

## International Journal of Research Publications

### ‘Fitting-In’ Struggles of Multiracial Adolescents in Philippine School Doha: Win or Lose?

Lorina S. Villanueva, Ed. D,<sup>1,2,3</sup> Amiel Joshua C. Aguillar,<sup>1,2,3</sup> Ralph Mathew B. Aposaga,<sup>1,2,3</sup> Romer Ailon G. Lubuguin,<sup>1,2,3</sup> Kyla Nicole B. Lim,<sup>1,2,3</sup> Suzette A. Prieto,<sup>1,2,3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Philippine School Doha, Doha, Qatar

<sup>2</sup> Research Development Accreditation and Publication Office, PSD, Doha, Qatar

<sup>3</sup> Research Capstone Project, PSD, Doha, Qatar

---

#### ABSTRACT

**Background:** Living in a culturally diverse world, relationships are bound to form. Unions between those of different races are becoming more prevalent which leads to multiracial offspring. **Purpose:** This research aims to uncover the ‘Fitting-In’ struggles of multiracial adolescents within their own family and how they cope with their given circumstances. **Methods:** The respondents’ lived experiences were discovered following qualitative design through phenomenology. **Findings:** Three themes have emerged such as Cultural Diversity, Language Barrier and Mediation which represent the familial fitting-in struggles as they undergo the processes of adapting, acquiring, and adjusting to cultures of both sides of the family. Fitting-in struggles are also felt through miscommunication, misunderstanding, personal adaptation, and familial conciliation. **Conclusion:** The respondents proved that they have ‘won’ in this battle of constantly fighting to learn and adapt to the cultures they have been exposed to and to the people they are surrounded with. **Recommendations:** Thus, it is recommended for other multiracial adolescents to give great emphasis on the attitude of learning which causes them to be more determined, driven, and willing to continue through as they undergo the process of acculturation. No matter what the race, gender, class, or age the person has, they are to be acknowledged and placed value upon as people.

**Keywords:** *Cultural Diversity, Mediation, Personal Adaptation, Familial Conciliation, Miscommunication, Language Barrier, Acculturation*

---

#### INTRODUCTION

Living in a more culture accepting world, expatriates’ interracial relationships and inter-marriages result in the children being half of different nationalities, in other words, a multiracial child. Coping with the surrounding cultures and finding ones’ self is a must to these Multi-racial adolescents because of their surrounding being dominantly one culture. It creates an urge to adapt and cope with the culture of other people. Coping is defined as “efforts to prevent or diminish threat, harm, and loss, or to reduce associated distress”. (Boyraz, 2016). Coping has

long been established as a key concept in adjustment and is defined as cognitive and behavioral attempts to managing potentially conflicting and challenging life demands (Barnard et. al., 2016)

This paper focuses on the struggles of multiracial adolescents in their family setting. Family is the smallest form of society and is the first form of society that these multiracial adolescents have. The multicultural environments of these young adults should be considered, including family context, family socialization, discrimination, community, and general social climate concerning ethnic identity (Hsieh, 2016). These adolescents struggle to find their own cultural identity. Culture does not refer solely to ethnicity; cultural differences arise in connection with all intersecting aspects of diversity. Every human being is affected by cultural affiliations, though often effects are subconscious according to (Beagan, 2016). This paper specifically tackles the struggles of multiracial adolescents in their family settings focusing on language barrier within family members due to cultural diversity. Misunderstanding is a common issue within these multiracial adolescents. Adolescents and immigrant parents encounter communication problems as a result of the lags in parents' English language competency compared to their children which results in the inability to properly communicate with each other (Park & Young, 2017). The ethnic diversity of the family results in confusion within the multiracial adolescent. Still, these multiracial adolescents experience conflicts within the family. Though when in conflict, multiracial adolescents rely on mediation as a resolution with conflicts within their culture. They cope with it by being mediators. They are the ones bringing familial conciliation by arbitrating when there is a disagreement. According to Tucker, et. al. (2017) Mediation is intended to have lasting positive effects on individual participants by improving their skills, knowledge, and dispositions.

The Multiracial adolescents use acculturation as their main coping mechanism as they adjust to both cultures of their family. Acculturation is a process through which a person or group from one culture comes to adopt the practices and values of another culture, while still retaining their own distinct culture (Cole, 2019). Through acculturation, they find their sense of belongingness in the family and develop their cultural identity. Cultural identity or identities is a complex construct to define insofar as the notion of human identity is shaped by several interconnected facets of life that are not always distinct, nor static (Beaverton, 2016). Acculturation creates a sense of stability in the multiracial adolescents' sense of self.

## METHOD

### Research Design

This research is a qualitative research as it deals with further scrutinizing and analyzing of a phenomenon that is challenging, which in this case is the phenomenology of the struggles of multiracial adolescents. Qualitative research is achieved by driving a wedge between ethnographic methods of data-collection and their origins in the phenomenological strands of sociological thought (Wainwright, 1997). The type of qualitative research utilized in this study is the in-depth interviewing. This is because open ended questions are used in order to get as many details as possible. The use of open-ended questions enables the participants to answer their own frame of reference rather than being confined by the structure of pre-arranged questions. This allows the participants to have more liberty when expressing their sentiments (Bogdan-Biklen, 1997). In addition, the phenomenological approach is utilized as an attempt to comprehend the coping mechanisms and adjustments done by the participants when faced with a taxing situation upon inferring from their lived experiences.

### Research Locus and Sample

This study was conducted at Philippine School Doha (PSD), the leading learning institution in the State of Qatar. With years of service and excellence, and notable achievements under its belt, PSD has always been acknowledged as an exceptional Philippine school in the Middle East. PSD provides quality service and education for its students ever since its founding on October 3, 1992.

The selected respondents for this study were multiracial adolescents, specifically the senior high school students. The criteria used for selecting the respondents were based on the following: (a) the respondent must be an



**Figure 2. Location of Philippine School Doha**

Source: Google Maps

adolescent; aged between 10-19 years old (WHO, 2018), (b) the respondent must be multiracial; a child born from a couple of at least two different nationalities, and (c) the respondent must have had experiences with some sort of struggle. Interview was the medium used to gather and collect data. The researchers made it a point to have a variety of participants with different personalities in order to have a better understanding on how different multiracial adolescents cope and deal with their struggles. Interviewing was conducted at the respondent's choice of venue; where they were most accessible and available at, ranging from malls to their own homes.



**Figure 1 Map of Qatar**

Source: Google Maps

### Data Collection and Ethical Consideration

In order to get the gist of the phenomenon of this investigation, the researchers gathered and provided data for this study through a semi-structured interview with the help of instruments such as: the *robotfoto* and the twenty-five developmental questions made for the interview. When it comes to research, the *robotfoto* refers to a personal sheet of background information of the chosen participants (de Guzman & Tan, 2007). The twenty-five developmental questions for the semi-structured interview were used for the researchers to simply get a better understanding of reality (Wengraf, 2001). It was made as a guide to gather specific answers from specific questions and ensures the sensitivity of the subject being researched based on the participants' responses.

Data seen were transcribed verbatim with the help of an audio recorder. All responses given by the participants are treated confidential. The semi-structured interviews conducted were an in-depth type of interview. This was used

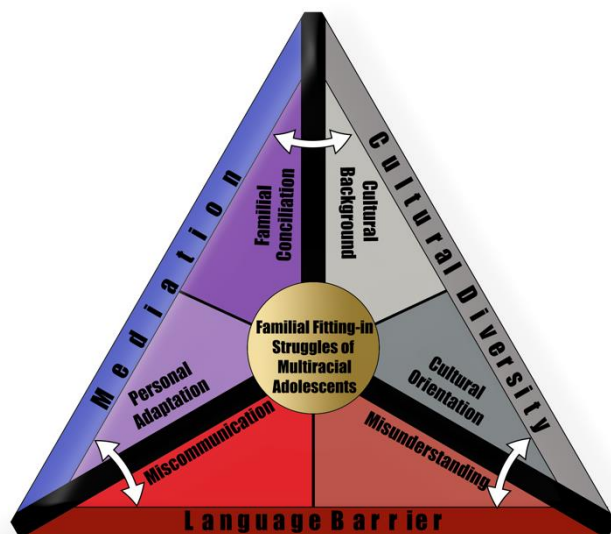
to get detailed information on the participants' perspective on ideas and situations (Boyce et al., 2006). The researchers sought approval from the participants through written consent forms before conducting the interview.

### Data Analysis

Inductive approach was pursued by the researchers in theme development (Braun & Clarke, 2006) to apprehend and analyze the gathered data in the study: (1) fathoming and rereading the transcribed data to attain the respondent's perception of reality; (2) determining small units which is called meaning units; (3) transfiguring meaning units from the respondent's point of view (emic) to the naïve understanding of the researchers (etic); (4) arranging the devised meaning by coding the data into categories, clusters, and themes through *dendogram*; (5) designing a simulacrum to present themes visually; designating emergent themes to member checking procedures and triangulation to ensure validity and data reliability (McWilliam et al., 2009).

## FINDINGS

Figure 3 below shows the familial fitting-in struggles of multiracial adolescents. The double-headed arrows show how the three factors are all interconnected and all contributive to the familial struggles of the multiracial adolescent such as cultural diversity, language barrier and mediation. Family is the smallest unit that constitutes a society. Being the core, it has to be firm and strong in order for one's nation to be progressive and stable. Moreover, the prevalence of multi-racial adolescent in the middle-east is a common phenomenon as a consequence of its working environment. Expatriates' interactions and inter-marriages became a reality thus resulting to the creation of multi-racial adolescent students. Students who are half Filipino and half-other nationalities experienced some struggles incomparable to other adolescents who are pure Filipinos.



**Figure 3. Familial Fitting-in Struggle of Multiracial Adolescents**

Figure 3 shows the themes that have emerged in this study such as, **Cultural Diversity**, **Language Barrier**, and **Mediation**. Language Barrier is a result of Cultural Diversity, since language constitutes an essential portion of culture. While, mediation on the other hand, spells out how the adolescents made corresponding adjustments based on their situation.

### Cultural Diversity

As theorized by the researchers, the family life of a multiracial adolescent can be quite diverse having originated from two different sides of the family with different cultures. Two respondents confirmed this theory such as:

*"My family is very diverse; they have different cultural backgrounds." (F3)*

*"My family is scattered throughout the world. It can be both good and bad. Good, because I get to learn stuff from where they are. Bad, because I cannot really talk to them in person. But in spite of that, we are still connected with each other." (F4)*

On one hand, **cultural background** is an antecedent of cultural diversity. This is because the environment in which family members grew up in can be somewhat considered as a culture itself. Culture is relative to that environment. It must be established that this 'environment' is more than its denotation of merely geographical location. In the context of this study, it is more concentrated on the lifestyle on leads as molded by the family members. This is to be seen on matters such as the food they consume, the language they use and the traditions they practiced. This is supported by the following responses:

*"The cultural differences are found in the kind of children that have been developed in us, kinds of food that we eat, and other traditions that are found in both cultures." (F1)*

*"One could be the food that we eat, and the other could be the way of living. Sometimes, they disagree but not with everything that the other does." (F5)*

*"My sister would show what she has learned from Malaysia through her language or routines. It would seem unfamiliar to me, but considering where she came from, I can understand why." (F4)*

Moreover, **Cultural Orientation** is to be comprehended as the tendencies of mentality and perception in

Contrarily, family can contribute greatly to the essence of an individual; more specifically, the adolescents who are the main concern of this study. Moreover, since values and moral principles are basically taught and enforced by the family, an adolescents' inner feelings and social environment must be made secure and meaningful.

Identifying the lebenswelt of Philippine School Doha Senior High School students who continuously suffered familial fitting-in struggles, this phenomenological research revolves around what exactly composes the familial difficulties that these adolescents endure, as well as what coping mechanisms they utilize. This systematic study attempts to deduce a satisfactory answer to the specific question of this study: *"How do the Multi-racial adolescents in Philippine School Doha adjust with the struggles which they have experienced in their family?"*. The significance of a family's influence having been established; this study further expounds the difficulties that the multiracial adolescents of Philippine School Doha.

accordance to what is acceptable to one's culture. In a sense, this is more deeply ingrained in one's psyche. In accordance with this, respondents have shared:

*"An example would be for values and customs. My sister's personality, qualities, and ethics are from China. Meanwhile, I have some Filipino and/or Malaysian qualities in me. So, we have different cultures and beliefs. She would eventually show what she has learned from Malaysia through her language or routines. It would seem unfamiliar to me, and I would find it weird. But, considering where she came from, I can understand why" (F4)*

*"The way we do things in the house. Like, the mindsets that we have, and how my mom raised me." (F5)*

The divergence in terms of culture is also to be observed in a more intrinsic and integral element of an adolescent's life. These elements comprise of ethics, religion, beliefs, and also values. This is stated in the following responses:

*"The differences could be within religion or traditions and practices. The differences are seen in certain beliefs, such as superstitious myths." (F2)*

*"Mainly it is religion. My father is Filipino, and my mom is Moroccan. Filipinos are more inclined towards Christianity, while Moroccans are more inclined to Islam. The traditions of my parents' home countries are also very different from one another." (F3)*

As examined, a multiracial adolescent's lifestyle is considerably affected by the cultural variance; not only through the everyday matters, but also moral dispositions, and fundamental principles.

## **Language Barrier**

As language composes an enormous part of culture, it was also reflected upon one of the prominent issues that the adolescents struggle with. Multiracial adolescents struggle with communicating even with their own families due to the variances in the languages. This is proven as follows:

*"We have a big family, to the point where we have language barrier, and struggles regarding our cultures." (F5)*

*"My struggle is that I have a hard time understanding them, because I speak a variety of languages." (F4)*

*"For me, it is the language barrier with my mom." (F5)*

**Misunderstanding** is seen as one of the adolescents' hardship. Language barrier contributes monumentally to misunderstandings. To illuminate, the misunderstanding is understood that the message delivered was not interpreted correctly by the receiver. In the case of this study, there are misunderstandings within the family due to the ease, knowledge, manner and fluency when utilizing their respective languages. The adolescents confirmed this through the following statements:

*"Most of the times, I encountered misunderstandings with my parents. When I try to explain things to them in one language, they would often misunderstand. I would have to explain it to them in a language that they are more comfortable with, so that they could understand me better." (F3)*

*"Yes, I have experienced a lot of struggles at home when I try to communicate with my Persian relatives. I do not know which words to use, and most of the times, I do not understand them at all." (F1)*

*"What I have learned from my experience is it is difficult if you do not have enough knowledge about the language. I struggle when it comes to using the language, as well as the pronunciation." (F2)*

**Miscommunication** also transpires within the culturally-diverse family, much like the normal family. It must be emphasized that miscommunication occurs not only due to the user's proficiency to use the language, but also outside forces that disrupt the communicating process. Culture acts as the outside force that disrupts for this specific situation. Respondents articulated:

*"Some are just problems in general, but some are language problems, like having my aunt be mad at my other aunt. For example, my aunt from Germany says tough words, or words that are slightly offensive as a normal thing, but for my aunts in the Philippines, they find it very offensive. It has even gotten to the point that they would not talk." (F4)*

Each culture has established its own understanding of words, situations and practices. There are misunderstandings which are bound to occur because of the differences in connotation, social concept and generalizations exclusive to a culture. The adolescents take it upon themselves to understand such matter, which will be discussed further later on.

*"I learn more about the languages, the hand gestures, slangs, words, that they do not like, and the nicknames you should not call them; things that could offend their pride as whatever country they are representing." (F5)*

As seen, the adolescents utilize everything to their advantage in order to understand the people around them. It is vital that the adolescent comprehend the importance of non-verbal cues in communication. There are times when non-verbal cues provide more meaningful messages than verbal ones. Since verbally communicating is sometimes not an option, the best thing to decipher is their non-verbal cues; body languages most of all.

*"Whenever my mom, my sister, and I would speak in Chinese, my dad would think that I am keeping something from him since he and my brother cannot really understand what we were saying. When in actuality, we were just talking about everyday life. The same thing goes with my sister, whenever my brother and I would talk in English, she would think that there would be something else between us." (F4)*

Culture can be a beautiful and intricate subject, but it is not without its pitfalls. Though it does pose as a great obstacle that the adolescents must navigate their way through, it also comes with great reward. The reward they acquire is being able to be more intimate with their family and being able to understand the cultural context in a way only they can.

## Mediation

Every person is confronted with struggles. Accordingly, a coping mechanism or **personal adaptation** will arise in order for one to overcome the struggle. In the familial circumstance of multiracial adolescents, they have somewhat of a common ground in their struggles. Hence, the coping mechanism that emanate holds resemblance to one another. As stated previously, they struggled with the cultural clashes in their family. They cope with it by being mediators.

The coping mechanism utilized by the multiracial adolescents when it comes to understanding the different cultures, most especially the language barrier, is through **personal adaptation**. This includes self-studying, adapting, researching and interacting with both sides of their families. The participants stated that:

*"I just jot down notes as to what they are saying, and find out if it is true or false. I will have to experience it first and then I would tell them my point of view." (F3)*

*"When it comes to linguistic problem in the family, I try to learn the language in my free time." (F4)*

The passion to understand and be understood by their family is undeniable. Even though it is no easy feat, the adolescents understand exactly how vital it is to learn the languages of their family. They see it as the most effective way to adjust to the challenge at hand. They exert great effort and spend plenty of time to learn.

The other way the adolescents choose to adapt is through interaction and acclimatizing. Some things are better learned through experience. There are things that cannot be taught through merely studying. Respondents verified:

*"I usually, try to get used to the things that are happening, including the culture, and just go along with it." (F5)*

*"Interacting with my relatives from both sides helped me cope with the different cultures." (F1)*

Personal adaptation in this context, that is the familial aspect and this research in general, comes in numerous forms. First being self-studying. The adolescents bring it upon themselves responsibility to learn the materials and bodies of information necessary for them to adapt. Second is the matter of adapting. Adolescents adapt by acclimatizing or get themselves used to the situation. Lastly, adolescents adjust by way of experiencing. Interacting and socializing with relatives falls under this category. This is because the adolescents learn the culture through direct contact with people of that specific culture, not merely through theoretical-based (researching and reading) learning methods.

As stated beforehand, the adolescents also struggle with the clashes between the different sides due to cultural diversity of the family, and their manner of coping is by bringing *familial conciliation*. They act the bridge between the two arguing parties and seek to unify them. This is a privilege only they have since they can understand where both parties are coming from and can find the middle ground. The responses of two respondents were:

*"I usually clarify it to both parties of my family, so they would not fight anymore." (F4)*

One respondent (F5) has familial struggles, in addition to learning the culture, because of the misunderstandings between the adolescent's parents. These misunderstandings stem from the cultural differences. In turn, the respondent looks for common ground between the parents in order for the feud to be solved. As evidence, the respondent shared:

*"For me, it is trying to learn the cultures of both sides of my family, while also learning the cultures and languages of my parents. I usually try to look for some things that they would both agree on." (F5)*

Lastly, the multiracial adolescents emphasized how vital it was for them to be open and accepting when it comes to learning both cultures. Although they have formidable adversities they need to overcome, they are still able to appreciate opportunity of being able to see the beauty of seeing not one, but two cultures. This connotes to the necessity of being optimistic while facing such obstacles. Having come from different cultural backgrounds of the parents, respondents attest:

*"I get to see two parts of the world." (F3)*

*"I get to understand my family members, learn a new language, and understand their culture more." (F4)*

*"The adjustment I did is being open to their culture. I do not just say bad things about their traditions, because no culture is perfect. They all have their ups and downs." (F3)*

This indicates that the perspective of the adolescents is not limited to knowing, understanding, and learning the culture of one parent, but of both. A positive morale is indispensable in order for the adolescents to persevere. It is recognized that the adolescents possess this zeal within them to learn and get along with their families that drives them to continue adapting whether through personal adaptation or serve as conciliator or mediator.

This research aimed to discover the struggles exclusive to multiracial adolescents and how they chose to cope with said struggles. After methodical means to acquire the information that was being sought by the researcher, the results were not far from what the researchers theorized. Concluding overall, the multiracial adolescents struggle with the clashes and the language barriers that both stem from the cultural difference. Nevertheless, they are still able to cope through personal adaption and mediating. In addition, the adolescents are to remain an intriguing subject, because of experience unique to their situation.

## DISCUSSIONS

Childhood and adolescence are the periods in which individuals accumulate various developmental assets that shape the content of their later life. Healthy adolescent development requires that the social context provide opportunities to fulfill physical, intellectual, psychological, and social developmental needs. Unfortunately, for many adolescents, the social context in which they are embedded fails to provide the supports that are essential for their healthy growth and development (Kingston, 2018). Studies of intergroup relations have largely focused on attitudes and interactions between dominant and minority groups. As a result, there is a need for more “intraminority” attitudes and relations (Sullivan & Ghara, 2015). This proves that the social development of an adolescent particularly in relation to family is vital in one’s life, more so with multiracial adolescents. Multiracials occupy a distinct category that is not congruent with other single-raced populations. This differential categorization makes it harder for multiracials to assimilate with either of their single-race heritages (Schlabach, 2013). This includes the family. Having come from different cultures of the parents, communication gap is inevitable unless all members of the family can understand everyone. Unfortunately, that is not the case for most families. This also applies to the relationships multiracial adolescents develop because of the community they are thrown into. The present study was evidently supported by Levesque’s study which stated that according to the U.S. Census (2012), multiple-race groups increased by 50% or more yet despite the growing percentage of youth who view themselves as multiracial, research on racial identity development still generally is known for focusing on a single race or ethnic group (Levesque, 2018). Deductively, both categories undergo language development in its own setting. It influences their personal daily experiences. For youths as well as adults, proficiency in the majority language – the dominant language of their host country – serves as a foundation for their relationship with a host society outside of their co-ethnic network (Medvedeva, 2018).

### Cultural Diversity

Familial fitting-in struggles of multiracial adolescents particularly in the Middle East is not different from other parts of the globe. These struggles rooted on the cultural background such as the food they consume, the language they use, and the traditions they practiced. Cultural and linguistic diversity (CLD) encompasses a broad range of racial, ethnic, and linguistic identities that fall outside of dominant cultural norms (Wilt, 2018). Diversity is often discussed alongside the concept of culture, which arises from anthropology. In addition to this, *culture* refers to shared ideas, beliefs, systems of concepts and meanings, values, knowledge, ways of being, customs, and often, language that arise over time within a particular group (Beagan, 2015). *Culture* does not refer solely to ethnicity; cultural differences arise in connection with all intersecting aspects of diversity. Every human being is affected by cultural affiliations, though often effects are subconscious (Beagan, 2015). Culture mixing itself is a diverse, heterogeneous phenomenon, and different forms of culture mixing (e.g., simultaneous co-presence, superimposition, fusion) may activate different psychological outcomes. Furthermore, heritage cultures serve critical psychological functions by providing guides and normative standards for behavior, acting as markers that facilitate differentiation of in-group members from those of outgroups and buffering against psychological threats (Cheon, 2019).

On one hand, cross-cultural interconnectedness within an expatriate's social network contributes to the development of multiculturalism in one's cultural identity (Mao and Shen, 2015). K. and P. Del Carpio (2015) argue that when we learn our mother tongue, we also learn to be part of a culture that significantly influences our way to perceive the world and the vision we build of this. We are jubilant and filled with confidence when our culture and language gets acknowledged by society, as a legitimate social context. This is the reason why school, as an institution, plays such an essential part of our life, because apart from family, this is where we can socially interact with others and integrate our identity. Text cannot be understood correctly without cultural background knowledge.

Cultural orientation, on the other hand, is the cultural preferences of an individual when coming across with imported culture while still observing the native culture (Wang, et. Al., 2016). When it comes to cultural orientation, Knight, et. Al. (2018) sought to advance a theoretical structure that conceptualizes cultural orientation as a developmental construct represented by multiple characteristics and social identities, and influenced by the contexts in which individuals are rooted. This perspective suggests that cultural orientation changes within individuals over time as a function of their experiences with and memberships in multiple groups, including the



mainstream and ethnic culture groups, as well as a function of their normative developmental changes (i.e., the development of cognitive, social, and emotional capabilities).

Cultural adjustment found to be affected more by individual cultural orientation than national culture differences among expatriates' home and host countries. The alignment of the expatriate cultural orientation with the national culture is found to be critical for effective expatriate cultural adjustment (Wondwossen and Su, 2017). A research conducted by Tian (2017), demonstrating how cultural orientation may influence the decoding of signifiers used to non-verbal ideological cues. However, it remains critical to maintain self-reflexivity in analysis as the researcher's own cultural background and social underpinnings may have predisposed certain interpretations of the visual sample. In addition to this, varying family structures may affect the transference of racial narratives between generations, which can in turn affect how multiracial children choose to identify themselves racially (Thomas, 2014). In socializing children in a racial world, parents should be mindful of their own identity and informed of their children's perceptions, sentiments, and ecological pressures (Pereira, 2018). Family providers can play an important role through advocacy, education, and intervention. Moreover, families and professionals form a community that can largely impact systemic influences such as media and family policy in order to acknowledge multiracial diversity, encourage positive racial identities, and provide accessibility to and utilization of services that will promote the wellbeing of multiracial individuals and communities (Pereira, 2018). Prior experiences and cultural background influenced the domain/s utilized by families. Significantly, families that consistently tapped into all three domains were able to effectively manage personal and family difficulties; these families also had family strategies in place to prevent adolescents from risky behaviors (Kao, 2017).

## **Language Barrier**

Language barrier is the lack of knowledge of the language that prevents two or more people from talking to each other through verbal communication. (Friedman, 2018). In some cases, language served as a barrier and in others as a connector. (Thomas, 2014).

According to Dumanig & David (2014) whenever communication generally involves interaction between people whose cultural perceptions and symbol systems are distinct, it is likely that the communication event will be altered and disagreement will be probably created. Multiracial adolescents struggle communicating within their families because of several languages emerge in their abode. As they converse with their family the occurrence of miscommunication and misunderstanding are evident. Many of the participants did not realize the inadequacy of their own language until they were presented with a scenario where they were expected to speak their heritage language to family members and relatives and could not perform (Thomas, 2014)

Oftentimes people are confused between miscommunication and misunderstanding but these two aspects have different meanings. Miscommunication happens when the desired message was not relayed properly to the receiver. However, Misunderstandings are defined as the types of unsuccessful communicative acts primarily associated with failure to fulfill the speaker's informative intention (Halász, 2018). In this particular study, miscommunication refers to when the recipient did not receive the intended message accurately due to cultural diversity, while misunderstanding refers to the unsuccessful interpretation by the recipient of the message delivered by the recipient due to the ease, knowledge, manner and fluency when utilizing their respective languages. The results of the study was confirmed by the study of Halász (2018) as stated above.

Being a mixture of two different races, language variances may cause difficulties in conversing with their families. Such adolescents have had a hard time conversing with their parents because their parents do not know their spouse's language entirely, so the likelihood is that the teenager will have a problem as to what language to use to communicate to their family, and sometimes combining the two languages resulting in miscommunication because the message was not adequately communicated to the parents. When two speakers of two different English varieties seek to communicate, there may be miscommunication. A message may be interpreted differently by speakers who come from different linguistic and cultural backgrounds (Dumanig & David, 2014). They could not grasp the words they need to say for they are hindered to express themselves due to the variances of languages that made the adolescents confused on what language to use in order to fully express themselves but rather it became a struggle for them because the desired message was not delivered. Due to various cultural and language gaps, including practical elements that do not readily translate into the target language, Arabic-speaking English language

learners are at a specific disadvantage when trying to understand and communicate with English speakers (Abushariefeh, 2016).

Moreover, due to difficulty in conversing with their parents, troubles occur due to being confused because of the technicalities of language used, they have a hard time processing if their choice of word is correct, the grammar and sentence structure. Even though grammatical errors are apparent and easily forgiven; on the other hand, logical errors, including the correct or incorrect use of honorifics, can lead to roadblocks in communication (Abushariefeh, 2016). Although English is used, communication problems still arise because speakers from different cultures have different 'taken-for-grants' and such 'taken-for-grants' will result in complex language usage and cause miscommunication. Furthermore, speakers from different cultures have different patterns of discourse and use different lexical, phonological, structural and pragmatic features (Dumanig & David, 2014) which results in misunderstanding.

Furthermore, misunderstanding and miscommunication does not only occur in verbal communication, but it also occurs in nonverbal communication. Nonverbal communication requires language of the body, sound of the voice and appearance. Feelings and thoughts expressed through the language of the body include sorrow, joy, anxiety, concern, carelessness, curiosity, affection, rage, hate, jealousy, reluctance, goodness, honesty or dishonesty. (Rasheed, 2019).

Truly, communication is one of the most important life skills. Approximately 70 percent of our organizational and personal life problems are due to lack of communication or miscommunication and misunderstanding (Rasheed, 2019). Language barrier in conversing can be a challenge but associating with people from different cultures and backgrounds drives innovation, creativity and achievement.

### **Mediation**

Multiracial adolescents have struggled in every aspect in life especially in communication. In order to surmount this, a coping mechanism or personal adaptation will emerge. They struggled with their family's cultural clashes. By being mediators, they cope with it.

The first stage of Stonequist's three-stage theory, states that a multiracial individual undergoes assimilation with each parent and their heritages (Moniz, 2019). It was stated that, multiracial adolescents need to adapt to the cultures and heritage of their parents to create reconciliation within their families.

Cultural adaptation is the process and time a person takes to assimilate to a new culture. Being in a new culture, particularly if it is drastically different from your own, can be startling and very difficult to process. A person exposed to a new culture will feel a variety of different sensations. The willingness of multiracial individuals to hold different racial identities depends on the context in which they are and who is around them. In Moniz's study (2019), he claimed that cultural versatility, as described by Carter, is "the ability to interact, engage, and manage various social and cultural settings, accept multiple forms of cultural knowledge, extend their own self-understanding, and hold inclusive perspectives on others that vary in myriad social or identity aspects". Multiracial adolescents have cultural flexibility that means they can adjust to the cultures both of their parents and tries to understand it, so in that way the multiracial adolescents can conciliate them together. It was noted that the product of multiple cultures is multiracial individuals. Having a diverse background allows multiracial individuals to capitalize on multi-cultural facets and strengths (Moniz, 2019) and be more open to other cultures (Pew Research Center, 2015). Some perceptions associated with being multiracial are knowledge and responsiveness to cultural signals, being able to appreciate differing views, recognizing acceptance and tolerance for difference, and a fear of excluding others. Therefore, the tolerance and openness of multiracial individuals to differences and diversity will help them foster a sense of cultural flexibility (Moniz, 2019); thus they are flexible in terms of adjusting and absorbing knowledge.

Researchers found that establishing a third space or a set of values and practices unique to one's culture, is useful for many families to overcome their cultural differences (Warfield, 2018). In the context of this study, multiracial adolescents use *third spaces* as way of mediating their parents when cultures clashes. Furthermore, differences in general parenting attitudes characteristic of European American, Hispanic, African American, Asian

American and Asian Indian caregivers were identified in a study comparing parenting among five major ethnic groups. The results showed that African American, Asian American, and Asian Indian mothers showed lower empathy and a tendency to find comfort in one's children more frequently than European American and Hispanic mothers. Less often, Asian American, Asian Indian, and Hispanic caregivers demonstrated unrealistic expectations for their children than did the participants of European American and African American. While the studies examined denote the impact of cultural heritage in monocultural families on various parenting factors, these differences in parenting may similarly occur in intercultural families and become particularly important when examining multiracial children's experiences (Warfield, 2018). This can be denoted that different cultures have evident differences that also affect the family. Seemingly, due to the differences in culture and tradition of both parents the child who is multiracial will mediate between them. The multiracial adolescent will act as a bridge to conciliate both parties.

## CONCLUSION

This study divulges the huge endeavor of multiracial adolescents dealing with pressures of 'fitting-in' in their own families. The struggles they face are caused by cultural diversity. A home that is naturally exposed to cultural diversity makes it inevitable for language barrier to occur. As revealed, it is an area where most, if not all, of the respondents interviewed had the most difficulty with. Miscommunication and misunderstandings are bound to emerge from this. Given the situation, for multiracial adolescents, it is an arduous task for them to develop relationships to whom they can relate and communicate with. This is the pressure that these adolescents have to deal with. It is not merely an option for them to constantly be learning. It is their way of living.

Communication plays an integral part in every relationship. Multiracial adolescents need to consistently learn the ways of the culture and put it into practice whether it be linguistic or familial. Multiracial adolescents deal with these circumstances through mediating amidst them. Mediation can be displayed through personal adaptation and familial conciliation. It takes place to meet their specific needs which then leads to its success.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

One of the main ideas this research suggest is giving great emphasis on the **attitude of learning** observed in each of the respondents. This attitude is what causes the determination, drive, and willingness of the multiracial adolescents to continue through. This study generates the same principle of embracing challenges and making an effort to improve as a means to strengthen relationships.

When it comes to establishing familial relationships, communication is key. It is important to **open the line of communication** for better understanding. Learn intently on the cultures of both sides. **it comes to linguistic development, continuous practice is key.** In this day and age, access is available for everyone. It is recommended by the respondents to take advantage of these materials. As testified, searching up on Google and YouTube served great help. There are applications available on electronic devices specifically made for language development.

The researchers acknowledge that the adjustments made by multiracial adolescents take time and effort, and this is something that they have to deal with all throughout their lives. It is taking the initiative to learn and adapt in order to create an environment where the family can get along well despite their differences. This is where **acculturation** occurs. Most, if not all, the recommendations mentioned in this study falls under this idea. Acculturation is best understood as the dual process of cultural and psychological change that occurs when individuals and groups from one culture come into contact with and acquire elements of another culture (Frazer, A. L. et al. 2010). It is does not mean neglecting one's culture, but learning both of the cultures all the while maintaining original customs, values, norms, and rules. Furthermore, acculturation encourages the idea of openness; it is giving attention to both sides of the family.

Findings from this study reveals the success of healthy communications and relationships developed through the process of acculturation. This is not only limited to a multiracial adolescent's familial aspect but is also applicable in other relationships. Overall, the respondents included in this study proved that they have 'won' in this battle of constantly fighting to learn and adapt to the cultures they have been exposed to and to the people they are surrounded with. Along with this, the multiracial adolescents are satisfied with the results they have seen. It was

because of the willingness and drive they have in pursuit of learning to communicate and relate with people that made them feel the contentment they have received.

The researchers from this study recommend future researchers to expand the pool of participants to elicit a wider range of responses. This can help in further knowing other aspects of the different struggles multiracial adolescents deal with. It can provide other coping mechanisms that were not mentioned in the study and also test the effectiveness of each one. A lot can still be uncovered through conducting further studies revolving on the lives of multiracial adolescents.

Moreover, this study is built on the foundation of respect towards other cultures and the beautiful people each one comprises of. This same principle should apply to further studies. Along with respect, come acceptance and openness towards others. No matter what the race, gender, class, or age the person has, they are to be acknowledged and placed value upon as people.

### **Acknowledgements**

We would like to express our utmost gratitude to all who offered assistance, and guidance in the development and completion of this research. We give thanks and appreciation to **Dr. Lorina S. Villanueva Ed. D.** for setting aside time to consistently meet with us and guide us throughout this entire process. We give her our praises for being such an exemplary and patient mentor. This study would not have been completed if not for her heart and wisdom through extending her knowledge, understanding, patience, and her efforts in the completion of this study. We are truly grateful and lucky to have her as our Research Adviser.

We also thank **Dr. Fredelito Don John A. Vallesteros, Ph.D** for being our Research Teacher in the 11<sup>th</sup> Grade. We are grateful for him for briefing us in the ways of doing IMRaD. We admire him for his passion to continuously teach students about the proper ways of IMRaD. His meticulousness and determination to strive for excellence extends to his students. His attitude of always giving the best and pushing oneself when it comes to outputs is one to be admired. We appreciate his constant reminder of availability in order to help us. We would not have had the appropriate foundations of research if not for Dr. Vallesteros.

We thank **Ms. Wama A. Jorbina, DALC, Ms. Monaliza P. Cayatoc, MAG, RGC, Mr. Danilo N. Keh Jr., MAEd., Mr. Jerome B. Constantino, MAEd., RGC** for giving time to correct and assure the accuracy of the data made by the researchers. We acknowledge the effort and time they took in order to extend their help, and are truly grateful for it.

We would to thank our family and friends for their love and support throughout this entire process. If not for their continuous support, care, guidance and help, we would not have been able to complete this. They have extended their aid in their own ways and in more ways than one. Above all, we thank the Almighty God for providing us the strength and discipline to complete this task. He has blessed us with people who are experts in this field and have the initiative to offer help when we are troubled. We acknowledge that all things come from Him, and that none of this would have been possible if not for Him. We thank Him for giving us knowledge and wisdom in the tasks given to us.

Once again, we thank everyone mentioned above for their guidance. This study would not have been molded to its best version if not for their efforts and dedication to constantly guide, rectify, and teach us the proper ways of doing so. They have provided us the much-needed help and support in more ways than one. Our appreciation for them does beyond words.

## REFERENCES

- Abushariefeh, A. A. (2016). The importance of the inclusion of pragmatics in the english as a second language (ESL) classroom: Maximizing the communicative competence of arabic-speaking english language learners (Order No. 10250746).
- Barnard, A., Clur, L., & Joubert, Y. (2016). Returning to work: The cancer survivor's transformational journey of adjustment and coping. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies on Health and Well-being*, 11, 32488.
- Beagan, B. L. (2015). Approaches to culture and diversity: A critical synthesis of occupational therapy literature: Des approches en matière de culture et de diversité : Une synthèse critique de la littérature en ergothérapie. *The Canadian Journal of Occupational Therapy*, 82(5), 272-282.
- Beaverton (2016). Handbook of research on promoting cross-cultural competence and social justice in teacher education (2016). Beaverton: Ringgold Inc.
- Bogdan, R., & Biklen, S. K. (1998). *Qualitative Research for Education: An introduction to theories and methods*. Boston: Allyn and Bacon, Inc.
- Boyce, C. and Neale, P. (2006). *Conducting In-Depth Interview: A Guide for Designing and Conducting In-Depth Interviews for Evaluation Input*. Pathfinder International Tool Series, Monitoring and Evaluation-2.
- Boyras, G., Waits, J. B., Felix, V. A., & Wynes, D. D. (2016). Posttraumatic stress and physical health among adults: The role of coping mechanisms. *Journal of Loss and Trauma*, 21(1), 47-61.
- Cheon, B. K. (2019). The diversity of cultural diversity: Psychological consequences of different patterns of intercultural contact and mixing. *Asian Journal of Social Psychology*, 22(1), 93-105.
- Cole, N. L. (2011, June 9). Do You Know What Acculturation Is and What Causes It to Happen?
- De Guzman, A., & Tan, E. (2007). Understanding the Essence of Scholarship From the Lived Experiences of a Select Group of Outstanding Filipino Researchers.
- Del Carpio, K., & Del Carpio, P. (2015). The importance of considering students' cultural and linguistic backgrounds: Languages are friends, not enemies! certamente l'italiano e' l'amico di tutti! *Journal of Language Teaching and Research*, 6(3), 467-474.
- Dumanig, F. P., & David, M. K. (2014). Miscommunication in filipino-malaysian interactions: Intercultural discourse in english. *Linguistic Insights - Studies in Language and Communication*, 183, 253-278.
- Frazer, A. L., Rubens, S., Johnson-motoyama, M., Dipierro, M., & Fite, P. J. (2017). Acculturation dissonance, acculturation strategy, depressive symptoms, and delinquency in Latina/o adolescents. *Child & Youth Care Forum*, 46(1), 19-33.
- Friedman, A. (2018). What Are Language Barriers?
- Halász, K. (2018). Misunderstandings in communicative language use. *Sprachtheorie Und Germanistische Linguistik*, 28(2), 237.
- Hsieh, M. (2016). Ecological perspective: Identity formation within interracial and multicultural families (Order No. 10103388). Available from ProQuest Central; ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global. (1789111678).
- Kao, T. A., & Caldwell, C. H. (2017). Family efficacy within ethnically diverse families: A qualitative study. *Family Process*, 56(1), 217-233.
- Kingston, B. (2018). Social disorganization theory. In R. J. R. Levesque, *Encyclopedia of adolescence* (2nd ed.). Dordrecht, The Netherlands: Springer Science+Business Media.
- Knight, G. P., Safa, M. D., & White, R. M. (2018). Advancing the assessment of cultural orientation: A developmental and contextual framework of multiple psychological dimensions and social identities. *Development and psychopathology*, 30(5), 1867-1888.
- Levesque, R. J. (2018). Multiracial identity. In R. J. R. Levesque, *Encyclopedia of adolescence* (2nd ed.). Dordrecht, The Netherlands: Springer Science+Business Media.
- Mao, J., & Shen, Y. (2015). Cultural identity change in expatriates: A social network perspective. *Human Relations*, 68(10), 1533-1556.
- McWilliam, C.L., Kothari, A., Ward-Griffin, C. et al. Evolving the theory and praxis of knowledge translation through social interaction: a social phenomenological study. *Implementation Sci* 4, 26 (2009) doi:10.1186/1748-5908-4-26
- Medvedeva, M. (2018). Immigrants' linguistic adaptation. In R. J. R. Levesque, *Encyclopedia of adolescence* (2nd ed.). Dordrecht, The Netherlands: Springer Science+Business Media.

- Moniz, J. N. (2019). Relationships among racial identity integration, cognitive processes, and attitudes towards racial issues and diversity among multiracial individuals (Order No. 13809092). Available from ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global. (2317615516).
- Park, C. J. Y. (2017). Parent-adolescent communication in Korean immigrant families: Relationships among communication quantity, quality, and challenges and adolescent's emotional and academic outcomes (Order No. 10243588). Available from ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global. (1884739734). Retrieved from
- Pereira, S. (2018). Multiracial Identity Development and Integration: Family Socialization and Group Heterogeneity (Order No. 10836987). *ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global: Literature & Language; ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global: Social Sciences*.
- Rasheed, T., & Flavours, F. (2019, Oct 27). Nonverbal communication: Understanding body language.
- Schlabach, S. (2013). The Importance of Family, Race, and Gender for Multiracial Adolescent Well-being. *Family Relations*, 62(1), 154-174.
- Sullivan, J. M., & Ghara A. (2015). Racial Identity and Intergroup Attitudes: A Multiracial Youth Analysis\* *Social Science Quarterly*, 96 (1) 261-272.
- Thomas, M. O. (2014). The stories we tell: A qualitative inquiry to multiracial family storytelling (Order No. 1583864).
- Tian, K. (2017). THE INFLUENCE OF CULTURAL ORIENTATION ON GENDER ROLE REPRESENTATIONS: HORIZONTAL-VERTICAL VALUES IN CROSS-CULTURAL ADVERTISING. *International Journal of Business Anthropology*, 7(1), 49-84.
- Tom Wengraf (2001). Qualitative Research Interviewing: Biographic Narratives and Semi-structured Methods [13 paragraphs]. *Forum Qualitative Sozialforschung / Forum: Qualitative Social Research*, 3(4), Art. 4,
- United States Census Bureau. (2012). 2010 Census Shows Multiple-Race Population Grew Faster Than Single-Race Population.
- Virginia Braun & Victoria Clarke (2006) Using thematic analysis in psychology, *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 3:2, 77-101, DOI: 10.1191/1478088706qp063oa
- Wainwright, D. (1997). Can Sociological Research Be Qualitative, Critical and Valid? . *The Qualitative Report*, 3(2), 1-17.
- Wang, S., Newman, I. M., & Shell, D. F. (2016). Cultural orientation and its associations with alcohol use by university students in China. *PloS one*, 11(11), e0165858.
- Warfield, C. (2018). The Acculturation Gap: Investigating the Relationship Between Inter-Partner Acculturation Discrepancy and Parenting Quality (Order no. 10750559).
- Wilt, C. L., & Morningstar, M. E. (2018). Parent engagement in the transition from school to adult life through culturally sustaining practices: A scoping review. *Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities*, 56(5), 307-320, 389, 391.
- Wondwossen, K. T., & Su, Q. (2017). Expatriates cultural adjustment: Empirical analysis on individual cultural orientation. *Journal of Applied Business Research*, 33(5), 963-978.

## BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH



**Amiel Joshua C. Aguilar** is a Grade 12 Senior High School student under the academic strand of STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) in Philippine School Doha. Born on December 12, 2001 and raised in Qatar ever since. Amiel is very adept in multiple activities, he has been participating for almost 3 consecutive years in his school's Ultimate Dance Battle (UDB) Winning 2<sup>nd</sup> and 1<sup>st</sup> runner ups respectively. Participating 2 years in the school's Battle of the Bands (BOB). He is also physically active winning a local doubles tennis tournament and representing his team in table tennis for 3 years of the school's intramurals. Amiel also participated in the Citizenship Advancement Training (C.A.T) obtaining the position of 1<sup>st</sup> lieutenant where he was taught the value of time management and was immersed in community work for a year. Amiel also was awarded Best in CSS (Computer System Servicing) from their Technology and Livelihood Education (TLE) specialization. Expected to graduate in April of 2020 he

aspires to continue his education under the field of Medicine.



**Ralph Mathew B. Aposaga** is currently a Grade 12 Senior High School student under the academic strand of STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) in Philippine School Doha. He has been consistently being a top student during his Junior High proving that hard work and determination are the key to reaching one's goal. Now he is in Senior High School he continues to strive in his academics, he proves to himself that he can achieve his dream with ardor and enthusiasm in studying, thus he became a Laureola Awardee for 3 consecutive terms during his 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> semester in 11<sup>th</sup> Grade and 1<sup>st</sup> semester in 12<sup>th</sup> grade, achieving a Bronze Awardee. Aside from academic awards he has been one of the students recognized by Prefect of Discipline as a Well-groomed student. Furthermore, he does not only excel in academics, but he also engages in extra co-curricular activity as part of Hiyaw Chorale. After he graduates and receives his high school diploma in April 2020, he plans to pursue his studies at West Visayas State University taking Nursing as his course in college.



**Romer Ailon Garcenila Lubuguin** is currently a twelfth grade STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) student in Philippine School Doha, where he is finishing his studies. Throughout his High School journey, he has accumulated a sufficient amount of achievements and recognitions academic and non-academic alike, such as graduating Junior High School with Honors and besting his fellow contenders en route to be the school's Intramurals Chess Champion during his senior year. Through hard work and dedication, he did not let his dreams be just dreams.

Moreover, during his earlier years, he was one of the journalists for his school paper, even earning a Golden Pen Award, and was the team captain of his school's chess team. Being a team person, composed, and calm, he not only aspires to be productive in the academic aspects of the school but also in the extra co-curricular ones: indulging in basketball and chess.

He shows his adaptability and resiliency as he transferred schools from the Philippines to Qatar, switching from three schools in a six-year time span: two years each in; University of San Agustin, Philippine International School Qatar, and Philippine School Doha. In the upcoming future, he aspires to become a Civil Engineer after finishing his Engineering course at Central Philippine University.



**Kyla Nicole B. Lim** was born on the 17<sup>th</sup> of June 2002 and is currently a Grade 12 Senior High School student under the strand of STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) in Philippine School Doha. She studied in Manila, but later moved to Qatar in 2015. She was homeschooled for two years during her 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> Grade. In the past year, she was recognized as a Bronze Laureola awardee on the 1<sup>st</sup> Semester of her 11<sup>th</sup> Grade. She participated in Season 6 of PSD Idol on her 12<sup>th</sup> Grade. After graduating high school on April 2020, she will study in the Philippines for college and pursue music as a course. She is planning to take up either Music Business Management or Theater Arts as a course in Meridian International College (MINT College).



**Suzette A. Prieto** is currently a Grade 12 Senior High School student under the strand of STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) in Philippine School Doha. She was consistently a Bronze Laureola awardee during the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> semester of her grade 11<sup>th</sup> year. Currently, she is preparing to compete in The Order of the Knights of Rizal-Middle East and Africa Chapter (OKOR-MEAR) as the Young Maria Clara. She was elected as Vice President in the student body council when she studied in Middle East International School. Once she graduates this incoming April 2020, she plans on pursuing a bachelor's degree in Environmental Science due to her passion to help make a difference.