



MIGRANTS IN CRISIS: THE CASE OF REPATRIATED OVERSEAS FILIPINO WORKERS

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ABSTRACT

This phenomenological study aimed to explore the plight of repatriated Overseas Filipino Workers (OFWs) in the Province of Tarlac. Specifically, it sought to examine their lived experiences during and after repatriation, the challenges they encountered, and to provide a deeper understanding of their reintegration process.

Data were collected from thirty (30) respondent who experienced repatriation at various times. Various factors influenced their repatriation, including unfavorable employment conditions, personal circumstances, and environmental challenges, suggesting that working abroad was not a sustainable option for many of them.

Despite challenges, the study found that repatriates demonstrated resilience by adopting self-determination strategies to regain employment and rebuild their lives. Reintegration experiences varied, but many relied on personal initiative and adaptability to navigate post-repatriation difficulties.

The results of this study provide valuable insights that may contribute to the development of more responsive programs and policy reforms for Overseas Filipino Workers. Furthermore, this research may serve as a foundation for future studies focused on the reintegration and well-being of repatriated OFWs.

Chapter 1

THE PROBLEM AND IT'S BACKGROUND

Background of the Study

Labor migration is a global phenomenon, with millions of individuals seeking employment opportunities outside their home countries in pursuit of better economic conditions and improved quality of life. However, migration is often accompanied by social, emotional, and psychological challenges, particularly when workers are forced or choose to return to their home countries. According to Newland (2017), return migration may be voluntary such as retirement or family reunification or involuntary, when migrants lose their legal right to stay. Regardless of the circumstances, returnees frequently encounter reintegration difficulties, including social pressures and feelings of personal failure when expectations abroad are not met.

In the Philippine context, working overseas has become a widespread socio-economic strategy, largely driven by financial motivations despite the emotional cost of family separation. According to the Philippine Statistics Authority (2023), the number of OFWs from April to September 2023 was estimated at 2.16 million, reflecting a 9.8 percent increase from the previous year. Overseas Contract Workers comprised 98.1 percent of this total, while 1.9 percent worked without proper permits or under non-immigrant visas. Women accounted for the majority at 55.6 percent, consistent with 57.8 percent in 2022. In terms of age distribution, the largest group consisted of workers aged 45 years and above (24.1%), followed by those aged 30–34 (23.5%) and 35–39 (18.6%).

Geographically, most OFWs originated from Luzon (65.9%), followed by Mindanao (17.6%) and the Visayas (16.5%). Among regions, CALABARZON accounted for the largest share (19.0%), followed by Region III (15.2%) and the National Capital Region (9.6%). These figures demonstrate the widespread reliance on overseas employment across different parts of the country.

At the local level, particularly in the Province of Tarlac, many repatriated OFWs continue to experience reintegration challenges even after receiving assistance. These challenges extend beyond financial concerns and include emotional distress, social adjustment difficulties, and uncertainty in rebuilding their lives. Despite the presence of government programs, many returnees continue to seek support years after repatriation, indicating gaps in reintegration systems.

This study employs qualitative interviews to explore the lived experiences of repatriated OFWs, focusing on their post-return challenges, emotional and psychological impacts, and coping mechanisms during crises. Rather than generalizing findings, the study aims to provide in-depth insights into participants' perceptions and experiences within their specific contexts.

Statement of the Objectives

The study focused on the plight of repatriated overseas Filipino workers in the Province of Tarlac.

Specifically, it aimed to answer the following:

1. To describe the profile of the participants in terms of:
 - 1.1 Age
 - 1.2 Gender



- 1.3 Type of Work Abroad
- 1.4 Country of Origin Abroad
- 1.5 Case Category
2. To narrate the lived experiences of repatriated overseas Filipino workers in the province of Tarlac.
3. To determine the government support programs provided to repatriated overseas Filipino workers in the Province of Tarlac.
4. To propose measures to address the prevailing problems experienced by the repatriated overseas Filipino workers in the province of Tarlac
5. To identify the implications of the study to Public Administration.

Significance of the Study

Various factors prompted the conduct of this study, particularly those highlighting the experiences of repatriated overseas Filipino workers in the Province of Tarlac. The results of the study benefited the following:

To the Department of Migrant Workers, As the executive department responsible for protecting the rights and promoting the welfare of overseas Filipino workers, the findings of this study provided valuable input for the formulation and implementation of policies and programs.

To the Department of Labor and Employment, The study supported efforts to assist repatriated overseas Filipino workers in the Province of Tarlac, particularly in advocating for training programs that facilitated reemployment opportunities and livelihood development.

To the Overseas Workers Welfare Administration, The study offered recommendations for strengthening proactive approaches in managing migrant-related concerns and enhancing the delivery of welfare services to overseas Filipino workers.

To the Department of Social Welfare and Development, he results provided an assessment of the effectiveness of existing social welfare intervention programs and identified areas for technical and resource augmentation applicable to Local Government Units.

To the Province of Tarlac, the study presented a comprehensive understanding of the implications of labor migration on individuals, families, and communities, and offered guidance in addressing issues faced by repatriated overseas Filipino workers.

To the Local Government Units, the findings served as a guide for social workers and practitioners in handling cases involving overseas Filipinos in crisis, improving the efficiency and effectiveness of interventions.

To the Citizens, the study raised awareness among individuals and families regarding the challenges faced by repatriated

overseas Filipino workers and emphasized the importance of supporting their welfare.

To the Students, the study provided insights into current issues affecting repatriated overseas Filipino workers, contributing to academic learning and awareness.

To the Researchers, the findings served as reference material and a guide for future studies related to the experiences and challenges of repatriated overseas Filipino workers.

Scope and Delimitation of the Study

This study focused on the plight of repatriated overseas Filipino workers in the Province of Tarlac. Specifically, it aimed to: (1) describe the profile of the participants; (2) narrate their lived experiences; (3) determine the government support programs provided to them; (4) propose measures to address the problems they encountered; and (5) identify the implications of the study for Public Administration.

Literature Review and Related Studies

Repatriated Overseas Filipino Workers

Repatriation refers to the process by which individuals return to their country of origin, either voluntarily or involuntarily, after displacement, migration, or detention. According to the International Organization for Migration and the Social Management Center (IOM-SMC, 2023), repatriation is defined as “the personal right of a refugee, prisoner of war, or a civil detainee to return to his or her country of nationality under specific conditions laid down in various international instruments,” or alternatively, as “the return of eligible persons to the country of origin on the basis of freely expressed willingness to so return.” This definition emphasizes both the legal and humanitarian dimensions of repatriation, highlighting the right of individuals to reintegrate into their home country safely.

The government’s interventions in the areas of financial support and remittance management demonstrate a recognition of the central role of OFWs in both household and national economic stability. By providing accessible banking services, reducing remittance costs, and promoting financial literacy, these initiatives help migrant workers secure their families’ well-being while contributing to sustainable development in the Philippines.

Livelihood and reintegration programs

Livelihood and reintegration programs play a critical role in the successful return of overseas Filipino workers (OFWs) to Philippine society. According to the National Reintegration Center for OFWs (2022), these programs have significantly improved access to entrepreneurship training and business opportunities for returning workers. By equipping OFWs with skills in business planning, financial management, and enterprise development, livelihood programs aim to empower returnees to establish alternative sources of income following repatriation. Many OFWs have successfully initiated small-scale businesses as



a direct result of these programs, demonstrating the potential of such interventions to transform remittances and overseas experience into productive local ventures.

Despite these positive outcomes, sustainability remains a significant concern. Limited follow-up support, restricted access to broader markets, and the absence of continuous guidance often hinder the long-term success of livelihood initiatives. Without ongoing technical assistance, mentorship, and monitoring, many returnees face challenges in maintaining or expanding their enterprises, leading to business closure or financial losses. This highlights the critical gap between initial training and sustainable enterprise development, emphasizing the need for reintegration programs to extend support beyond short-term interventions.

Supporting this perspective, a study conducted by the Asian Development Bank (2021) stressed that reintegration programs in Southeast Asia, including the Philippines, are most effective when designed as comprehensive and sustained initiatives. The study identifies several key components essential to successful reintegration. First, skills certification and recognition validate the competencies acquired by OFWs abroad, enhancing their employability in the local labor market. Second, access to microfinance provides returnees with the necessary capital to establish or sustain businesses, addressing the financial barriers that often limit entrepreneurial growth. Third, continuous mentoring and monitoring ensure that returnees receive technical guidance, business advice, and emotional support throughout the reintegration process.

Without these elements, small enterprises established by returning OFWs often fail within the first few years, undermining the potential of livelihood programs to secure long-term economic stability. Strengthening partnerships between government agencies, financial institutions, and private sector stakeholders can further enhance the effectiveness of reintegration programs by expanding market access, providing advisory services, and offering sustainable financial support.

Overall, a holistic and sustained reintegration framework is essential to maximize the impact of livelihood programs for returning OFWs. By combining entrepreneurship training, financial assistance, continuous mentorship, and market linkages, these programs can provide not only immediate post-repatriation support but also long-term pathways to economic stability and self-reliance. This approach ensures that OFWs can leverage their skills, experiences, and remittances to contribute meaningfully to both their families and the broader Philippine economy.

Challenges Encountered of the Repatriated Overseas Filipino Workers

Mental health challenges are a significant concern among overseas Filipino workers (OFWs), particularly female workers, whose emotional well-being is frequently affected by prolonged separation from family, high workloads, and the uncertainties of

working abroad. Studies indicate that many female OFWs experience stress, anxiety, sadness, and frustration as a result of these factors, highlighting the psychological toll of migration (Straiton et al., 2017). At the same time, periods of positive adjustment, feelings of independence, and empowerment have been documented, suggesting that emotional resilience and adaptive coping strategies are critical to the mental health of migrant workers. These findings underscore the importance of addressing both the risk factors and protective factors that influence the emotional and psychological experiences of OFWs.

Addressing these gaps requires a multi-pronged approach that integrates mental health services with broader reintegration programs. This includes increasing the availability of culturally sensitive counseling, providing training for practitioners to recognize and address OFW-specific stressors, and developing public awareness campaigns to reduce stigma. Furthermore, improved enforcement of labor protections and social support mechanisms in host countries is critical to reducing the mental health burden on migrant workers. By combining psychological support with legal protections and family-centered interventions, the Philippine government and associated agencies can better safeguard the emotional well-being of OFWs and their families, ultimately promoting successful reintegration and sustainable livelihood outcomes.

Conceptual Framework

This conceptual framework was anchored in qualitative research principles that emphasized understanding the lived experiences, emotions, and perceptions of repatriated overseas Filipino workers (OFWs). Rather than focusing on numerical measurement, it prioritized the subjective realities of individuals, recognizing that each experience was shaped by personal, social, and structural contexts. The framework aimed to provide a deeper understanding of the migrant crisis by examining how these workers interpreted and navigated their return to the Province of Tarlac.

Post-repatriation experiences focused on the reintegration of OFWs into their families, communities, and the local labor market. Many encountered difficulties such as unemployment, financial instability, and shifting family roles. These challenges highlighted the importance of social support systems, including family, peers, and community networks, which either eased or complicated the reintegration process.

Overall, this framework illustrated the dynamic relationship among these factors, offering a holistic understanding of the migrant crisis. It underscored the importance of exploring individual narratives to generate insights that could inform policies and programs supporting repatriated OFWs.

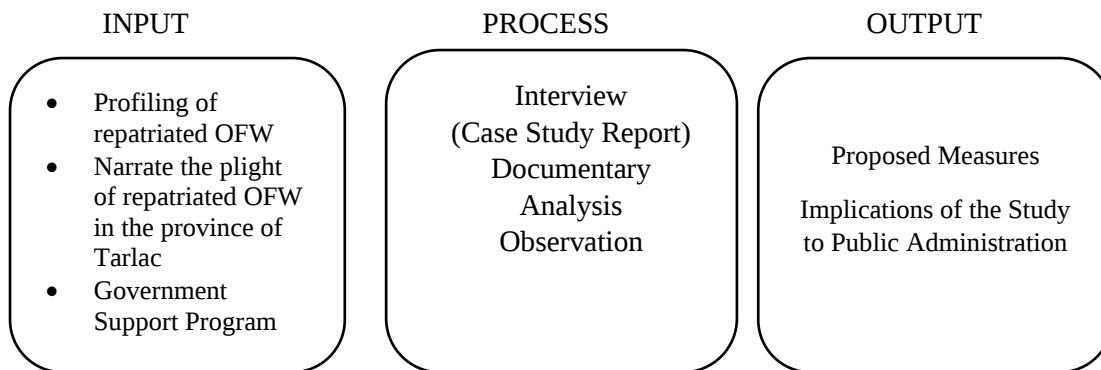


Figure 1. Paradigm of the Study

Chapter 2 METHODOLOGY

This research study was conducted based on a defined methodology, which played an important role in its proper implementation. This chapter presented the methods used by the researchers in conducting the study. It included the procedures that led to the answers to the main problem and its sub-problems. This chapter consisted of four parts: Research Design, Sampling Method, Data Collection Method, and Instrumentation.

Research Design

This qualitative study utilized the phenomenological method. The phenomenological approach aimed to describe, understand, and interpret the meanings of human lived experiences. It focused on research questions that explored what it was like to experience a particular situation. A

phenomenological study attempted to set aside biases and preconceived assumptions about human experiences, feelings, and responses.

Phenomenology made use of various methods, including interviews, conversations, participant observation, action research, focus group discussions, and the analysis of diaries and other personal texts. The goal of the study was to provide a comprehensive understanding of the plight of repatriated Overseas Filipino Workers in the Province of Tarlac by describing their experiences and characteristics.

The study was based on an interview guide, which was answered by the selected repatriated Overseas Filipino Workers who participated in the research. This research design involved presenting a series of questions to which the qualified participants responded.

Locale of the Study

The research was carried out among participating repatriated Overseas Filipino Workers in different municipalities within

the Province of Tarlac. The province was divided into 17 municipalities and one component city, Tarlac City, which served as the provincial capital

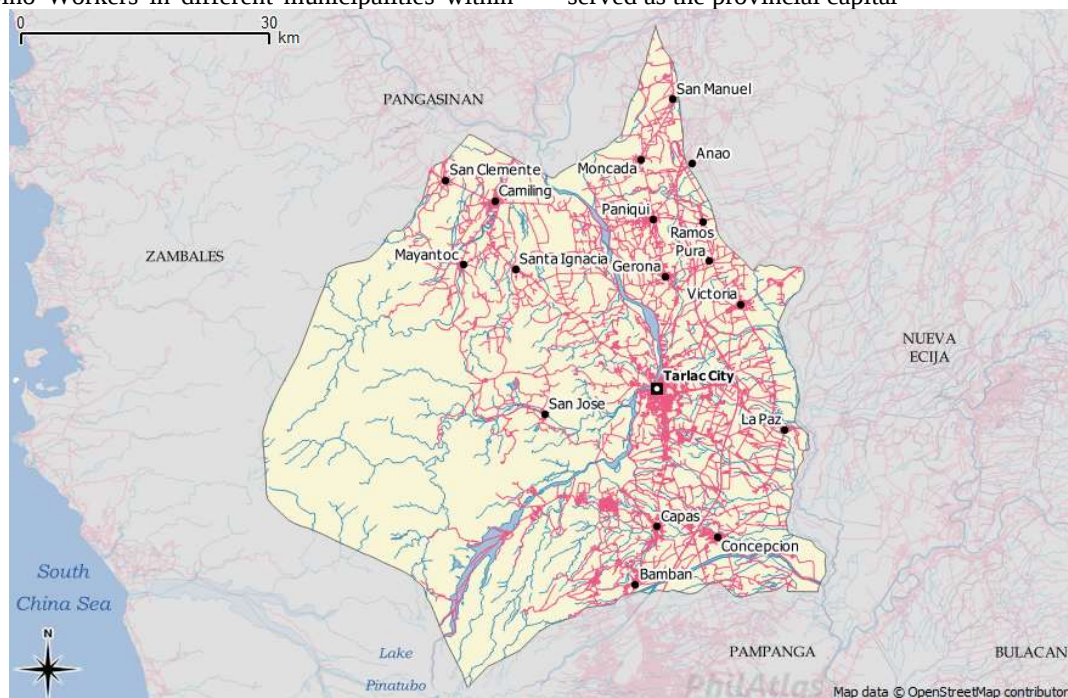


Figure 2. Map, Province of Tarlac



Participants of the Study

The interview targeted a total of 30 repatriated Overseas Filipino Workers in the Province of Tarlac using purposive sampling. The participants were selected from referrals of the Department of Social Welfare and Development Regional Office III, which were received by the Social Welfare and Development Office in Tarlac. These participants came from different repatriation periods and represented a range of diverse experiences.

Sampling Method

Initially, purposive sampling was utilized to select participants. Purposive sampling involved the intentional selection of informants based on their ability to elucidate a specific theme, concept, or phenomenon.

Furthermore, an invitation was posted on a social media forum (group chat) named "Tarlac Repatriates." This was done to generate initial volunteer participants, along with the personal contacts and associates of the researcher. Online invitations were also sent to various prospective respondents, assuring them of their confidentiality and anonymity.

The researcher selected thirty (30) respondents based on the required case categories: (1) victim-survivors of physical abuse, (2) victim-survivors of sexual abuse, (3) trafficking in persons, (4) illegal recruitment, and (5) documentary-related problems (amnesty program).

To identify additional participants or informants, the researcher employed snowball sampling by asking initial informants to recommend other potential participants for the study. Requests to suggest co-repatriates were extended to online participants to increase the number of informants and to further validate and enrich the responses gathered from earlier participants.

Data Gathering Procedure

Using the data collection method, the researcher utilized four (4) instruments:

(1) documentary analysis; (2) interview; (3) validation; and (4) observation guide.

Documentary Analysis. The researcher obtained data from the master list of referrals at the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) Social Welfare and Development Office in Tarlac. An application for approval was submitted to the Provincial Team Leader.

Interview. The interviews, which served as the primary data collection instrument, were conducted after the initial document analysis had been completed. Each participant was provided with an interview guide. After obtaining the desired number of respondents and confirming that data saturation had been reached, personal interviews were conducted. Each interview lasted approximately 25 to 30 minutes.

Validation. The researcher remained aware of interactions such as providing affirmations to participants, restating responses that required further clarification, and referring back to the research questions throughout the data collection process. Additionally, the researcher maintained an audit trail of the data analysis to evaluate whether any researcher bias had influenced the study.

Observation. It was conducted directly by the researcher during the interview, wherein the participants shared their personal stories and discussed the challenges they faced in their work environments.

Data Analysis

By following the steps of the thematic analysis process, familiarization, coding, theme identification, and writing, the researcher developed a rich, detailed understanding of the phenomenon under study.

Familiarization. The researcher assessed the interview guide of the respondent and reading through the notes from observations to become familiar with the data.

Coding: The researcher assigned codes to **chunks of data** (e.g., sentences, paragraphs) that appear to be related to the question, examples: case category, type of repatriation, and problem presented.

Theme Identification. The researcher reviewed the list of codes and began grouping them into potential themes. Refining and adjusting the themes were undertaken as necessary to ensure that they were clear, distinct, and well-supported by the data.

Writing. The researcher organized the findings into a report, using the identified themes as the main structure of the discussion. The researcher included quotes from participants to illustrate the key points within each theme.

Ethical consideration

To ensure ethical integrity throughout the study, the researcher maintained a professional and empathetic demeanor during all interactions. Participants were given the freedom to share only what they felt comfortable disclosing. Any discussion of sensitive issues, such as abuse or exploitation, was approached with great care and only if the participant willingly broached the subject. The study adhered to the highest ethical standards, ensuring the well-being and dignity of all participants involved. Informed consent, confidentiality, the right to withdraw, and minimization of harm were central to the research design. The ethical guidelines ensured that participants were respected, supported, and protected throughout the study. By following these principles, the research provided meaningful insights into the plight of repatriated overseas Filipino workers in the Province of Tarlac while maintaining their trust and privacy.



Chapter 3 PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF DATA

This chapter presents findings in accordance with the statement of the objectives. These are presented in tables following the frequency distribution of the respondents in terms of their personal profile. Profile of the respondents comprised of their age, gender, occupation, country of origin abroad, and case category.

1. Profile of the Participants

The demographic data and employment information were taken and used to describe the participants and assisted the researcher in deriving meaning to the experiences from the participants perspective. These include the respondents age, gender, occupation, country of origin abroad, and case category.

1.1 Age Distribution

Age was used as an important demographic variable to determine the characteristics of the respondents. Identifying the age of the respondents was essential because it helped the researcher determine the age group of the individuals being studied.

For example, in some studies, age was an important factor when the respondents were employed individuals or migrants. Age influenced employment opportunities, the level of work experience, the degree of responsibility, and the situations that individuals may have encountered while working abroad. According to Babbie (2020), demographic variables such as age provide a basis for understanding patterns of social behavior and are crucial in explaining variations among respondents.

Overall, identifying the age of the respondents helped in establishing their demographic profile, which in turn provided a clearer understanding of their characteristics and enabled the researcher to describe the respondents more accurately.

Table 1
Age Distribution

Age Range	Frequency	Percentage
26–29	8	26.7%
30–34	7	23.3%
35–39	8	26.7%
40–44	4	13.3%
45–49	3	10%
Total	30	100%

The age distribution of the respondents shows a relatively balanced representation across different adult age groups, with a slight concentration in the younger and middle adulthood stages. The age ranges 26-29 and 35-39 both recorded the highest frequency, with 8 respondents each (26.7%), indicating that a significant portion of the sample falls within early to mid-career stages. This suggests that many respondents are likely in periods of active employment, skill development, and career advancement.

The 30–34 age group follows closely with 7 respondents (23.3%), further reinforcing that the majority of participants are within the prime working age. These three groups combined (26-39 years old) account for 76.7% of the total population, showing that the study is largely composed of individuals who are expected to be economically active, experienced, and adaptable to workplace demands.

On the other hand, fewer respondents fall within the older age brackets. The 40–44 group comprises 4 respondents (13.3%), while the 45–49 group has the smallest representation with 3 respondents (10%). This may suggest a decline in participation or availability of individuals in higher age groups, possibly due to factors such as retirement considerations, career stability, or decreased mobility depending on the context of the study.

1.2 Gender Distribution

The gender of the respondents was crucial part of the study in the analysis of demographic characteristics. Gender played a significant role in shaping the experiences, opportunities, and challenges of repatriated workers. By knowing whether the respondents were male or female, the researcher was able to identify possible differences in the experiences of repatriated workers. Understanding these gender differences enables researchers to develop a more comprehensive and nuanced perspective of the experiences of repatriated workers. It ensures that the findings reflect the diverse realities of both male and female respondents. Furthermore, analyzing gender as a variable is essential in informing the development of responsive and inclusive programs and policies. Such initiatives can be tailored to address the specific needs, vulnerabilities, and strengths of both male and female repatriated workers, ultimately promoting more equitable and effective support systems (Babbie, 2020; International Organization for Migration [IOM], 2020).

Moreover, the gender of the respondents helped the study identify gender differences that might affect the trend of overseas employment. Male and female workers who were repatriated to their home countries were usually involved in different types of jobs while working abroad, which exposed them to different types of experiences, opportunities, and challenges. Understanding these gender differences allowed the study to achieve a more comprehensive understanding,



ensuring that the findings were representative of the diverse experiences of repatriated workers.

Finally, the gender of the respondents was essential in guiding the development of more responsive programs, as the study's findings could inform initiatives tailored to the specific needs of both male and female repatriated workers.

Table 2
Gender Distribution

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Female	18	60%
Male	12	40%
Total	30	100%

1.3 Type of Work Abroad

The identification of the type of work abroad referred to the specific jobs performed by the respondents while they were working overseas. This included employment such as domestic helper, construction worker, caregiver, factory worker, driver, teacher, and other professional or skilled occupations.

Including the type of work in the respondents' profile was significant in the study because it allowed the researcher to gain deeper insight into the nature of the work performed by the overseas workers. Different types of jobs varied in terms of

working conditions and responsibilities, making it possible for the study to analyze the types of work undertaken by the respondents.

Overall, including the type of work as a demographic variable provided a more comprehensive understanding of the respondents' experiences and allowed researchers to link specific job types with the challenges faced by overseas Filipino workers, thereby contributing to more informed policy recommendations (ILO, 2019; IOM, 2020).

Table 3
Type of Work Abroad

Occupation	Frequency	Percentage
Domestic Helper / Household Service Worker	13	43.3%
Construction Worker	4	13.3%
Caregiver/Nurse	2	6.7%
Others (Driver, Welder, Electrician, Receptionist, BPO, Teacher, Data Entry, Hotel Staff, Factory Worker, Entertainer)	11	36.7%
Total	30	100%

The largest group of workers are Domestic Helpers and Household Service Workers (43.3%), highlighting the strong global demand for Filipino household labor. These jobs are primarily held by women. Construction work (13.3%) represents the second-largest category and is mainly dominated by male workers. Other professions such as nursing, caregiving, BPO work, welding, and office-related jobs make up smaller portions of the dataset.

This pattern reflects the gendered nature of overseas employment, where women are commonly placed in care and domestic roles while men are placed in skilled or manual labor sectors.

1.4 Country of Origin Abroad

The identification of the country of employment, or the country where the respondents worked overseas, was a vital demographic factor in the research. It referred to the specific country where the overseas workers had been employed prior to repatriation.

This helped determine the type of work performed by the respondents, the types of cases they handled, and the experiences they encountered while employed abroad. The International Labour Organization emphasizes that migrant workers' experiences vary depending on the regulatory frameworks and protections available in host countries (ILO, 2019).

Table 4
Country of Origin Abroad

Country	Frequency	Percentage
Saudi Arabia (KSA)	7	23.3%
Dubai/UAE	4	13.3%
Kuwait	3	10%
Malaysia	3	10%
Hong Kong	2	6.7%
Taiwan	1	3.3%
Qatar	1	3.3%



Oman	1	3.3%
Singapore	1	3.3%
Abu Dhabi	1	3.3%
Syria	1	3.3%
Myanmar	1	3.3%
Japan	1	3.3%
Thailand	1	3.3%
Jedah	1	3.3%
Total	30	100%

1.5 Case Category

Including the case category in the respondents' profile was important because it helped the researcher classify and understand the nature of the problems or circumstances

experienced by the overseas workers. By identifying the case categories of the respondents, the study was able to determine the most common problems they faced while working abroad.

Table 5
Case Category

Case Category	Frequency	Percentage
Amnesty Program	15	50%
Physical Abuse	5	16.7%
Sexual Abuse	5	16.7%
Illegal Recruitment	2	6.7%
Trafficking	2	6.7%
Not Indicated	1	3.3%
Total	30	100%

2. Lived Experiences of Repatriated Overseas Filipino Workers in the Province of Tarlac

Identifying these lived experiences allowed the researcher to gain deeper insights into the difficulties and risks faced by repatriated OFWs. These experiences included challenges in their workplaces, issues related to working conditions, and the struggles they encountered after returning to the Philippines. Understanding these experiences provided a clearer perspective on the realities faced by migrant workers during and after their employment abroad.

Furthermore, identifying the lived experiences of repatriated OFWs in offered a human-centered understanding of their circumstances. This approach helped policymakers, government agencies, and other stakeholders develop more effective programs, policies, and support services that address the needs and welfare of repatriated OFWs.

The lived experiences of the repatriated Overseas Filipino Workers (OFWs) in the Province of Tarlac describe the various social, economic, and psychological challenges that the OFWs have encountered during their work abroad. The findings showed that the primary motivation of the OFWs to work abroad was economic in nature. Specifically, the OFWs wanted to improve the living conditions of their families. The limited job opportunities in the Philippines, low pay rates, and the need to support their families were the major considerations that influenced the OFWs to work abroad. For the OFWs, working abroad was a viable means to attain economic stability.

Another interesting theme that came out of the data relates to the issue of illegal recruitment, which is closely related to human trafficking. Some of the respondents claimed that they were recruited by individuals or agencies that promised them

legitimate jobs abroad, with attractive pay and good working conditions. However, upon reaching the country of destination, the promise was not fulfilled. Some of the workers realized that the jobs they were assigned to do were very different from what had been indicated in the work contracts, while others realized that the jobs they were assigned to do lacked the appropriate legal documentation. Some of the respondents were recruited at a very high price, which made it difficult for them to quit the jobs.

Furthermore, a substantial number of respondents were repatriated back to their home country through government repatriation and amnesty programs. Such migrants faced issues like job loss, expired visas, and undocumented status in their host countries. Economic factors like business closures, labor policy changes, and economic volatility in host countries also contributed to their repatriation. For these respondents, repatriation back to their home country was unplanned and costly, as they were not in a position to save enough money and provide economic support to their families back home before repatriation.

Moreover, the assistance given by the government agencies and the local institutions also helped significantly to reintegrate the repatriated workers into the society. Various types of support programs were also given to the respondents to help them deal with the effects of their stay abroad. These support programs helped the workers to slowly recover from the effects of their stay abroad and reintegrate into the society.

In general, the experiences of the repatriated OFWs in the Province of Tarlac reflect the complexities of the reality of overseas migration. On one hand, the experience of overseas



work is full of promise for economic mobility. On the other, it is also fraught with the possibilities of being exploited, abused, or repatriated unexpectedly. Thus, the present study points to the need for more effective measures to protect the welfare of migrant workers, more effective regulation of the migration process, and the development of reintegration programs for migrant workers before, during, and after their overseas work.

3. Government Support Programs Provided to Repatriated OFWs in Tarlac

Upon their return to the Philippines, the repatriated OFWs received assistance from various government agencies and programs aimed at facilitating reintegration into society. These support mechanisms were essential in addressing the immediate needs of the workers and helping them transition back to their communities.

Table 6
Government Support Programs

Government Support Programs	Frequency (n)	Percentage
Department of Migrant Workers (DMW) – documentation & reintegration services	30	100.0%
Overseas Workers Welfare Administration (OWWA) – transport & financial assistance	25	83.3%
Recovery and Reintegration Program for Trafficked Persons (RRPTP) – livelihood grant	15	50.0%
Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) – psychosocial & emergency support	30	100.0%
Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA) – skills training	20	66.7%
Balik Pilipinas! Balik Hanapbuhay! Program – livelihood package	15	50.0%
Local Government Units (LGUs) – food packs, referrals, transport	30	100.0%

4. Proposed Measures to Address the Problems Experienced by Repatriated OFWs

Based on the experiences of the repatriated OFWs, several measures may be proposed to address the prevailing challenges

faced by migrant workers and to improve reintegration programs.

Table 7
Proposed Measures to Address the Problems

Measures	Objectives	Strategies	Expected Output
Strengthen monitoring and regulation of recruitment agencies	To prevent illegal recruitment and human trafficking	Strict enforcement of labor laws; regular inspection of agencies; public awareness campaigns on safe migration	Reduced cases of illegal recruitment and trafficking; increased awareness among aspiring OFWs
Expand sustainable livelihood and employment programs	To promote financial stability and reduce dependency on overseas work	Provide livelihood grants; entrepreneurship training; access to microfinance and job placement services	Increased number of OFWs engaged in sustainable livelihood; improved household income
Improve mental health and psychosocial support services	To address emotional and psychological needs of repatriated OFWs	Continuous counseling; establishment of support groups; community-based mental health programs	Improved mental well-being; reduced stress, anxiety, and trauma among returnees
Strengthen international cooperation and labor protection policies	To ensure protection of OFWs in host countries	Bilateral labor agreements; stronger embassy support; accessible legal assistance for OFWs abroad	Enhanced protection mechanisms; reduced cases of abuse and exploitation
Enhance community-level reintegration programs	To provide continuous and holistic support for returning OFWs	Collaboration with LGUs, NGOs, and private sector; community-based livelihood and support initiatives	Sustained reintegration support; improved social and economic adjustment of OFWs

5. Implications of the Study to Public Administration

The findings of this study carry significant implications for public administration, particularly in the areas of policy development, program implementation, and service delivery

for repatriated Overseas Filipino Workers (OFWs). The experiences of returnees highlight the need for a more responsive, coordinated, and sustainable governance



framework that addresses not only immediate concerns but also long-term reintegration challenges.

In conclusion, the study calls for a paradigm shift in public administration—from fragmented and short-term responses to a more holistic, proactive, and sustainable reintegration

Chapter 4

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

This study examined the lived experiences of repatriated Overseas Filipino Workers (OFWs) in the Province of Tarlac, focusing on their demographic profile, challenges experienced abroad, government assistance received, and possible measures to improve reintegration programs.

Based on the analysis of the data gathered from thirty (30) respondents, the following findings were identified:

Summary of Findings

1. Age Profile of Respondents

The majority of the respondents belong to the 30–39 age group (40%), followed by those aged 20–29 (30%) and 40–49 (20%), while no respondents were recorded above 50 years old. This indicates that most OFWs seek employment abroad during their prime productive years, when they are financially responsible for supporting their families.

2. Gender Distribution

The findings revealed that female respondents (60%) outnumber male respondents (40%). This reflects the common pattern of overseas employment where women are frequently employed in domestic work, caregiving, and household services, while men are commonly employed in construction, technical, and manual labor sectors.

3. Country of Employment

Most respondents worked in Middle Eastern countries, particularly Saudi Arabia, Dubai/UAE, and Kuwait, which collectively represent a significant portion of the respondents. Other countries such as Hong Kong, Malaysia, Taiwan, Japan, Singapore, Thailand, and Myanmar were also identified but with fewer respondents. This finding confirms the continued demand for Filipino labor in the Middle East and selected Asian countries.

4. Type of Work Abroad

The data shows that the most common occupation among respondents was Domestic Helper or Household Service Worker (43.3%), followed by Construction Worker (13.3%). Other occupations such as caregiver, driver, welder, electrician, receptionist, teacher, data entry personnel, factory worker, and BPO employee were also reported but in smaller numbers. This highlights the concentration of Filipino workers in domestic and service-related occupations abroad.

5. Case Categories of Repatriated OFWs

Half of the respondents (50%) were repatriated under amnesty programs, indicating that many OFWs returned due to documentation issues or employment termination. Meanwhile, physical abuse (16.7%) and sexual abuse (16.7%) were also reported among several respondents, particularly among female domestic workers. Other cases included illegal recruitment

framework. By addressing gaps in coordination, policy implementation, and service delivery, public institutions can better support repatriated OFWs in rebuilding their lives and achieving long-term socio-economic stability.

(6.7%) and trafficking (6.7%), showing that exploitation remains a significant issue among migrant workers.

6. Lived Experiences of Repatriated OFWs

The lived experiences of the respondents revealed various forms of labor exploitation, emotional distress, and financial hardship. Many OFWs reported experiencing physical abuse, excessive workloads, unpaid wages, restricted communication with families, and confiscation of travel documents. Several female respondents also experienced sexual harassment and assault while working abroad.

Additionally, some OFWs encountered illegal recruitment and trafficking, where they were promised legitimate employment but were later subjected to exploitative working conditions. Others returned due to economic difficulties, job termination, natural disasters, or family emergencies.

7. Government Support Received

Upon repatriation, respondents received assistance from several government agencies, including the Department of Migrant Workers (DMW), Overseas Workers Welfare Administration (OWWA), Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD), Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA), and Local Government Units (LGUs). These agencies provided various forms of support such as financial assistance, transportation support, psychosocial counseling, livelihood programs, and skills training.

However, many respondents noted that the assistance was temporary and limited, and they expressed the need for long-term livelihood opportunities and continuous support services.

CONCLUSIONS

Based on the findings obtained from the study, the following conclusions were drawn:

1. Overseas employment is still one of the most promising economic opportunities for Filipinos, especially for those belonging to the prime working age group, who aspire for a better income to support their families.
2. Women are also a significant percentage of overseas workers, particularly in household service and caregiving, which unfortunately makes them more susceptible to abuses and exploitation in private homes.
3. The Middle East is still one of the most prominent areas for Filipino migrant workers due to their strong demand for domestic helpers, construction workers, and service staff.
4. A significant number of repatriated OFWs experienced various forms of labor exploitation such as physical abuse, sex harassment, illegal recruitment, and trafficking, which revealed their vulnerability as migrant workers in foreign lands.
5. The government plays a vital role in providing assistance to returning OFWs; however, the present schemes and programs are more focused on providing short-term assistance, which might not fully address their long-term needs as returning OFWs.



6. The strengthening of reintegration programs, regulations in recruitment, and support services is vital in providing for the welfare and protection of returning OFWs.

Recommendations

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

1. The Philippine Government may intensify the monitoring and regulation of recruitment agencies to prevent cases of illegal recruitment, human trafficking, and other forms of exploitation involving Overseas Filipino Workers (OFWs). Government agencies responsible for labor migration may strengthen regulatory mechanisms to ensure that recruitment agencies comply with existing labor and migration laws, ethical recruitment practices, and the protection of workers' rights. Regular inspection and evaluation of licensed recruitment agencies may also be conducted to prevent fraudulent activities such as excessive placement fees, contract substitution, and misrepresentation of job conditions abroad. In addition, stricter accreditation procedures and heavier penalties, including suspension or cancellation of licenses, may be imposed on agencies found violating regulations.
2. The Philippine Government and concerned government agencies may strengthen reintegration programs by providing sustainable livelihood opportunities for repatriated OFWs. Programs may include entrepreneurship training, skills development activities, and financial literacy seminars to help returning workers establish and manage small businesses. Access to microfinance services, livelihood grants, or start-up capital may also be provided to support income-generating activities and help repatriated OFWs regain financial stability and rebuild their lives.
3. The Department of Health (DOH), Overseas Workers Welfare Administration (OWWA), and Local Government Units (LGUs) may improve psychosocial support services for repatriated OFWs, particularly those who have experienced trauma, abuse, exploitation, or emotional distress while working abroad. Continuous counseling, mental health programs, stress management activities, and support groups may be established to assist returning workers in coping with psychological challenges. These services may be facilitated by trained social workers, psychologists, and counselors to help OFWs regain emotional well-being, rebuild confidence, and reintegrate more effectively into their families and communities.
4. The Philippine Government and the Department of Migrant Workers (DMW) may strengthen international labor protection mechanisms by improving bilateral agreements with host countries where many Filipino migrant workers are employed. These agreements may clearly define the rights, welfare, and protection of OFWs, including fair wages, safe working conditions, reasonable working hours, and protection from abuse and exploitation. Philippine embassies, consulates, and labor offices abroad may also strengthen legal assistance and support services to respond more effectively to labor disputes, contract violations, and cases of abuse involving OFWs.
5. Local Government Units (LGUs), in coordination with national government agencies and civil society organizations, may strengthen community-based reintegration programs for repatriated OFWs. These programs may include livelihood assistance, employment facilitation, skills training, counseling services, and financial management seminars to help returning workers regain financial independence and successfully reintegrate into their communities. Through collaborative efforts, LGUs may also provide accessible support systems that address the economic, social, and emotional needs of returning OFWs.
6. Future Researchers may conduct further studies on migrant worker welfare to strengthen policies and programs that support OFWs. Future studies may focus on issues such as labor exploitation, illegal recruitment, mental health concerns, and the effectiveness of reintegration programs. Researchers may also evaluate existing government policies and intervention programs to determine whether they adequately address the needs of migrant workers and their families. Furthermore, future research may explore strategies for improving protection mechanisms, enhancing reintegration services, and promoting sustainable livelihood opportunities for returning OFWs.