

# *Sawadee Ka: Practices and Experiences of Filipino Physical Education Teachers in Thailand a Phenomenological Study.*

Jaffmar M. Palawan and Bryan L. Cancio\*

jaffmar.palawan001@deped.gov.ph

University of the Immaculate Conception, Topaz Street, Matina Crossing Davao City, Philippines 8000  
University of the Immaculate Conception, Davao City, Philippines 8000

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## **Abstract**

*The purpose of the study is to describe the best practices and experiences of Filipino physical education teachers in Thailand. Six participants in the study were Filipino teachers in Thailand handling physical education subject. The best practices and experiences of Filipino physical education teachers in Thailand is gearing towards two major themes namely: motivates students to be more active in class and student-centered learning. While the challenges faced by Filipino physical education teachers in Thailand is gearing towards two major themes namely: distance learning and language barrier. In addition, the educational insights drawn to improve the physical education teaching in Thailand is presented in two major themes: right mind setting and considering the multiple intelligences. The school leaders must support the implementation by providing continuous instructional support and provide Filipino teachers with different seminars and training to be more competent. In providing learning to students Filipino physical education teachers should be creative and increase the level competence to catch students attention in implementation of physical education in class.*

**Keywords:** *Physical Education Teacher; Experiences; Practices; Professional Development*

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## **Introduction**

In the world today, the flow of professionals from one country to another has increased significantly (Kerr et al, 2016). A lot of factors have caused this migration of people. To sustain the financial needs of the family was one of the main reasons why most people considered working abroad as an option. Many educators are pursuing opportunities to travel abroad just to achieve individual academic goals, obtain personal independence, and gain intercultural understanding. Additionally, educators have found an

increasing demand to develop cultural sensitivity and the need to broaden their personal and professional lives.

Recently, societies have been confronting new challenges in education resulting from the process of globalization. This atmosphere of internationalization combined with changes in educational policies has forced teacher preparation programs to recruit professionals with a broader understanding of the differences among cultures and peoples (Stewart & Kagan, 2005). When educators embark on the adventure of living and teaching abroad, they face a diverse range of rewarding and challenging experiences. The ability to successfully teach students from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds is underpinned by the knowledge and training of the teacher in question (Zozakiewicz, 2010).

Filipinos often mourn the outmigration of teachers and see it as an example of brain drain. Surely it can be disheartening to see some of our best and brightest educators leave the country to teach abroad, but overseas Filipino teachers would say otherwise (Inquirer.net, 2021). Also many of our *kababayans* landed a job in teaching in the different parts of the globe because for them it's fairer to seek a job overseas rather than landing a job here. For them the best qualification is not your work experience and educational attainment but rather the people you know inside the organization.

Locally, in Davao City the ever-increasing migration rate status of teachers is very evident. For example, teacher exchange programs have significantly altered the lives of educators as they move out of their local context and broaden their perspectives on teaching, which, in the long run, enriches the entire profession (Garson, 2005). Being immersed in a foreign culture is a valuable opportunity to see one's own culture from the outside and that these cross-cultural experiences and the reflections on one's own culture are the foundation of intercultural learning (Bodycott and Walker, 2000).

This study was designed to investigate the best practices and personal experiences of Filipino physical education teachers in Thailand, the benefits that stemmed from their intercultural experiences, and the challenges they faced in the transition from the Filipino culture to the Thai culture. I am writing this research paper as a physical education enthusiast who have observed the trend of physical education teachers applying the job overseas. Although many research already explored the best practices and experiences of a teacher, little research has been made that qualitatively. This research aims to provide intervention that will help our *kababayan* teaching physical education in Thailand to continue their excellence in teaching even overseas. Furthermore, the proposed intervention of this study is responsive to the context of the teachers best practices, experiences and coping mechanisms. Lastly, this research study may advance the understanding of this phenomena to a deeper level and encourage meaningful discussions and exploration in the future.

## Theoretical Lens

This study is anchored on theory of social intelligence as cited by M Babu (2013). It states that social intelligence is the ability to get along well with others, and to get them to cooperate. Sometimes referred to simplistically as "people skills", social intelligence includes an awareness of situations and the social dynamics that govern them, and a

knowledge of interaction styles and strategies that can help a person achieve his or her objectives in dealing with others. It also involves a certain amount of self-insight and a consciousness of one's own perceptions and reaction patterns. With this Filipino Physical Education teachers are now foreigners in Thailand. And there is a need to adjust because of cultural differences and its norms. Filipino teachers needs social intelligence and adapt with the environment. Possible. This theory also acknowledges that people go through these steps at widely varying speeds and in ways that influence how others around them will respond to and adopt the innovation.

Acculturation is defined as "the process of cultural change that occurs when individuals from different cultural backgrounds come into prolonged, continuous, first-hand contact with each other" (Redfield, Linton, & Herskovits, 1936, p. 146). This first-hand contact results in changes at both individual (i.e., values, attitudes, beliefs and identities) as well as group level (i.e. social and cultural systems) (Berry, 2003). Salient forms of the acculturation process are composed of antecedent factors (acculturation conditions), strategies (acculturation orientations), and consequences (acculturation outcomes). Filipino physical education teachers are very adaptive in the environment where they are situated. The theory of acculturation can be broken down to include learning a new language, immersion, assimilation and integration. This theory is relevant for the study since that the heart of this research is the practices and experiences of physical education teachers in Thailand wherein acculturation is evident.

## **METHODOLOGY**

This study utilized qualitative research method for the study, employing phenomenological approach. This involves collecting and analyzing non-numerical data to understand concepts, opinions, or experiences. It was used to gather in-depth insights into a problem or generate new ideas for research. The participants of this investigation were selected Filipino teachers handling physical education subject in Thailand. To ascertain that the data emanating from the participants of the study, the participants were Physical Education teachers of Thailand qualified in the study. It is consisted of 6 teachers purposely selected by the researcher who will participate in the in-depth interview (IDI) and who will join the (FGD). The members of the discussion were picked since they coordinated involvement on the happenings in the school. They served as the solid wellspring of information for this investigation

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS**

This section provides a discussion of the first research question of the study. It focuses on the best practices and experiences of Filipino physical education in Thailand. For this study, I ask the participants about their best practices and lived experiences in teaching physical education in Thailand. Figure 1 will show you the result of my thematic analysis which summarizes the answer to the first objective of this study.

**Motivates Students to be More Active in Class.** Motivation is a central part of a student's educational experience from preschool onward, but it has received scant attention amid an education reform agenda focused mainly on accountability, standards and tests, teacher quality, and school management (Center on Education Policy, 2012). Therefore, student motivation must always be considered in the delivery of instruction in able for our students to engage and participate in the discussion. After all our clientele is our major priority that's why we need to motivate them while they are learning. Participants shared their best practices and experiences. As expressed by Participant 6:

*"Motivate children to be more active in the class promote community activities \*Use a very simple terms in English as a medium of instruction \*teacher must secure first the safety of the students while having outdoor and indoor activities \*Always praise students for their participation One of my best practices as a Physical Education teacher in Thailand is teaching how to dance and coaching sports. It enables them to equip their skills and talents by encouraging them to do their best in every way."*

**Student-centered Learning.** The concept of student-centered learning is to bring the classroom and students to life. The teacher is considered a "guide on the side", assisting and guiding students to meet the goals that have been made by the students and the teacher (Overby, 2011). Student-centered learning is one of the few strategies and best practices of physical education teachers in Thailand. Participants shared their best practices and experiences. As expressed by Participant 2:

*"My roles and responsibilities as a foreign teacher here in Thailand is to be guiding children in a school setting and provide a very basic English instructions. And I teach a range of different sports and provide young Thai people with an opportunity to develop and improve their social and physical skills. Active learning. In order to increase their academic intake. I let them engaged in the different types of activities. Such as Games, Group Presentations and Body movement demonstrations. Team based learning This sequenced format of practice is that I allow a large numbers of students to work within small teams to apply content to specific team. That build on how they unite and peer interactions by collaborative learnings."*

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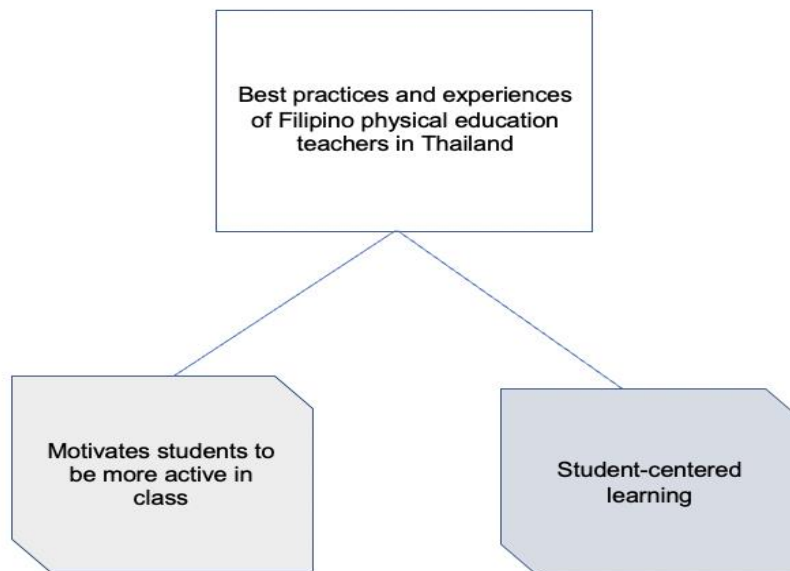


Figure 1. Best practices and experiences of Filipino physical education teachers in Thailand.

This section provides a discussion of the second research question of the study. It focuses on the challenges faced by Filipino teachers in Thailand. For this study, I ask the participants about their challenges and struggles in teaching physical education in Thailand. Figure 2 will show you the result of my thematic analysis which summarizes the answer to the second objective of this study.

**Distance Learning.** Distance learning is one of the most rapidly growing fields of education and its potential impact on all education delivery systems has been greatly accentuated through the development of Internet-based information technologies and in particular the World Wide Web. Distance learning can be summarized as teaching and learning involving implementation of various technological applications. This term also reflects both the fact that all or most of the teaching is conducted by someone removed in time and space from the learner (Oeconomica Jadertina, 2012). For physical education teachers in Thailand distance learning do have both positive and negative effect. Positive that despite the current pandemic still learning continues. On the other hand, distance learning doesn't give authentic results or outputs. Participants shared some of the challenges faced while teaching physical education in Thailand. As expressed by Participant 5:

*"Another challenge for me is teaching in an online setting. I really struggled with understanding how we could be able to provide physical education activities in a physically distant environment. And because of this, it helps me to be creative in designing my lessons and activities. I also urge the*

*students to go on bike rides, hikes, jogs, walks, or complete any physical activity that can be done safely outdoors and create an activity workout that can be done safely indoors using common household objects.”*

**Language Barrier.** Language barriers are the root causes of many problems or obstacles in health care, aviation, maritime, business, and education (Abuarqoub, 2019). The findings of a study about the impact of language barriers on the customers of English as a Second Language, suggests that language barriers generate negative emotional and cognitive responses and prevent the customers from taking specific actions such as seeking necessary information or complaining about a service failure. (Meuter et al.: 2015). Language barrier is very evident for Filipino teachers in Thailand knowing that English is their second language. Participants shared their best practices and experiences. As expressed by Participant 6:

*“There a few things I cannot forget while teaching Physical Education in Thailand, one is using the English language as the medium of instruction even if you use the simple terms in the event of warming up the body like hands up and shake your hands they don’t understand it and to address this you have to be patient at all times and do it first every time you teach them..”*

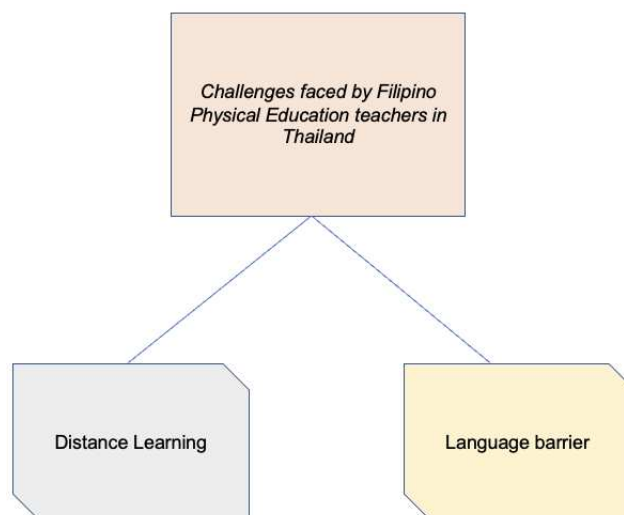


Figure 2. Challenges faced by Filipino physical education teachers in Thailand

This section provides a discussion of the third research question of the study. It focuses on the educational insights drawn to improve teaching physical education in Thailand. For this study, I ask the participants about their educational insights drawn to improve teaching physical education in Thailand. Figure 3 will show you the result of my thematic analysis which summarizes the answer to the second objective of this study.

**Right Mind Setting.** Research shows a teacher's mindset can significantly impact the achievement gap (Rice, 2021). For physical education teachers in Thailand its beneficial to have right mind set because it will help students to be at ease in school. Some students are intimidated with other teachers and those teachers lacks right mind setting. Participants shared some of the educational insights drawn to improve teaching physical education in Thailand. As expressed by Participant 4:

*"If we are lucky as a teacher, students would remembered and made as a role model as they were growing and that's priceless! The best teachers bring their passion, personality and sense of humor to the classroom. Great teachers are committed to find new and different ways to deliver content so that it's more interesting for the students."*

**Consider Multiple Intelligences.** In the context of education and students' achievement, multiple intelligences are especially powerful because they help parents and teachers understand education holistically (Ahvan and Pour, 2016). According to Gardner, there are biological and cultural bases for multiple intelligences. Accepting Gardner's Theory of Multiple Intelligences has several implications for teachers in terms of classroom instruction. Therefore considering our students multiple intelligences is very important for Filipino teachers in Thailand knowing that every child is unique. Participants shared some of the educational insights drawn to improve teaching physical education in Thailand. As expressed by Participant 2:

*"Being able to teach students from all different backgrounds and experiences set you up for success in future career goals. You can work hard and be creative in your job, knowing that you have security in a sometimes unpredictable world. I'm the teacher when Thailand seems to be doing all the teaching."*



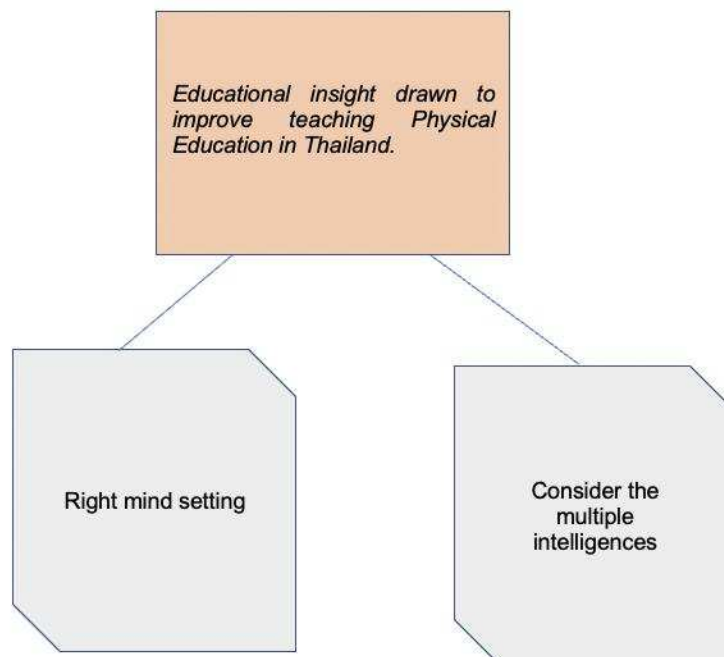


Figure 3. Educational insights drawn to improve teaching physical education in Thailand

### Future Directions

Based on the implications of the study best practices and experiences of Filipino physical education teachers in Thailand, I, Jaffmar Mudjakate Palawan the researcher, felt that the following are the best possible future directions:

*The Philippine Government through the Department of Education*, being the primary body involved in the planning, implementation up to evaluation of the curriculum and instruction. This is a best way to be informed of the best practices and teaching strategies of our Filipino physical education teachers in Thailand. Moreover, through this study the Philippine government through the Department of Education will be guided in improving the teaching strategies of our educators in the country.

*The school administrators In Thailand*, as immediate head of the Filipino physical education teachers may also provide trainings for our Filipino physical education teachers so that Filipino physical education teachers can do their job more effectively and students can reach their maximum potential. This in turn will be beneficial for everyone in the school and the community.

*The physical education teachers* may learn from this study and benchmark in the results. By being aware of the challenges and experiences of our fellow Filipino teachers teaching physical education in Thailand, they are better equipped to meet the challenges of being a physical education teacher.



*The students*, as the primary beneficiary of this study, may make adjustments in dealing with their physical education classes. Moreover, teachers' insights that resulted from this study maybe adapted by others as a guiding principles. Also, the students may be able to appreciate the beauty of having teachers who are not only concerned of their learning but also of their holistic development as a human being. Both the teacher and the student may realize how mutual concern for each other can positively impact their performance.

*Finally, the future researchers* may explore the result of this study and conduct a more comprehensive investigation on the practices and experiences of Filipino physical education teachers in Thailand. A comparison between the Filipino physical education teachers teaching in the Philippines and Thailand may also be looked into to give readers a wider view of this situation.

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