philippine embassies of these countries) to assist Filipino teachers?”

4.1.10 Ease of mobility and compliance to teaching qualifications and immigration requirements.

The Philippine embassies have a role in easing mobility by assisting Filipino teachers in compliance to teaching qualifications and immigration requirements. The Philippine embassy in Cambodia organized seminars on capacity building for Filipino teachers who were not licensed, and has assisted Filipino teachers such as getting health insurance. They have also helped Filipino teachers in educating them about financial literacy. The Philippine embassy in Thailand, on the other hand, assisted the Filipino workers by expediting authentication of their documents for work visa and work permit requirements.

ASEAN policies and declarations are also important in easing mobility of Filipino teachers. These policies, although not legally binding, set the norms that ASEAN member countries have to follow.

So far, the most important measures implemented by the Filipino government through the Philippine embassies according to the respondents are (1) finding employment opportunities where more Filipino teachers can be hired, as in the case of the memorandum between Thailand and the Philippines; and (2) facilitating seminars for OFWs, as in the case of the Philippine embassy in Cambodia.

This study is not representative of the conditions of all teachers in Southeast Asia. It is just a glimpse of the mobility of Filipino professionals in the region. However, these cases could be a small version in the big picture of mobility in the region.

Since this researcher is also a teacher in Thailand, she can attest that the results are similar to her experiences. Although conditions at present are good enough, it is not sufficed for these conditions to remain as is. In order to achieve better mobility for Filipino teachers, there must be a concerted effort from the Philippine government, the host ASEAN countries, and the ASEAN to implement necessary measures and policies. The improvement of the intra-ASEAN mobility of Filipino teachers will surely strengthen the socio-economic aspect of the ASEAN Community, the third pillar of regional integration in Southeast Asia.

While this study concentrates only on the mobility of Filipino teachers in the three countries in Southeast Asia, the impact of mobility of professionals is beyond financial. The presence of the Filipinos in Cambodia, Myanmar, and Thailand is not only contributing to the improvement of the English proficiency of students but also impart to them the Philippine culture in the process. Imagine if this phenomenon happens all over the region with Thai teachers working in the Philippines conversely and share to the Filipino students not only English proficiency skills but also the appreciation of Thai culture. Same case for the Cambodians, Burmese, Malays, Singaporeans and others. Imagine the multiplicity of their presence in the improvement of English language, promote cultural understanding of each country's culture, and contribute to ASEAN awareness among others towards the realization of the ASEAN Community. Even now, this feeling of oneness between people in ASEAN is expressed by Thai school administrators and the official in Thailand's MOE since they can relate better to Filipino teachers because of the shared Asian culture and similar physical features and practices.

4.2. Recommendations

The last objective of this study is to recommend strategies on how to improve the Filipino teachers' mobility and conditions with the aim towards ASEAN integration. This is operating on a question which is basically looking for ways on how to improve/enhance their mobility and working conditions.

The recommendations of this study are as follows:

4.2.1 Better compensation.

The major complaint of Filipino English teachers as to compensation was the salary gap with NES teachers. This discrimination stems from the perception that NES teachers are better speakers than Filipino English teachers. However, as stated by the ministry of education in Thailand, newly hired Filipino English teachers are improving in their pronunciation abilities. On a positive side, there are more employment opportunities for Filipino English teachers than NES teachers because lower salaries meant that Filipino English teachers are more affordable to hire by schools with lower income. In light of this finding, the Philippine government should invest in making Filipino English teachers intending to work overseas more competent. Filipino English teachers should have stricter qualifications before working abroad. Accent reduction (to minimize strong unintelligible accents) must be encouraged to achieve clear and understandable pronunciation. Strengthening the qualifications of the Filipino English teachers is also timely since ASEAN countries are starting to become stricter when hiring qualified Filipino English teachers. When Filipino English teachers are more competent, their value increases and they can command better compensation.

4.2.2 Favorable working conditions.

ASEAN should continue promoting a good work-life balance for teachers. Ministries of education of different ASEAN countries should not just monitor Filipino teachers as to whether they have teaching licenses or not. They should ask Filipino teachers if their work environment is good. The ministries of education should further encourage the schools in using technology in lesson preparation and data management (in keeping lesson plans, grades, and enrollment),

4.2.3 Visa processing.

ASEAN countries should continue to use the AQRF in determining qualifications. Philippine embassies are to be commended for their help in authenticating documents and coordinating seminars.

4.2.4. Opportunities to upgrade qualifications.

Because of the internet, distance is no longer a problem in upgrading the qualification of Filipino teachers. IN fact, this researcher was able to get her Professional Teaching Certificate (PTC) through UP Open University (UPOU), and has known a lot of Filipino teachers who got their PTC in the same university. Through their teaching certificates, these Filipino teachers were able to get their Thai teaching license, one of whom is the researcher's husband. The Philippine government, through the Philippine embassies, can help promote these courses as well as the MOOCs offered in the Philippines. The Philippine embassies can also help coordinate with Philippine institutions to give seminars or webinars to Filipino teachers. Furthermore, the government should further support these teachers by giving scholarships.

4.2.5 Other recommendations.

Both Philippine embassies (from Cambodia and Thailand) stated that there was no demand for pursuing a mutual recognition agreement (MRA) for education services at this point. However, the respondents agreed that an MRA for education services would be beneficial for Filipino English teachers. Should an MRA for education services be pursued in the future, Filipino English teachers are encouraged to make a strong case for it.

ASEAN has contributed immensely to the ability of Filipino English teachers to effectively migrate and teach in other ASEAN countries. Major policies undertaken are AFAS, AQRF, AUN, and the “ASEAN Declaration on the Protection and Promotion of the Rights of Migrant Workers”. Despite these significant policies, very few teachers had knowledge of ASEAN’s role in this field. It is strongly recommended that the Philippine government should improve the dissemination of information about the role of ASEAN to better the mobility of OFWs within the region.

The result of this study was able to address the main research question which focused on the mechanisms needed by Filipino English teachers of English-mediated subjects in basic education institutions in ASEAN countries in Thailand, Cambodia, and Myanmar to achieve easier mobility for better ASEAN integration. It turned out that Filipino English teachers teaching English mediated subjects in basic education institutions in the three countries must be provided with the following support systems (in order of importance - good compensation, conducive working conditions, affordable and safe living conditions, easy work visa processing, and opportunities to upgrade qualifications) in order for them to actively and successfully contribute in the

intra-ASEAN mobility of teachers in the region and to the larger picture of all professionals' mobility in Southeast Asia in the years to come.

By and large, the talents and capabilities of the Filipino teachers are gradually being recognized in the Southeast Asian region. However, mere recognition is not enough. Filipino English teachers (both in the Philippines and abroad) need further support in order to better their mobility within the ASEAN region. Improvement of the Filipino English teachers' (1) compensation, (2) working conditions, (3) visa processing, (4) living conditions, and (5) opportunity to upgrade their qualification is necessary. This is possible with better legal and working mechanisms that will emanate from the Philippine government, the ASEAN member states, and the ASEAN organization.

These needs must be further provided with the help of all stakeholders (school administrators, the education ministries of ASEAN countries, the Philippine government), and to be complemented by the favorable labor and migration policies of ASEAN member states and of the ASEAN itself as a regional body to facilitate regional integration and towards the complete realization of the ASEAN Community in the near future.

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Appendix A: Interview Questions for Filipino English teachers

Hi Sir/Ma'am,

I am Desiree Claro-Azucena, a Master of ASEAN Studies student at the University of the Philippines Open University (UPOU). I am currently doing a thesis titled, "*Mobility of Filipinos Teaching English-Mediated Subjects in the Basic Education Institutions of Cambodia, Myanmar and Thailand*". The study aims to describe and explain the increasing hiring of Filipino teachers to teach bilingual programs in Thailand, Cambodia, and Myanmar. Part of my study is to know what are your experiences and thoughts on teaching in the country where you are at present.

I would like to request for an interview with you either through video cam interview or through private messaging (depending on what works best with you). Rest assured that your identities will remain confidential and your responses will be used only for the purposes of this study.

Your participation in this study will help in determining what ways can the government do to assist the Filipino teachers teaching in ASEAN countries.

Thank you and I look forward to your kind response to my request.

Dear Sir/Ma'am,

Thank you for granting me this interview. Kindly answer these questions and send them back to me through email. I will also send follow-up questions should I need more clarification.

Interview Questions:

1. Name:
2. Age:
3. Position:
4. School (and is it a private or public school):
5. Number of years teaching in the country:
6. Number of year teaching in the Philippines:
7. Do you like teaching in the country where you are working in? Why or why not?

8. Please rank your reasons from 1 to 5 your reasons why you like working in this country:

- _____ 1. Competitive compensation
- _____ 2. Easy visa processing
- _____ 3. Favorable working conditions
- _____ 4. Better place to live in compared to the Philippines
- _____ 5. Opportunity to upgrade qualifications

Please explain your reasons:

9. In what range was the compensation you receive in?
- a) less than \$500
 - b) \$500 to \$700
 - c) \$701 to \$1,000
 - d) More than \$1,000
10. Do you have any other benefits aside from your salary?
11. How do you process your work permit and work visa?
12. Do you think it is an easy or hard process? Why or why not?
13. Do you experience discrimination as a Filipino teacher compared to Native English-Speaking teachers? In what way have you experienced it?
14. Do you feel that the students are happy with you as their teacher? How about the parents? How about your co-teachers? supervisor?
15. Is living or working here better in the Philippines or not? Please explain.
16. What are your experiences in meeting teaching qualifications and visa requirements in your country? Was it difficult to fulfill these requirements?
17. Do you think that the government is doing enough to assist Filipino teachers? Why or why not?
18. Are you familiar with what ASEAN does to improve the welfare of Filipino teachers? In what way?
19. What do you think are measures that should be done by our government to assist you? How about from the government of the country you're in? How about from ASEAN as a whole?

Appendix B: Interview Questions for School Administrators

Principal

[School]

[School address]

Dear Sir/Ma'am,

I am a Master of ASEAN Studies student at the University of the Philippines Open University (UPOU). I am currently doing a thesis titled, "*Mobility of Filipinos Teaching English-Mediated Subjects in the Basic Education Institutions of Cambodia, Myanmar and Thailand.*" The study aims to describe and explain the increasing hiring of Filipino teachers to teach bilingual programs in Thailand, Cambodia, and Myanmar. Part of my study is to know what is your opinion regarding hiring Filipino teachers teaching in your school.

I would like to request for a written interview with your officer in-charge of either the foreign teachers' department in your school or the one who assists in fulfilling work visa requirements of foreign teachers. Should you agree, I will email the interview questions to them and they can write their responses and send them back to me. I will send follow-up questions after should I need more clarification.

I am hoping that your office will grant this request. Your participation in this study will help in determining what ways your office can further improve in helping Filipino teachers improve their teaching skills and become happier in their place of work.

Thank you and I look forward to your response.

Respectfully yours,

Desiree Claro-Azucena

Dear Sir/Ma'am,

Thank you for granting me this interview. Please see the questions below. Kindly answer these questions and send them back to me through email. I will also send follow-up questions should I need more clarification.

Interview Questions:

1. Name:
2. Office:
3. Position:
4. How many Filipinos are teaching in your school as of present? What levels and subjects are they teaching?
5. Generally speaking, are Filipinos easy to work with? Why or why not?
6. What problems have you encountered with Filipinos working in your school?
7. Do you also hire Native English speakers (like Americans, Canadians, British, etc.) in your school? How many are they?
8. Do you compare Filipino teachers to NES teachers? Are they less than, equal to, or more than competent compared to NES teachers? Please explain why is this so?
9. How much do you pay Filipino teachers? How much do you pay NES teachers? Why is the pay same or different?
10. What are the parents of your students' opinion regarding your Filipino teachers?
11. What are the requirements (both as to teaching license and work visa) in order for a Filipino to teach in your school? Do you find them easy or difficult complying to these requirements?
12. Have you encountered any problems complying with the requirements?
13. Do you think there are differences in the way Filipino teachers and Native English speakers (NES) teach?
14. What do you think are the advantages and disadvantages of hiring Filipino teachers compared to NES teachers?
15. There has been an emerging theory in ESL learning and teaching regarding "Global Englishes". It means that Englishes from other countries aside from those in Native English-speaking countries are being recognized. Do you think this is true in your country or do you prefer English in English-speaking countries are still the ones being held as the standard of good English?
16. In what ways do you help your Filipino teachers grow professionally?
17. What usually are the concerns Filipino teachers raise?
18. Do you have any suggestions on what your government should do in order for you to do a better job in supervising Filipino teachers?

Thank you.

Appendix C: Interview Questions for the Ministry of Education

The Department/Ministry of Education

To Whom It May Concern:

I am a Master of ASEAN Studies student at the University of the Philippines Open University (UPOU). I am currently doing a thesis titled, “*Mobility of Filipinos Teaching English-Mediated Subjects in the Basic Education Institutions of Cambodia, Myanmar and Thailand*” The study aims to describe and explain the increasing hiring of Filipino teachers to teach bilingual programs in Thailand, Cambodia, and Myanmar. Part of my study is to determine how your office is assisting Filipino teachers teaching in these ASEAN countries.

I would like to request for a written interview with your officer in-charge of facilitating teaching requirements of Filipino teachers. Should you agree, I will email the interview questions to them and they can write their responses and send them back to me. I will send follow-up questions after should I need more clarification.

I am hoping that your office will grant this request. Your participation in this study will help in determining what ways your office can further improve in helping Filipino teachers who are teaching in ASEAN countries.

Thank you and I look forward to your response.

Respectfully yours,

Desiree Claro-Azucena

Dear Sir/Ma'am,

Thank you for granting me this interview. Please see the questions below. Kindly answer these question and send them back to me through email. I will also send follow-up questions should I need more clarification.

Interview Questions:

1. Name:
2. Office:
3. Position:
4. How many Filipinos are teaching in this country as of present?
5. Why do you think a lot of Filipinos go to your country to teach?
6. Do you think there are differences in the way Filipino teachers and Native English speakers (NES) teach?
7. What do you think are the advantages and disadvantages of hiring Filipino teachers as against NES teachers?
8. There has been an emerging theory in ESL learning and teaching regarding "Global Englishes". It means that Englishes from other countries aside from those in Native English-speaking countries are being recognized. Do you think this is true in your country or do you prefer English in English-speaking countries are still the ones being held as the standard of good English?
9. What government laws and ASEAN resolutions help in assisting Filipino teachers teach in your country?
10. What are the requirements in order for a Filipino to teach in your country?
11. Are there any challenges in Filipinos complying to your requirements?
12. The ASEAN has also established an ASEAN Qualifications Reference Framework (AQRF). How has this helped you with regard to assessing Filipino teachers?
13. The ASEAN has established mutual recognition agreements (MRA) but there is none for education services. Do you think an MRA for education services is necessary?
14. Are there other measures that are currently being constructed to help Filipino teachers?
15. Do a lot of Filipino teachers come to office for help? What are their usual problems?
16. What do you think are other ways that the government should do to help your office be more effective with regard to assisting Filipino teachers?

Appendix D: Interview Questions for the Philippine Embassies

The Philippine Embassy

To Whom It May Concern:

I am a Master of ASEAN Studies student at the University of the Philippines Open University (UPOU). I am currently doing a thesis titled, “*Mobility of Filipinos Teaching English-Mediated Subjects in the Basic Education Institutions of Cambodia, Myanmar and Thailand*” The study aims to describe and explain the increasing hiring of Filipino teachers to teach bilingual programs in Thailand, Cambodia, and Myanmar. Part of my study is to determine how the government is assisting Filipino teachers teaching in these ASEAN countries.

I would like to request for a written interview with your official in-charge of the education or labor attaché. Should you agree, I will email the interview questions to them and they can write their responses and send them back to me. I will send follow-up questions after should I need more clarification.

I am hoping that the embassy will grant this request. Your participation in this study will help in determining what ways the government can further improve in helping Filipino teachers teaching in ASEAN countries.

Thank you and I look forward to your response.

Respectfully yours,

Desiree Claro-Azucena

Dear Sir/Ma'am,

Thank you for granting me this interview. Please see the questions below. Kindly answer these question and send them back to me through email. I will also send follow-up questions should I need more clarification.

Interview Questions: (Philippine embassy)

1. Name:
2. Office:
3. Position:
4. How many Filipinos are teaching in this country as of present?
5. Why do you think a lot of Filipinos go to _____ to teach?
6. What Filipino laws and ASEAN resolutions help in assisting Filipino teachers teach in other ASEAN countries?
7. At present, most Filipino teachers enter the country as tourists to look for work and then going back to the Philippines later on to register as OFWs. As far as I know the Philippines as a policy does not recommend this and there were instances that Filipino tourists have been offloaded because they are suspected of going to the country for work. Are there measures by the government to fix this so that Filipinos can easily and safely look for work in other ASEAN countries?
8. The ASEAN has declarations that pertain to the rights of the migrant workers such as” The ASEAN Consensus on the Protection and Promotion of the Rights of Migrant Workers” and the “ASEAN Declaration on the Protection and Promotion of the Rights of Migrant Workers”. How do these ASEAN declarations affect the Filipino teachers teaching in _____?
9. The ASEAN has established mutual recognition agreements (MRA) but there is none for education services. Do you think an MRA for education services is necessary?
10. Are there other measures that are currently being constructed to help Filipino teachers?
11. Do a lot of Filipino teachers come to the embassy for help? What are their usual problems?
12. What do you think are other ways that the government should do to help embassy officials do their job effectively with regard to assisting Filipino teachers?