

RESEARCH ARTICLE

Stories of Diaspora of Overseas Filipino Workers in Singapore: A Management Perspective

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Abstract: This qualitative study focused on the documentation and analysis of the narratives on the diaspora stories of the overseas Filipino workers in Singapore in the contexts of their fear, opportunities, and management initiatives, viewed through management perspectives. The Filipino diaspora has gone global, having overseas Filipino workers (OFWs) present in all parts of the world. Push factors motivated many Filipinos to seek better job opportunities in developed countries such as Singapore. However, the length of stay is limited by the working pass. Narrative inquiry as a research design was used, and the data were collected through face-to-face interviews with the storytellers who are working in Singapore for five years and more under working pass. The narratives were themed and analyzed, and the results were inferred with the functions of management to surface the management perspectives. The storytellers were motivated by a better quality of life and a higher salary, and they fear the unknown and the uncertainties on their return home. As for opportunities, the storytellers consider putting a business in the future. For management initiatives, their employers provide programs for skills development. The narratives surfaced plausible inferences on the planning, leading, organizing, and controlling functions of management. The study concluded that the OFWs are adamant to return home because of the better quality of life in Singapore. They also give high regard to family and are strengthening their financial literacy. Their narratives led to recommendations for the multinational companies where they work to enhance their international management and leadership styles, establish stronger labor welfare, and consider distance employment.

Keywords: return-home stories, management functions, management perspectives, narrative inquiry, overseas Filipino workers

The Filipinos are conquering the world by being present in almost all countries living and working as migrants. The current social, political, and economic status of the country has pushed the talented and skilled human resource asset for local businesses out of the country as they were pulled by better opportunities, higher wages, and ideal social and political landscapes

offered by the global businesses in the developed countries (Massey et al., 1993; Kalaw, 2015).

Globalization enabled Singapore to expand and accept global businesses that provided jobs for its citizens and opened doors of opportunities for migrant workers. A multitude of multinational companies started to exist, which made Singapore's economy

grow and continuously thrive. It has now become one of the richest countries in the world, which opened many opportunities not only for skilled labor but, most importantly, for professionals. Because of this, many Filipinos left the country and sought refuge in the many opportunities that Singapore has to offer. Wong (2014) reported that the estimated number of Filipinos working in Singapore tripled from 2004-2014. This is relative to the report of The Philippine Statistics Authority (2017) stating that the OFWs in Singapore comprises 5.3% of the 85.5% of overseas Filipino workers (OFWs) in Asia. This number has certainly grown bigger to this day and continues to grow as more Filipinos opt to work in companies in Singapore.

Living and working in Singapore may seem to be a newer and easier way to achieve the Filipino dream. However, these Filipino migrant workers in Singapore will also have to face the inevitable reality that their working permits will eventually expire. Many of them missed considering this as they are overwhelmed by their new lives as migrant workers in the said country. They are too busy to notice that their stay in Singapore will eventually end and that they will have to come back home to the Philippines.

The main objective of documenting and analyzing the narratives on the diaspora stories of the OFWs working in Singapore on their eventual return home which has culled out emergent subjects and themes that were inferred from the management perspective. The overarching question assisted in facilitating the development of knowledge:

What diaspora stories do Singapore OFWs tell in the contexts of their:

1. Motivation;
2. Fears;
3. Opportunities; and
4. Management Initiatives?

The narratives were inferred to the discipline of management, particularly in the different functions of management. Their contexts exposed meanings that helped in understanding its relevance to the field of management.

The study identified concepts and themes related to the narratives coming from the personal viewpoint and experiences of the storytellers. The findings have shown specific significance on the following:

Theory – as a source of information in developing leadership and management theories, particularly for multinational organizations.

Policy – as reference for policy development, particularly for government agencies.

Practice – as a reference for multinational companies in improving management initiatives, systems, and processes in consideration of the existence of the migrants.

Social Action – as a contribution to the betterment of the lives of the OFWs returning home after the end of their contract.

This study also values the importance of the contribution of the OFWs to social development, considering their remittances that boost the country's unstable economy.

The scope of this study revolved around the documentation and analysis of the narratives in the stories of the OFWs working in multinational companies in Singapore under contract or working pass. It covered the fears and anxieties they experienced as they deal with the reality of returning home as well as the opportunities that they see and prepare for. It also considered their worldview and perspectives on management initiatives that could be related to their eventual return home.

The study was limited to the storytellers' perspectives and did not cover the side of the management of multinational companies. They may be referred to later on as an expansion of this novel study.

Review of Related Literature

In the Philippines, migration has been a culture deemed common, acceptable, and desirable for a better life. For decades, many Filipinos have left their place of origin in search of either a temporary or permanent settlement overseas because of attractive economic and political circumstances in their chosen destination. More than 10 million or 10% of the population are working and living abroad (Asis, 2017). Filipinos are scattered all around the globe because of work. Destinations of Filipino migrants are diversified (Philippine Overseas Employment Administration, 2015). Collosan (2011) further stated that OFWs travel to their country of destination to search for better opportunities and a better life for their families in the

Philippines. Low earning capacity and unemployment contribute to the widening income gap between the rich and the poor (Collosan, 2011). The Philippines is recorded to have one of the worst income disparities in the region, where the rich become richer, and the poor become poorer. This contributes mainly to motivation for the people to migrate and work abroad.

Dependent on their income or salary in the host country, migrant workers' contribution to their families in their country of origin is important. For migrants coming from low-income countries, remittances are the only way to make ends meet. Remittances play a significant role in the Philippines and are the primary means through which the country attempts to overcome its historic trade deficits and manage its balance of payments (Wiley, 2012). OFWs prefer to go to developed countries because of higher wages that enable them to send bigger remittances. Singapore is one of the most open economies in the Asian region when it comes to international trade, foreign direct investment inflows, and foreign labor inflows. According to Yue (2011), the high foreign labor ratio shows the buoyant labor demand, limited domestic labor supply with the decreasing total fertility rate, and labor protectionism in Singapore. Foreign labor is needed to grow the population, mitigate the aging population, grow the GDP and the per capita, cover the shortages in supply in labor and skills, and contain wage costs to continue the international competitiveness. The competition in the workplace aggravated the situation because Filipino migrant workers are being employed as professionals, managers, executives, and technicians already (Kalaw, 2015).

Enderwick et al. (2011) argued that the knowledge and the linkages these migrants obtain allow them to reduce transaction costs for bilateral trade. It is a result of a so-called ethnic network effect coming from superior cultural understanding and levels of trust. Fragomen (2016) stated that the overarching goal of the business mechanism is a regulatory environment in which labor migration policies support business and development to create job opportunities and economic prosperity. From the business-level perspective, organizations exist in a very complex environment that is directly affected by globalization (Go, 2012). To thrive and succeed, it must learn to adjust and adapt to the ever-changing conditions of the global market, which includes leading and managing migrant workers.

Methods

Design

This study was qualitative as the research problem inquired into the meaning that individuals or groups ascribe to as a social or human problem (Creswell, 2007). Also, qualitative research fully captured the context and feelings within which storytellers express their fears and anxieties that contribute to their diaspora stories and how it is inferred in the functions of management. Narrative inquiry, which is both a methodology and view of the phenomena, was utilized to document and analyze the narratives. Narrative inquiry is a way to study experience (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). The defining features of narrative research are very much applicable as a research design for this study. According to Creswell (2013), narrative researches collect stories from individuals about individuals who lived and told experiences. The heart of this study lies in the stories that came from the storytellers themselves.

Locale and Participants

The research locale of this study was Singapore, as it is a popular destination for OFWs. It also has a unique system of providing the working pass for a specific period where the main problem of the study stemmed out.

The OFW storytellers were (a) single, (b) aged 30–40 years old, (c) had been working in Singapore for five years or more, and (d) have experienced being denied a working pass. Using the snowball technique, we gathered from seven storytellers who fit the qualifications set, rich data from their viewpoints and experiences.

Instrument

One of the most important qualitative data collection methods used in conducting field studies and ethnographic researches is the research interview (Qu & Dumay, 2011). An interview guide that lists the questions or issues that were explored in the course of the interview was also utilized.

Analysis

To systematically and strategically process and analyze the collected data, I followed Creswell's data analysis spiral in which the process of data collection, analysis, and report writing are interrelated and go on

simultaneously. The transcript of the interviews was plotted in the MAXQDA 2018 software for processing. From which, important statements coming from the narratives were highlighted and assigned with a specific code. Also, thematic analysis was treated as a primary descriptive strategy to establish patterns of experiences within the coded data. The patterns and the emergent, iterative concepts helped identify the themes that are responsive to the research question.

Results

This study has gone beyond the social and economic rationale of migration and working abroad as it puts more interest in the diaspora stories of the OFWs in Singapore as viewed and inferred using a management lens. The narratives of the storytellers revealed significant findings as they shared their diaspora stories in the contexts of motivation, fears, opportunities, and management initiatives.

Motivation to be an OFW in Singapore

More than 10% of the country's population are working and living abroad (Asis, 2017) and this is due to the absence of sustained economic development and wavering political stability. Also, issues like unemployment, underemployment, and differing wages (Collosan, 2011) motivated many Filipinos to work in developed countries like Singapore. The

narratives of our storytellers revealed that their motivation are (a) family – inspired by relatives who are also working abroad; (b) better quality of wants – having the capacity to afford high-end wants, and (c) change in environment – having experienced better social services and facilities. In return, the OFWs make sure that they excel in their fields. According to Wong (2014), Singaporean professionals are likely to have a Filipino colleague these days.

Fears

Considering the comfortable life that our storytellers have experienced in Singapore, they also narrated their fears and concerns in realizing that they will eventually need to go back home. Returning home completes the transnational migration process and is an essential part of temporary labor migration (Kalaw, 2015). It reflects in full circle the diaspora stories of the OFWs as they go through a change in their perceptions and relationships in coping with daily struggles while anticipating a guaranteed return to their families and homeland. The narratives of the storytellers exposed that they fear (a) adaptability – as they may not be able to assimilate quickly back as they got so used to a comfortable and convenient life compared to that of in the Philippines; (b) employability – there is the uncertainty that they may not be able to find suitable employment that would support their new lifestyle and would maximize their enhanced skills; (c) reintegration – the fear of going back to the old life of discomforts and inconveniences in the country.

Table 1

Summary of Findings (Categories and Emergent Themes)

What are the diaspora stories of the Overseas Filipino Workers in Singapore in terms of:		
Factors	Categories	Emergent Themes
Motivation	Family	Better quality of life and salary
	Better quality of wants	
	Desire for change	
Fears	Adaptability	Fear of the unknown or uncertainties
	Employability	
	Reintegration	
Opportunities	Chance to reunite with family	Use of savings for other plans
	Business opportunities	
	Migration to another country	
Management Initiatives	Education and self-development	Skills development and training
	Financial security and literacy	

Opportunities

The storytellers already resolved that they will not be able to find job opportunities similar to what they have in Singapore when they go back home. However, they are consoled by the fact that they would have the chance to make up for the lost times with their loved ones. They view their return as an opportunity and chance to (a) reunite with their family as they have been away for quite a time, and this will enable them to make up for the lost times and take care of their aging parents and be with their loved ones; (b) do business – putting up their own business using the money that they were able to save while working in Singapore; (c) migrate to another country – many of the storytellers would prefer to migrate and work in another country when their working pass expires instead of settling back in the Philippines.

Management Initiatives

According to Enderwick et al. (2011), the social connections of migrant workers help to match international buyers and sellers better. In effect, migrant employees bring valuable knowledge of overseas markets, particularly those of their country of origin, facilitating foreign market entry by the employing company. Given this, our storytellers narrated that the multinational companies where they work provide (a) educational and self-development benefits in consideration of their growth as an employee as well as to ensure productivity in the workplace, and (b) financial security and literacy – our storytellers value the importance of saving money in preparation for the future and finds financial literacy sponsored by the company very helpful as it provides options on how to make their money work for them.

Management Perspective

The process of documenting and analyzing the context and meaning set forth by the storytellers, as

they shared their narratives, has led us in determining aspects of management that are directly related and borne out of the themes that emerged. Dubrin (2016) defined management as the process of using organizational resources to achieve organizational objectives through planning, organizing and staffing, leading, and controlling. The emergent themes have led to determining the specific functions of management that are related to the storytellers' viewpoints and experiences.

Preparation for the Future

The companies plan for the future of their business, but they seem to disregard and do not include concrete plans for migrant employees. Because of this, our storytellers are bound to consider having plans for themselves. Their narratives have exposed a great deal of consideration with what is in store for them in the future, and that is why our storytellers are consciously building up their financial portfolio through insurance and investments, as well as having regular savings. These narratives have shown a great deal of inference with the planning function of management. According to Dubrin (2016), planning is considered to be the central function of management as it pervades everything a manager does. In planning, the manager looks to the future and involves decision-making in the same way that our storytellers are also preparing for what lies ahead for them. They set goals and figure out ways of how to reach them.

Work Ethics and Management Styles

Considering the narratives of our storytellers and taking from the management experts' definition of leading, it is imperative to assume that there is a disconnect between the logical definition and the experience of our storytellers. They shared how they like the leadership style of their managers as it encourages disciplined work ethics. However, what

Table 2

Emergent Themes Inferred to the Functions of Management

	Emergent Themes	Functions of Management
Management Perspectives	Preparation for the future	Planning
	Work Ethics and Management Styles	Leading
	Discrimination and Stereotyping	Organizing and Staffing
	Adherence to Singaporean Government Policies	Controlling

is lacking is a sense of direction that could inspire them to perform beyond what is expected. Leading an organization means influencing others to achieve organizational objectives. It was easily inferred by considering their narratives on the work ethics and management styles of the Singaporeans and their colleagues. Our storytellers saw how dedicated their managers are to their jobs. They also appreciated the work attitude of the locals, who are so keen on details and are quick to respond to work problems and keeps a professional stance on work-related concerns.

Discrimination and Stereotyping

Companies need to constantly hire new people to complete the workforce because of the high attrition rate. It also entails the cost of the hiring process and the training of the new members of the organization. These affect the organizing and staffing function of management. Because of the diversity in the workplace, many OFWs are working as professionals are being related to working in service industries more so as domestic helpers. This kind of stereotyping has led some of our storytellers to feel discriminated against. The discrimination does not only stem out of their race but also from the reality that they are working pass holders. Despite their efforts, they cannot deny that they are considered third-class citizens within the dynamics of their respective companies.

Adherence to Singaporean Government

Our storytellers are well aware that their length of stay as foreign workers in Singapore depends on the government. Regardless of whether your company would still need your services, if the government says otherwise, then the company will have to submit to the government's decision. The controlling function of management is being observed by the government as they desire to provide opportunities and better social services for their citizens. This is the sad reality that the OFWs need to accept and understand.

Discussion

This study gives value to the stories narrated by the storytellers. If not for the richness of their stories, there will be no coherence in the presentation of this study. The process enabled them to look back on their

experiences as they are determined to look ahead to the future.

The main objective of my study is to document and analyze the stories and narratives of the OFWs working in multinational companies in Singapore in reference to a management perspective. We gathered stories based on their actual feelings and views and related these with management functions to draw perspectives on the said discipline.

Returning Home

In a research made by Go (2012), she found out that the decision for Filipino migrant workers to return to the country was not a choice they freely made. Most of them were forced to return for numerous reasons like labor exploitation, physical abuse from employers, deportation, illness, and family-related matters. All interviewees agreed that there are circumstances wherein they would have continued to work overseas if it did not happen.

The same is true with most of our storytellers. They are very vocal in narrating that they would prefer to stay and work in Singapore if it is for them to decide. If worse comes to worst that they will not be granted a renewed working pass, that would be the only time that they would really go back home to their families in the Philippines.

According to Go (2012), although the Philippines has the most developed migration system in the region, with their policies and program designed to address the needs of these modern-day heroes from their pre-departure until the day they decide to come back, returning Filipinos have been the less concern of the Philippine government over the years. Go (2012) further argued that it is the weakest component in the government's overseas employment program.

Looking at it closely, the Philippine government, having all the efforts in institutionalizing the exportation of human labor abroad, seems to have not much concern on the eventual return home of the OFWs. Our storytellers are in unison in saying that they do not expect much or anything at all from the government when they return home. Sad but true. They have already accepted that the government will not be able to provide them with the necessary assistance.

Motivation to be an OFW in Singapore

In the Philippines, migration has been a culture deemed common, acceptable, and desirable for a

better life. For decades, many Filipinos have left their place of origin in search of either a temporary or permanent settlement overseas because of attractive economic and political circumstances in their chosen destination. More than 10 million or 10% of the population are working and living abroad (Asis, 2017). Furthermore, Gorospe (2007) argued that for many Filipinos, migration is a symbol of hope as it provides an alternative to being unemployed or underemployed, being poor, and having a difficult life in the Philippines. Issues like unemployment, underemployment, and differing wages (Collosan, 2011) motivate many Filipinos to work in other countries, mostly, if not always, in developed countries. They see them as a venue where better opportunities are available.

In the case of our storytellers, these reasons appear to be on the backseat as they are all employed in the Philippines prior to their decision to leave and work in Singapore. However, despite having job security, they still opted to try their luck in a foreign land. As per their stories, they were motivated by their families, not because they need to provide support, but were influenced because their relatives are also working abroad. Working in Singapore also exposed them to afford a better quality of wants because they are paid higher doing the same kind of work that they have in the Philippines. This enabled them to travel to other first-world countries, invest in properties, and change their lifestyles. As they stay longer, they get to assimilate with the kind of living the city-state has offered, like the efficient transportation system, technological advancement, safety and security, and the discipline of the people. Having been exposed to this kind of social system, they were able to compare it with what is present in the Philippines and from there have agreed that the Singapore experience is way better.

Fears in Returning Home

Staying in Singapore for five years or more enabled our storytellers to totally adjust to the kind of life in the said country. They have already settled and have established a new life in this country that they now consider home. Beyond material gains, our storytellers are considering a livable society wherein a better quality of life can be experienced. They would prefer a place where comfort and convenience are as normal as the rising of the sun and that the people are granted the kind of services that they truly deserve. They want an environment conducive to raising their

posterity, and their contribution to society is greatly valued and appreciated. Sadly, that is not yet the case in the Philippines.

Kalaw (2015) shared in her study that two of her participants had had different fates when they returned home. One was able to use the skills developed while working abroad in finding a suitable job, whereas the other one did not get the same opportunity and had to return to his previous job as a jeepney driver. These uncertainties capture the fear of our storytellers in returning home. They were vocal in sharing that they will have problems adapting to the old systems as they have been very used to a convenient kind of life. They also fear being unemployed because they are not sure if they will get the same job opportunity and salary rate or the possibility of being underemployed. One of the storytellers also clarified that she does not consider returning home as a “major fear.” She narrated that she is more scared of what will happen to her personally and professionally. Keeping in mind the reality that she will not be able to get the same salary rate that she receives in Singapore, there is a big chance that she will need to downplay her kind of lifestyle. She will need to be more frugal and prioritize important things, unlike how she lives in Singapore. She can, at any time, upgrade to the latest gadgets, travel to other parts of the world, and treat herself in restaurants to have expensive meals. Her salary in Singapore enables her to live a very comfortable life, and all these are bound to change when she eventually goes back home.

Opportunities

In order to provide a balanced view of the stories of our OFW storytellers, this study also presented the possible opportunities that they see in returning home. It can be considered as the light at the end of the tunnel that would somehow encourage them or at least provide consolation in accepting the reality that they are bound to go back home when their working pass expires and are not renewed. The opportunities that they narrated can also be considered as their future plans as they move forward and accept the realities of ending their stint as OFWs in Singapore.

According to Kalaw (2015), the OFWs look forward to returning home to be with their loved ones. This appears to be true in the case of one of our storytellers when his working pass expired the first time, and he had to go back home. He shared how he genuinely enjoyed that period that he was able to spend

with his family again. He tried to establish new routines and adjust his expectations, especially in looking for a new job. However, the desire to be back in Singapore is really strong. So he went back to Singapore as a tourist and eventually landed another job and was granted a new working pass. The other storytellers consider putting up a business as an opportunity that they see when they return home. That is one reason why they are saving enough money as they see having a business as a more feasible fallback rather than finding a job in the Philippines.

Given the opportunity, our storytellers also consider migrating to another country as an opportunity to explore when their working pass expires. They would prefer trying their luck in countries like Australia and New Zealand rather than directly going back to the Philippines. If this thing happens, that will again be another gem lost by the Philippines. Imagine how other developed countries would accept them to migrate and accept them as permanent residents. These countries could maximize well their potentials and the skills that they have already gained in their work experience in Singapore. It would not be hard for them to find a suitable job. Also, they will bring with them the money they saved and earned, and it will be this new country that provides better opportunities, which will benefit from their savings.

Management Initiatives

In the context of management initiatives, I explored our storytellers' view on how the management of their current employers in Singapore responds to the reality that they are in the company just temporarily. It has been established already that the success of global businesses is reliant on the labor or workforce that they have. Having the best people to do the task and deliver the services is crucial in the regular operations of business organizations. According to Enderwick et al. (2011), the social connections of migrant workers help to match international buyers and sellers better. In effect, these foreign individuals act as effective trade intermediaries. Their role as employees is important in terms of contract enforcement and settlement of disputes given reputational effects.

In this manner, the employers of our storytellers still invest in their employees' skills development and educate them on how to be financially sound. Despite the reality that their contract will soon expire, they are still granted these opportunities as part of their

benefits as employees. One storyteller shared how they are provided with a retirement benefit similar to what is given to local Singaporean employees. Their employers also consider financial security and literacy important and would constantly send even the migrant employees to seminars related to this.

Management Perspectives

Documenting and analyzing the context and meanings revealed by the storytellers enabled the researchers to determine related aspects of management. Management is a universal phenomenon. Juneja (2018) said that all organizations—business, political, cultural, and social—are involved in management because it is the management that helps and directs the various efforts towards a definite purpose. Dubrin (2016) defined management as the process of using organizational resources to achieve organizational objectives through planning, organizing and staffing, leading, and controlling.

The OFWs, being an important part of a business organization and being considered as a special social group, are involved in the general concept of management. This idea was popularized by Peter Drucker (1954) with his concept of decentralization, where he emphasized the importance of making the employees feel valued and empowered, like their voice and work matters in the organization. He believed in assigning tasks that inspire workers and bringing supervisors and their subordinates together to achieve the common company goals.

Preparation for the Future (Planning)

Considering that companies where our storytellers work are multinationals, it can be assumed that they go through an ideal planning process. Our storytellers narrated that their company has short-term and long-term plans that focus mainly on operations and in achieving the set targets. What they believe is lacking in the company-wide plan is the direct consideration of the employees, especially temporary migrant workers like them. Because of this, our storytellers are bound to plan for themselves.

The same is true with local businesses who lose the best of their employees because they would opt to work in other countries. As reported by Hapal (2017), one manufacturing company has shared that they are losing about 5%–7% of their skilled employees because they would prefer to work abroad. The company has

no choice but to accept this because the workers are offered a higher salary than what they can give. This is similar to how our storytellers appreciate the higher salary that they get in Singapore, which enables them to save and come up with a definite plan for the future. Just like how business organizations would do it, the plans are interrelated with the available budget.

These narratives relate to the planning function of management. Planning involves setting goals and figuring out ways of reaching them. According to Dubrin (2016), planning is considered the central function of management as it pervades everything a manager does. In planning, the manager looks at the future. Decision-making is usually a component of planning, as choices must be made in the process of finalizing plans. Planning is very important as it expands its contribution heavily to performing the other management functions.

The aspects of planning can be related to the fears, which is one of the factors highlighted in the return home stories of the OFWs. The uncertainty of adapting to the systems and practices in the workplace in the Philippine setting compels them to set short-term directions like exposure or training that would allow them to adjust again. The fear of employability due to old age encourages them to create a long-term plan, including getting insurances, buying properties, and engaging in business ventures.

Work Ethics and Management Style (Leading)

In consideration of the narratives of our storyteller and taking from how the management experts described the function of leading, it is imperative to assume that there is a disconnect between the logical definition and the actual experience of our storytellers. They shared how they like the leadership style of their managers as it encourages disciplined work ethics. However, what is lacking is the sense of direction that could inspire our storytellers to perform beyond what is expected.

Leading an organization means influencing others to achieve organizational objectives. Leadership is such a key component of managerial function that management is sometimes seen as accomplishing results through people. The leadership aspect of management focuses on inspiring people and bringing about change (Dubrin, 2016). Managers are used to complying with international standards, OFWs are also being regularly exposed to those standards. They are being trained by the best people in the field, which

we believe is another advantage for them. Considering what Juneja (2018) posited that businesses are becoming more and more concerned with the ability of future leaders to lead across different countries and cultures, cope with the differences, and make important decisions in unfamiliar environments. The OFWs are already being trained to become global leaders.

Global businesses see this as an important factor in deciding to bring their business to Singapore, and literature would tell us that migrant worker are fundamental in the growth and development of these businesses. Migrant workers obtain valuable insights into trade opportunities because of their cross-country networks. It has been argued by Enderwick et al. (2011) that the knowledge and the linkages these migrants obtain allows them to reduce transaction costs for bilateral trade. It is a result of a so-called ethnic network effect coming from superior cultural understanding and levels of trust.

Discrimination and Stereotyping (Organizing and Staffing)

Contextualizing the narratives of our storytellers, discrimination and stereotyping emerged as a theme that should be considered. This theme was easily inferred in reference to the definition set for organizing and staffing as a function of management.

The companies may have diligently observed the delivery of the said function but what is crucial is the need to constantly hire new people to complete the workforce because the employees performing the tasks are hired only temporarily. This system puts the company in a difficult situation as the attrition rate becomes high and the vulnerability of being able to hire the right people to perform the specific job is at stake. It will also entail the cost of the hiring process and the training of the new members of the organization.

As a function of management, organizing and staffing ensure the existence of the needed human and physical resources for the company are available and are capable of carrying out the plan and achieve organizational goals. The staffing function ensures the availability of necessary human resources to achieve organizational goals. Hiring people for jobs is a typical staffing activity. Staffing is such a major activity that it is sometimes classified as a function separate from organizing (Dubrin, 2016).

However, different concerns were shared by our storytellers as they themselves had to frequently

adjust to having new people in their teams that would sometimes delay the delivery of the output. It also causes them anxiety as it would also be a reminder that they may be the next one to be replaced when they return home.

Although many OFWs are working as professionals, there are still instances that being Filipino is related to working in service industries like food and beverages or, the most popular of them all, as domestic helpers. One of our storytellers shared the comment given to him by his colleague at work when he learned that he is from the Philippines. It seems that the Filipinos in Singapore were able to gain a certain stereotype of being domestic helpers, as felt by most of our storytellers. They also clarified that the discrimination does not only stem out of the fact that they are Filipinos but also from the reality that they are working pass holders, and that makes them temporary employees. Despite the many sacrifices and efforts that they put into their job, they cannot deny the fact that they are still considered to be third-class citizens within the dynamics of their respective companies.

Adherence to Policies of the Singaporean Government (Controlling)

Our storytellers are well aware that their length of stay as foreign workers in Singapore depends on the government. Regardless of whether a company would still need a worker's services, if the government says otherwise, then the company will have to submit to that government decision. Reality can hit you straight to the face, and for our storytellers, this is something that they will have to deal with sooner or later, especially now that the government is attempting to restructure its economy by reducing its dependence on foreign labor. As mentioned in an article in the Forbes website, it was reported that the Singapore government opts to raise productivity growth and increase wages amid slowing force growth and an aging population (Forbes, 2018). Because of these economic restructuring efforts, the government has instituted stricter policies in hiring foreign labor.

This shows that the controlling function of management is being exercised by the Singaporean government as it is within their mandate to protect their people and ensure job opportunities for them. Controlling generally involves comparing actual performance to a predetermined standard. Any significant difference between actual and desired

performance would prompt a manager to take corrective action. Controlling as a function also determines whether the original plan needs revision, given the realities of the day.

This function is also bound to become a concern to the managers of multinational companies hiring temporary migrant workers. Considering the quick transition and turn-over of employees whose working pass expires also causes an adverse effect in the monitoring of the performance of the employees. The OFWs who are bound to return home may no longer show interest in fulfilling their tasks and following the predetermined standards, which could later cause an impact on the achievement of the overall success of the business organization.

The Singaporean government appears to be successful in ensuring the availability of jobs for its citizens; its efforts encourage global businesses to flourish. Unfortunately, it is the foreign workers who are suffering the consequences of this continuous economic growth and development as they no longer seem to be needed by the country. We cannot blame the Singapore government for prioritizing their citizens, we respect that, and we commend them for doing that. We believe that they are doing well in ensuring the future of their citizens. We just hope that the Philippines will be able to do the same, and the Filipinos need not leave the country to use their skills and talents elsewhere.

Conclusion

The storytellers revealed that having a better quality of life is their main motivation to continue working in Singapore. Summarizing the context of their narratives reveals that there is a fear of the unknown. They are uncertain of what will happen when they return home. Business opportunities seem to be the most ideal and common because they all have savings that they intend to use. Our storytellers were given opportunities for skills development, which include financial literacy, as well as funding for educational advancements to enhance their expertise in their field.

Coming from the narratives of the storytellers, it was concluded that they are adamant about returning home and their fears of uncertainty prevent them from returning. They would rather find work in other countries than go back home. This is because of the big salary disparity as they get to earn more while

performing the same task when they were in the Philippines. However, their expiring working pass is still there, so they need to prepare and establish coping mechanisms. Their only consolation in returning home is to see their loved ones, which reflects their value for the family. Looking ahead, their financial literacy is assumed to help them in being successful with their planned businesses.

The shared viewpoints and experiences of our storytellers confirmed the perspective that management is a social practice. Managers learn through both experience and study. The major purpose of management is to help get things done in organizations, and losing important, reliable, and diligent OFW employees will affect the achievement of this goal.

Considering the literature, qualitative findings, and conclusions of this study, we present valuable recommendations to the different stakeholders involved:

Multinational Companies

The experiences of the OFWs may serve as a relevant basis for international management. The concerns may be addressed by establishing a stronger labor welfare mechanism that will enable continuous skills development, financial wellness, and opportunities for long-term employment. Another recommendation is distance employment or the offshoring of workload and services.

Philippine Government

It is recommended for the Philippine government to be more open to foreign direct investments to create more opportunities. Filipinos are positioned to benefit from job opportunities offered by the ASEAN integration. Another productive move is to establish laws for unified competition or anti-trust law. This will address issues of monopoly, abuse of power, and consolidation and allow entry of more global businesses. Last is the review and enforcement of the law for the protection of the OFWs. It is good that there are programs, but it will be best if it is enforced to promote the welfare of the OFWs, including but not limited to social services, financial security, and employment.

Overseas Filipino Workers

It is recommended that OFWs develop a strong coping mechanism that will enable them to handle the

stresses brought about by their return home. Another recommendation is to build financial capability and assets. They will have to take advantage of the opportunity that they are earning more by saving or putting their money to different investments.

Future Researchers

Future researchers may consider the stories of the managers of the OFWs as regards to the reality that their employees will have to return home. Another extension is the stories of OFWs who have returned home and settled. This will provide information that could validate or refute the narratives of our storytellers as regards their perceived fears and opportunities.

Declaration of ownership:

This report is our original work.

Conflict of interest:

None.

Ethical clearance:

This study was approved by the institution.

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