

Navigating Linguistic and Cultural Frontiers: Lived Experiences of Filipino English as a Foreign Language (EFL) Teachers in Thailand

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Abstract

The increasing international mobility of teachers has created new opportunities for Filipino English as a Foreign Language (EFL) educators to pursue professional careers abroad, particularly in Thailand. Despite their recognized English language proficiency and teaching competence, Filipino teachers often encounter linguistic, cultural, and workplace challenges that influence their professional experiences and personal adjustment. This study explored the lived experiences of Filipino EFL teachers working in Thailand, focusing on their experiences of discrimination, language barriers, workplace conditions, cultural adaptation, and professional resilience. A qualitative phenomenological research design was employed to gain an in-depth understanding of participants' lived experiences through semi-structured interviews. The interview data were analyzed using thematic analysis to identify recurring patterns and meanings across participants' narratives. The findings revealed that Filipino teachers experienced varying forms of discrimination, communication difficulties, workplace inequities, and cultural adjustment challenges. Nevertheless, they demonstrated resilience by adopting effective communication strategies, embracing Thai culture, developing positive professional relationships, and maintaining strong commitment to their teaching profession. These adaptive strategies enabled them to overcome workplace challenges while promoting personal and professional growth. The study underscores the importance of equitable employment practices, culturally responsive school leadership, and institutional support systems that promote the well-being and professional development of foreign educators. The findings contribute to the growing literature on international teacher mobility and provide practical insights for educational leaders, policymakers, and institutions seeking to foster inclusive and supportive multicultural learning environments.

Keywords: Filipino EFL teachers, international teacher mobility, intercultural communication, cultural adaptation, workplace equity.

INTRODUCTION

The globalization of education has substantially increased the international mobility of teachers, creating opportunities for educators to pursue professional careers beyond their home countries. Among these internationally mobile professionals, Filipino English as a

Foreign Language (EFL) teachers have become highly sought after because of their strong English language proficiency, pedagogical competence, and adaptability in multicultural educational settings. Thailand has emerged as one of the leading destinations for Filipino teachers due to its continuing demand for English language instruction and national educational reforms designed to strengthen learners' communicative competence. Consequently, Filipino educators have become an important component of the Thai educational workforce, serving in both public and private schools while contributing to students' English language development and intercultural learning.

While teaching abroad offers opportunities for professional advancement, improved economic prospects, and intercultural exchange, it also requires continuous adjustment to unfamiliar linguistic, cultural, and institutional environments. Foreign teachers frequently encounter challenges associated with language barriers, differences in educational practices, workplace expectations, and cultural norms that influence both their professional performance and personal well-being. These experiences underscore the complexity of international teacher mobility and highlight the importance of creating supportive educational environments that promote inclusion, equity, and professional growth. Previous studies have documented that internationally mobile teachers often experience cultural adjustment difficulties, communication barriers, workplace inequities, and challenges related to professional identity. Research further indicates that resilience, intercultural competence, supportive leadership, and collaborative professional relationships play significant roles in facilitating successful adaptation in foreign educational settings. Despite these contributions, much of the existing literature has examined teacher migration, intercultural communication, language education, or employment conditions as separate areas of inquiry. Comparatively fewer studies have explored how these dimensions intersect within the lived experiences of Filipino EFL teachers working in Thailand using a qualitative phenomenological perspective.

Thailand provides a distinctive context for examining these experiences because English is taught as a foreign language and foreign educators are expected to function within a predominantly Thai linguistic and cultural environment. Although Filipino teachers are widely recognized for their English proficiency and learner-centered instructional approaches, they may also encounter discrimination, communication challenges, workplace inequities, wage disparities, and cultural adjustment difficulties. These issues have implications not only for teachers' professional effectiveness but also for their psychological well-being, job satisfaction, and long-term career sustainability. The existing body of knowledge offers valuable insights into the experiences of migrant teachers; however, there remains limited qualitative evidence explaining how Filipino EFL teachers construct meaning from their experiences and develop coping strategies while working in Thailand. This gap limits educational leaders' and policymakers' understanding of the institutional and cultural factors that influence the welfare and effectiveness of foreign teachers. Addressing this gap is essential for designing evidence-based policies and professional support mechanisms that promote equitable employment practices and culturally responsive educational leadership.

Guided by phenomenological inquiry, this study explored the lived experiences of Filipino English as a Foreign Language teachers working in Thailand. Specifically, it examined their experiences of discrimination and stereotyping, linguistic barriers, workplace conditions, wage disparity, cultural adaptation, and the coping strategies they employed while living and working in a multicultural educational environment. The findings are

intended to contribute to the growing literature on international teacher mobility, intercultural education, and educational management while providing practical recommendations for educational leaders, policymakers, and school administrators seeking to strengthen institutional support for foreign educators.

METHODS

Research design

This study employed a **qualitative phenomenological research design** to explore the lived experiences of Filipino English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teachers working in Thailand. Phenomenology is appropriate for studies that seek to understand how individuals interpret and assign meaning to their personal experiences. The design enabled the researcher to examine participants' perceptions, emotions, and coping strategies as they navigated linguistic, cultural, and workplace challenges within a foreign educational environment.

The phenomenological approach was selected because the study aimed to capture the essence of participants' experiences rather than quantify variables. Through in-depth interviews, participants were encouraged to describe their experiences in their own words, allowing rich descriptions of discrimination, communication barriers, workplace conditions, cultural adaptation, and professional resilience to emerge.

Participants and Sampling

The participants were Filipino English as a Foreign Language teachers currently employed in selected schools in Phitsanulok Province, Thailand. Participants were selected through purposive sampling, which is commonly used in qualitative research to identify individuals who possess firsthand knowledge of the phenomenon being investigated.

To ensure the richness and relevance of the data, participants met the following inclusion criteria:

- Filipino citizen;
- currently employed as an EFL teacher in Thailand;
- with at least one year of teaching experience in Thailand; and
- willing to participate voluntarily in the study.

These criteria ensured that participants had sufficient professional experience to provide meaningful insights into the realities of teaching and living in Thailand.

Research Setting

The study was conducted in selected educational institutions within Phitsanulok Province, Thailand, where Filipino teachers are employed as English language instructors. The province represents an important educational setting that accommodates both Thai and foreign teachers in public and private schools. Conducting the study within this locale provided an opportunity to examine participants' experiences within authentic multicultural educational environments.

Data Collection Instrument

Data were collected using a researcher-developed semi-structured interview guide consisting of open-ended questions aligned with the objectives of the study. The interview guide was reviewed by experts in educational research to establish content validity before data collection.

The semi-structured format allowed participants to express their experiences freely while ensuring that all major areas of inquiry including discrimination, communication challenges, workplace experiences, wage disparity, cultural adaptation, and coping strategies were systematically explored.

Data Collection Procedure

Following the approval of the research proposal, permission was obtained from the participating schools and the prospective participants. Individuals who met the inclusion criteria were invited to participate voluntarily and were provided with information regarding the purpose of the study, confidentiality procedures, and their rights as research participants.

Individual in-depth interviews were conducted at mutually agreed schedules and locations convenient for the participants. With participants' informed consent, interviews were audio-recorded to ensure the accuracy of data collection. Field notes were also maintained to document non-verbal observations and contextual information that complemented the interview data.

Recorded interviews were transcribed verbatim to facilitate systematic analysis.

Data Analysis

The interview transcripts were analyzed using thematic analysis. The analysis followed a systematic process involving repeated reading of transcripts, identification of meaningful statements, generation of initial codes, grouping of similar codes into categories, and development of overarching themes that captured the essence of participants' lived experiences.

Throughout the analytical process, emerging themes were continuously reviewed and refined to ensure that they accurately reflected the participants' narratives. Representative quotations were incorporated into the findings to illustrate and support each identified theme.

Ethical Considerations

This study was conducted in accordance with the ethical principles governing research involving human participants and the institutional research ethics guidelines of **Pangasinan State University–Open University Systems (PSU–OUS)**. Prior to the commencement of data collection, the research proposal underwent ethical review and was **reviewed and approved by the Research Ethics Review Committee of Pangasinan State University–Open University Systems on 22 July 2026**, certifying that the study complied with the University's ethical standards for the protection of human participants, confidentiality, and research integrity.

Before participation, all prospective participants received a Participant Information Sheet explaining the objectives of the study, research procedures, expected duration of

participation, potential risks and benefits, and the measures implemented to safeguard their rights and welfare. Written informed consent was obtained from each participant prior to the conduct of the interviews.

Participation in the study was entirely voluntary. Participants were informed of their right to decline participation, refuse to answer any interview question, or withdraw from the study at any point without penalty or adverse consequences. No financial or material incentives were offered that could influence their decision to participate.

To ensure confidentiality and anonymity, each participant was assigned a pseudonym or identification code (e.g., P1–P10). No personally identifiable information was included in the interview transcripts, data analysis, or presentation of the findings. Audio recordings, interview transcripts, consent forms, and other research documents were securely stored in password-protected electronic files accessible only to the researcher.

Throughout the research process, the principles of **respect for persons, beneficence, and justice** were strictly observed. The researcher conducted the interviews with cultural sensitivity and professionalism, ensuring that participants experienced no physical, psychological, social, or professional harm. Participants were likewise assured that the information they provided would be treated with the utmost confidentiality and used solely for academic and research purposes.

The researcher maintained honesty, transparency, and integrity throughout the study by accurately reporting the findings, faithfully representing participants' lived experiences, acknowledging all sources in accordance with the **APA 7th edition**, and avoiding fabrication, falsification, plagiarism, or any other form of research misconduct.

Trustworthiness of the Study

To ensure the rigor of the qualitative inquiry, the study employed the criteria of credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability.

Credibility

Credibility was established through prolonged engagement with participants, the use of semi-structured interviews, and member checking to confirm the accuracy of the interpreted findings. Participants were given the opportunity to verify that their experiences had been accurately represented.

Transferability

Thick descriptions of the research setting, participant characteristics, and research procedures were provided to enable readers to determine the applicability of the findings to similar educational contexts.

Dependability

Dependability was enhanced through the maintenance of a detailed audit trail documenting the research procedures, interview protocols, coding process, and analytical decisions. This ensured transparency and consistency throughout the study.

Confirmability

Confirmability was strengthened through reflective journaling, systematic documentation of analytical decisions, and the preservation of interview transcripts and field notes. These procedures helped ensure that the findings reflected the participants' perspectives rather than researcher bias.

RESULTS

The thematic analysis of the interview data revealed five major themes that characterize the lived experiences of Filipino English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teachers working in Thailand. These themes illustrate the complex reality of teaching in a foreign educational setting while highlighting participants' resilience and professional commitment despite linguistic, cultural, and workplace challenges. The themes include: (1) perceptions and responses to discrimination and stereotyping, (2) linguistic barriers and communication strategies, (3) wage disparity and job satisfaction, (4) workplace exploitation and coping mechanisms, and (5) cultural adaptation and integration strategies.

Theme 1: Perceptions and Responses to Discrimination and Stereotyping

The thematic analysis revealed that Filipino EFL teachers experienced varying forms of discrimination and stereotyping while working in Thailand. Participants described being compared with native English-speaking teachers, questioned regarding their English proficiency, and occasionally excluded from opportunities despite possessing comparable qualifications. These experiences affected their confidence, professional identity, and workplace satisfaction. Nevertheless, many participants demonstrated resilience by maintaining professionalism and focusing on their instructional responsibilities.

Participant Voices

Participant 2 shared:

"There were times when parents preferred native English speakers, even though I was qualified and experienced."

Participant 6 stated:

"At first, I felt discouraged because some people assumed Filipinos were not as competent as Western teachers, but I proved my capability through my work."

These responses indicate that discrimination was not always explicit but often manifested through unequal expectations and perceptions. Despite these challenges, participants developed positive coping strategies by strengthening professional relationships and demonstrating competence through effective teaching.

These findings corroborate the work of Amurao (2023), who reported that Filipino teachers in Thailand often experience racial and linguistic discrimination within educational institutions. Similarly, Ulla (2019) emphasized that Filipino teachers continually negotiate their professional identity in response to perceptions associated with nationality and English language status.

Implication

Schools should establish inclusive workplace policies, promote diversity awareness programs, and implement equitable hiring and evaluation practices to reduce discrimination against foreign teachers.

Theme 2: Linguistic Barriers and Communication Strategies

Language barriers emerged as one of the most common challenges experienced by Filipino EFL teachers. Although participants were proficient English speakers, communicating with Thai students, parents, and colleagues remained difficult because of differences in language proficiency. These communication barriers occasionally affected classroom instruction, collaboration, and administrative tasks.

Participant Voices

Participant 4 explained:

"Using English alone was difficult because many students understood only basic instructions, so I learned simple Thai expressions."

Participant 9 remarked:

"Google Translate became one of my daily teaching tools, especially when communicating with parents."

These statements demonstrate that participants adopted practical communication strategies such as learning basic Thai vocabulary, simplifying classroom language, using gestures, visual aids, and digital translation applications.

The findings agree with Viray et al. (2023), who identified code-switching, repetition, visual demonstrations, and simplified language as effective coping mechanisms among Filipino teachers working in Thailand. Likewise, Hua et al. (2016) emphasized that language barriers influence instructional delivery and teacher-student communication.

Implication

Schools should provide basic Thai language orientation and intercultural communication training for newly hired foreign teachers.

Theme 3: Wage Disparity and Job Satisfaction

Another prominent theme identified in this study was wage disparity. Participants perceived differences in salary, benefits, and employment conditions between Filipino and native English-speaking teachers, despite performing similar teaching responsibilities. These disparities influenced their perceptions of fairness and professional recognition.

Participant Voices

Participant 1 commented:

"Sometimes we have the same workload but receive different compensation."

Participant 8 shared:

"The salary is enough to support my family, but I still feel that equal qualifications should receive equal pay."

Despite these concerns, several participants remained committed to teaching because of professional fulfillment, opportunities for international experience, and personal growth.

These findings support Ulla (2019), who reported that salary differences between native and non-native English-speaking teachers significantly influence teachers' job satisfaction and perceptions of professional equity.

Implication

Educational institutions should establish transparent compensation systems based on qualifications, experience, and job responsibilities rather than nationality.

Theme 4: Workplace Exploitation and Coping Mechanisms

Participants also described challenges involving excessive workloads, limited professional support, unclear employment policies, and inconsistent implementation of contractual benefits. Although these situations created stress, participants developed adaptive coping strategies that enabled them to continue performing effectively.

Participant Voices

Participant 5 stated:

"There were times when additional responsibilities were assigned without additional compensation."

Participant 7 explained:

"I learned to communicate professionally with my supervisor and focus on maintaining a positive attitude."

These narratives illustrate the resilience of Filipino teachers despite experiencing workplace difficulties. Participants relied on emotional resilience, peer support, effective communication, and professional commitment to overcome workplace challenges.

The findings align with Dumlao (2022), who found that Filipino EFL teachers employed adaptive coping mechanisms to manage workplace stress, limited resources, and organizational challenges.

Implication

Educational institutions should strengthen employee welfare policies, ensure transparent implementation of employment contracts, and provide accessible grievance mechanisms for foreign teachers.

Theme 5: Cultural Adaptation and Integration Strategies

The final theme highlighted participants' successful adaptation to Thai culture. Although cultural adjustment initially presented challenges, participants gradually developed intercultural competence through continuous interaction with students, colleagues, and local communities.

Participant Voices

Participant 3 reflected:

"Learning Thai traditions helped me build stronger relationships with my students."

Participant 10 stated:

"Respecting their customs made it easier for me to become part of the school community."

These findings indicate that cultural adaptation extended beyond language learning to include understanding Thai values, traditions, communication styles, and social expectations.

The findings support Berry's (1997) Acculturation Theory, which explains that successful adaptation occurs when individuals maintain aspects of their own identity while integrating into the host culture. Similarly, Gudykunst and Kim (2003) emphasized that intercultural competence promotes effective communication and stronger professional relationships.

Implication

Schools should implement structured cultural orientation programs, mentorship initiatives, and intercultural professional development activities to facilitate the successful integration of foreign teachers.

Summary of Findings

The thematic analysis identified five interconnected themes that characterize the lived experiences of Filipino EFL teachers working in Thailand:

Theme	Key Finding
Perceptions and Responses to Discrimination and Stereotyping	Participants experienced subtle discrimination but responded through professionalism and demonstrated competence.
Linguistic Barriers and Communication Strategies	Communication challenges were addressed through adaptive strategies such as learning basic Thai, using visual aids, and digital translation tools.

Theme	Key Finding
Wage Disparity and Job Satisfaction	Perceived inequities in compensation influenced views of workplace fairness, although professional fulfillment remained high.
Workplace Exploitation and Coping Mechanisms	Participants encountered workload and policy-related challenges but relied on resilience, peer support, and professional communication.
Cultural Adaptation and Integration Strategies	Successful adaptation resulted from openness to Thai culture, intercultural competence, and respectful engagement with the local community.

DISCUSSION

The present study explored the lived experiences of Filipino English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teachers working in Thailand. Guided by phenomenology, the study revealed five interrelated themes: (1) perceptions and responses to discrimination and stereotyping, (2) linguistic barriers and communication strategies, (3) wage disparity and job satisfaction, (4) workplace exploitation and coping mechanisms, and (5) cultural adaptation and integration strategies. These findings demonstrate that while Filipino teachers encounter numerous professional and intercultural challenges, they consistently exhibit resilience and adaptability that enable them to remain committed to their profession.

Discrimination and Stereotyping Shape Professional Identity but Foster Resilience

One of the major findings revealed that Filipino EFL teachers experienced subtle forms of discrimination and stereotyping associated with nationality, ethnicity, and perceived language proficiency. Although participants were recognized as competent educators, several reported being compared with native English-speaking teachers and occasionally receiving unequal professional recognition. These experiences affected their confidence and professional identity during the early stages of their employment.

This finding supports previous studies indicating that internationally mobile teachers frequently experience discrimination based on nationality and linguistic background. Researchers have reported that non-native English-speaking teachers are often evaluated according to assumptions about native-speaker status rather than actual teaching competence. Such perceptions influence hiring practices, professional opportunities, and workplace relationships despite evidence demonstrating that teaching effectiveness depends primarily on pedagogical knowledge, instructional skills, and intercultural competence rather than first language status.

The findings also align with theories of professional identity development, which suggest that educators continuously negotiate their professional identities through interactions with students, colleagues, and institutions. Participants in the present study responded constructively to discriminatory experiences by demonstrating instructional competence, strengthening professional relationships, and allowing their classroom performance to challenge existing stereotypes. Rather than diminishing their commitment to teaching, these experiences appeared to reinforce their determination to excel professionally. The findings highlight the importance of equitable employment policies that recognize teacher competence irrespective of nationality. Educational leaders should cultivate inclusive organizational cultures that value diversity and actively address unconscious bias within schools.

Linguistic Barriers Encourage Adaptive Communication and Intercultural Competence

Communication challenges emerged as one of the most significant aspects of participants' experiences. Although all participants possessed high levels of English proficiency, the predominance of the Thai language in schools created barriers to communication with students, parents, and administrative personnel. Participants described initial frustrations related to classroom interaction, parent communication, and daily workplace transactions.

These findings support previous research emphasizing that language barriers represent one of the principal challenges encountered by foreign teachers working in multilingual educational environments. Intercultural communication theory suggests that successful communication involves more than language proficiency; it also requires understanding cultural norms, communication styles, contextual meanings, and social expectations. Participants demonstrated this adaptive process by learning basic Thai vocabulary, utilizing visual materials, employing nonverbal communication, and incorporating digital translation technologies into their daily professional practice.

The findings further indicate that communication competence develops through continuous interaction rather than formal language proficiency alone. Participants gradually became more effective communicators as they gained familiarity with Thai educational culture and community practices.

These results underscore the need for educational institutions to provide structured language orientation and intercultural communication training for newly hired foreign teachers. Such initiatives may facilitate more effective classroom instruction, improve collaboration among school personnel, and enhance teachers' overall professional adjustment.

Perceived Wage Disparity Influences Professional Satisfaction but Not Commitment

Another significant finding concerns participants' perceptions of unequal compensation and employment benefits compared with native English-speaking teachers performing similar instructional responsibilities. Several participants viewed these disparities as inconsistent with principles of fairness and professional equity.

This finding is consistent with organizational justice theory, which proposes that employees' perceptions of fairness influence motivation, organizational commitment, and job satisfaction. Previous international studies have similarly reported that perceptions of unequal compensation among foreign educators may contribute to workplace dissatisfaction and reduced organizational trust.

Despite these concerns, participants generally maintained strong professional commitment and expressed appreciation for the opportunities associated with international teaching, including career development, cultural learning, financial stability, and personal growth. This observation suggests that intrinsic motivation, professional purpose, and resilience may partially offset dissatisfaction associated with compensation inequities.

For educational administrators, these findings emphasize the importance of transparent employment policies and compensation systems based upon qualifications, professional experience, and assigned responsibilities rather than nationality. Fair employment practices

may contribute to higher teacher motivation, improved retention, and stronger organizational commitment.

Workplace Challenges Strengthen Professional Resilience

Participants also described workplace experiences involving heavy workloads, unclear contractual expectations, inconsistent implementation of benefits, and limited institutional support. Although these circumstances created stress and uncertainty, participants consistently demonstrated resilience through adaptive coping mechanisms.

Professional resilience emerged as an important characteristic enabling participants to maintain teaching effectiveness despite workplace difficulties. Participants emphasized the importance of positive attitudes, effective communication with supervisors, emotional regulation, peer support, continuous professional learning, and reflective practice. These adaptive strategies allowed them to manage occupational stress while maintaining commitment to their students and professional responsibilities.

The findings support resilience theory, which suggests that individuals facing challenging environments can develop adaptive capacities that enable positive psychological adjustment and sustained professional performance. Similar findings have been reported among internationally mobile educators who rely upon supportive professional networks, mentoring relationships, and collaborative workplace cultures to overcome occupational challenges.

Educational institutions therefore have an important responsibility to strengthen support systems for foreign teachers through mentoring programs, accessible grievance procedures, transparent human resource policies, and professional development opportunities that promote teacher well-being.

Cultural Adaptation Promotes Professional Success and Personal Growth

The final theme demonstrated that successful cultural adaptation extends beyond learning local customs and language. Participants described adaptation as a gradual process involving respect for Thai traditions, participation in school activities, development of intercultural competence, and establishment of meaningful relationships with students, colleagues, and community members.

These findings are consistent with Cross-Cultural Adaptation Theory, which proposes that successful adjustment occurs through continuous interaction between individuals and their host culture. Participants who actively embraced cultural learning experienced greater confidence, stronger professional relationships, and increased job satisfaction.

Similarly, sociocultural perspectives emphasize that learning occurs through meaningful participation within social and cultural communities. The experiences described by participants illustrate how intercultural engagement contributed not only to successful classroom instruction but also to broader professional identity development and personal growth.

The findings indicate that cultural competence should be viewed as a continuous developmental process rather than a one-time orientation activity. Educational institutions should therefore establish comprehensive induction programs, mentoring systems, and intercultural professional development initiatives that assist foreign teachers throughout their employment.

Implications for Educational Management

The findings of this study have important implications for educational leadership and management in multicultural educational settings. School administrators play a central role in creating organizational cultures that support diversity, equity, and inclusion. Institutional policies should ensure fair recruitment, equitable compensation, transparent employment practices, accessible professional development opportunities, and culturally responsive leadership.

Furthermore, educational institutions should recognize foreign teachers not merely as temporary employees but as valuable contributors to educational quality, intercultural understanding, and internationalization initiatives. Strengthening institutional support systems may enhance teacher satisfaction, organizational commitment, and long-term retention while ultimately improving educational outcomes for students.

The findings likewise provide evidence that teacher well-being and professional effectiveness are influenced by interactions among linguistic competence, cultural adaptation, workplace equity, and organizational support. Consequently, educational policies addressing only one dimension of foreign teachers' experiences may be insufficient. Comprehensive strategies integrating professional development, intercultural learning, and equitable employment practices are more likely to promote sustainable teacher success.

Limitations of the Study

Several limitations should be considered when interpreting the findings. First, the study involved only ten Filipino EFL teachers, limiting the transferability of the findings to other populations or educational contexts. Second, participants were drawn from educational institutions within one province in Thailand; therefore, experiences may differ across regions, school types, or institutional settings. Third, because the study relied on self-reported interview data, participants' recollections and interpretations may have been influenced by personal experiences and perspectives.

Despite these limitations, the study provides rich qualitative evidence regarding the lived experiences of Filipino EFL teachers working in Thailand. Future research may employ mixed-methods or comparative designs involving larger samples across multiple provinces or countries to further examine the relationships among intercultural adaptation, organizational support, professional identity, and teacher well-being.

CONCLUSION

This phenomenological study explored the lived experiences of Filipino English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teachers working in Thailand, with particular emphasis on discrimination and stereotyping, linguistic barriers, workplace conditions, wage disparity, cultural adaptation, and the coping strategies they employed in multicultural educational settings. The findings demonstrate that although Filipino teachers encounter numerous

professional and intercultural challenges, they consistently exhibit resilience, adaptability, and strong professional commitment that enable them to thrive in foreign educational environments.

The study revealed that experiences of discrimination and stereotyping remain evident in subtle forms, particularly regarding perceptions of nationality and native-speaker status. Nevertheless, participants responded constructively by demonstrating professional competence, maintaining positive workplace relationships, and allowing their instructional performance to challenge existing stereotypes. This finding emphasizes that teacher effectiveness should be evaluated on professional capability rather than nationality or linguistic background.

Linguistic barriers were found to influence communication with students, parents, and colleagues; however, participants successfully adapted by employing culturally responsive communication strategies, including learning basic Thai language expressions, utilizing visual instructional materials, and integrating digital translation technologies into their daily professional practice. These adaptive behaviors contributed to improved classroom interaction and strengthened intercultural communication.

The findings further revealed that perceived wage disparity and workplace inequities affected participants' perceptions of organizational fairness. Despite these concerns, intrinsic motivation, professional dedication, and opportunities for personal and career growth enabled participants to remain committed to their teaching profession. Likewise, workplace challenges related to workload, institutional policies, and employment conditions fostered the development of professional resilience through reflective practice, peer support, effective communication, and positive coping strategies.

Finally, cultural adaptation emerged as a dynamic and continuous process through which participants developed intercultural competence, strengthened relationships with students and colleagues, and achieved greater professional satisfaction. Successful adaptation was facilitated by openness to Thai culture, respect for local traditions, and active participation in school and community activities.

Overall, this study concludes that the lived experiences of Filipino EFL teachers in Thailand are characterized not only by challenges but also by remarkable resilience, intercultural growth, and professional transformation. These findings contribute to the growing body of knowledge on international teacher mobility and provide evidence that supportive educational leadership, equitable employment practices, and culturally responsive institutional policies are essential for promoting the well-being and effectiveness of foreign educators.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings and conclusions, the following recommendations are proposed:

1. **Educational institutions** should implement equitable recruitment, promotion, and compensation policies that recognize professional qualifications and teaching competence regardless of nationality.
2. **School administrators** should establish comprehensive orientation and mentoring programs that support newly hired foreign teachers in adapting to linguistic, cultural, and organizational expectations.
3. **Professional development programs** should include intercultural communication, basic Thai language instruction, culturally responsive pedagogy, and strategies for promoting inclusive educational environments.
4. **Human resource offices** should strengthen employee welfare policies by ensuring transparent implementation of employment contracts, accessible grievance mechanisms, and equitable workplace practices.
5. **Filipino EFL teachers** should continue developing intercultural competence, reflective teaching practices, and professional learning networks that enhance resilience and long-term career development.
6. **Future researchers** are encouraged to conduct comparative studies involving larger samples, multiple regions in Thailand, or other international contexts to further examine the relationships among workplace equity, intercultural adaptation, organizational support, and teacher well-being. Mixed-methods and longitudinal research designs may also provide deeper understanding of foreign teachers' professional experiences over time.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The author expresses her deepest gratitude to **God Almighty** for His unwavering guidance, wisdom, strength, and abundant blessings throughout this research journey. The author sincerely thanks **Dr. Renato E. Salcedo**, thesis adviser, for his invaluable guidance, scholarly expertise, encouragement, and steadfast support throughout the conduct of this study. The author extends her highest appreciation to **Dr. Romary R. Lincod**, thesis critic reader, whose exceptional mentorship, meticulous critiques, profound academic insights, and unwavering commitment to research excellence significantly strengthened this manuscript. Her constructive evaluations, intellectual rigor, and thoughtful recommendations greatly enhanced the quality, depth, and scholarly contribution of this study, making her mentorship instrumental in the author's growth as a researcher.

The author also gratefully acknowledges **Dr. Phillip G. Queroda**, Executive Director of the Pangasinan State University–Open University Systems and member of the Evaluation Committee, **Dr. Grace G. De Vera**, **Dr. Regina F. Santos**, and **Dr. Susan D. Tiangson** for their valuable comments and scholarly suggestions that improved this research. Sincere appreciation is likewise extended to the **Pangasinan State University–Open University Systems** for providing an environment that fostered academic excellence, to the **Filipino English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teachers in Thailand** who generously shared their lived experiences and made this study possible, and to the author's family, friends, and colleagues for their unwavering encouragement, prayers, and support throughout this academic endeavor.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The author declares that there is **no conflict of interest** regarding the publication of this manuscript. The research was conducted independently, and no financial or personal

relationships influenced the study's design, implementation, analysis, interpretation, or reporting of the findings.

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