

Filipino Personality Traits and Values for Social Support: FOW as human resources for work life balance in Japan (1)

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Abstract: The purpose of this study is to help contribute to solving nursing care problems in Japan by studying the characteristics, personality traits and values of the Filipino people. Filipinos work as nurses and caregivers overseas, serving to be the largest supplier of human resources relating to social support. Literary documents and books were analyzed to gather concrete examples of Filipino personality traits and values. Interview surveys were also conducted. The ten most depicted traits were the following: pakikisama, hiya, utang na loob, close family ties, bahala na, amor propio, bayanihan, hospitality, ningas cogon, and respect for elders. These traits are analyzed from a social psychological viewpoint.

Keywords:FOW, Filipino personal traits, work life balance, caregivers

INTRODUCTION

This study is a part of a social psychology research to compare work life balance on an international basis, and to consider international cooperation of social support. In Japan, where the birthrate is decreasing and the population is aging rapidly, the care for the elderly is an extremely urgent social issue. One of the greatest issues of nursing care is, who is to be the caregiver. Demographically, low birthrate and rapid aging inevitably mean the rapid increase of aged population requiring nursing care, and the sharp decrease of young caregivers. Signs of this problem can already be seen, as even now there are many cases when an aged person must take care of each other. Japan's problem of nursing care will become even more serious in the coming years. At the same time, with the present declining birthrate it will be difficult to suddenly increase the population of young caregivers in Japan, therefore trying to resolve this problem only by taking the national population into consideration will lead nowhere to resolution. It is ironic that while Japan boasts of rich

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economic power on a worldwide scale, the people have no choice but to brace oneself for a period of old age that can be unhappy. The time has come for not only the government, but each and every citizen to shift his/her way of thinking about this issue. One direction of this shift is to consider cooperation of human resources on a global scale. Japan is a trading nation, one of the nations futuristically leading the economical commerce of the world's material resources, however, in terms of international exchange of human resources, Japan is very closed, with a tendency to remain to resolve the issue of nursing care with domestic human resources only. Such a closed approach cannot lead to future prospects. By changing our way of thinking, and promoting international cooperation of human resources, improvement of this issue can be anticipated. The globalization of human resources is considered especially necessary in the nursing/care giving field, where urgent support is sought. There is no reason to stop promotion of human resource globalization.

However at present, the Japanese government is in fact strictly limiting the admittance of social supporters (in this case nurses and caregivers) from overseas by imposing strict restrictions on the grounds of stereotype reasons such as risk of decline in service quality, and deterioration of public safety. As a political measure Japan has only just agreed to conditionally admit approximately 1000 nurses and care workers according to the Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) concluded with the Philippines in December 2008. Only 273 nurses and care workers entered Japan in 2009 for the first time. On the other hand there are many Western countries, countries in Middle and Near East Asia, and relatively developed Asian regions such as Singapore and Hong Kong that seek human resources globally for social support focusing on care giving aid such as nurses, caregivers, home helpers, and maids. There are also countries increasing admittance of such human resources from overseas even though there are issues to resolve (ex. United States). The largest supplier of human resources of such social support to meet the needs of advanced countries and regions, and countries with higher socioeconomic groups is the Philippines. Consequently, there are many persons employed as social supporters (nurses, caregivers, maids, etc.) overseas and there are many applicants as well. For example, the number of nurses from the Philippines who entered the United Kingdom was over 10,000 in the year 2007 alone. The number of training institutions for nurses in the Philippines was approximately 40 in the 1970's, and this drastically increased to 370 in 2004 (Asahi Shimbun, Sept.27, 2005). Remittances from abroad also serve as a financial resource for the country, supporting the Filipino economy. According to the Filipino newspaper "The Star" (Aug. 19, 2008), remittance from overseas at the end of 2008 totaled 16 billion dollars (approximately 1600 billion yen), accounting for about 10% of the GDP of the Philippines. Also according to The Star, 10% of the Filipino labor force, approximately 8.5 million people work overseas.

Why is the Philippines the largest supplier of human resources relating to social support, such as nurses and caregivers? One of the reasons is the financial issue. By working overseas one can earn many times more, at times over ten times more than what one can earn in his/her own country, the

Philippines, where wages are low. However this is not the only reason. There are countries with lower wages, lower income than the Philippines. It is easy to imagine that very poor countries cannot provide the necessary training for the nurses and caregivers that Western countries seek. Citizens will need a certain income and financial stability to go to a vocational school. However the Philippines has achieved this level. This is also not the only reason. The fact that the Philippines is the greatest providing country of caregivers shows that countries such as Western countries in demand of caregivers are welcoming Filipinos as social supporting personnel. The reason they are welcomed does not lie only in economical factors, but in their occupational ability and their ability to psychologically adapt. It can be considered that the character traits and interpersonal psychological traits of the Filipinos make them qualified as social supporters, and make them welcomed as human resources abroad. These social psychological factors are believed to be the reasons why Filipinos are welcomed as social supporters overseas.

As mentioned above, if Japan were to seek care for the elderly from overseas resources, the Philippines, which is a worldwide supplier and highly regarded for those characteristics, would be the most suitable choice. The Philippines is close to the Japanese ethnically and is a neighboring country in Asia, making it most suitable as a provider of caregivers. President Arroyo of the Philippines has been requesting that Japan accepts social supporters such as nurses, each time she has visited Japan. The Japanese government has been reluctant of its approval, but has indicated relaxing of restrictions in this area. However, the number of human resources that Japan has announced to be accepted astonished the president, as it is merely 10 percent of the 10 thousand workers the Philippines is requesting, considering the fact that the United States is reported to have accepted 10 thousand Filipino nurses in 2006, and Libya announced to accept 16,000 FOW in 2009. The authors believe that it is Japan that must immediately respond to the acceptance of social supporters, especially caregivers for the elderly from the Philippines.

Based on this situation, the purpose of this study is to help contribute to the efforts of solving nursing care problems in Japan, by studying the characters, values, and interpersonal psychological traits of Filipinos who are accepted as human resources for social support from countries all over the world from a social psychological viewpoint.

METHOD

(1) Analysis of Literary Documents

Literary documents and books on psychology, social psychology, sociology, social comments, by Filipino authors concerning personality traits and values have been collected from the libraries of the University of the Philippines, the University of Ateneo, the University of Mindanao, and bookstores in the cities of Manila, Mindanao and Cebu. The personality traits and values mentioned in each of the collected 24 literary documents were picked up, and the percentage of each trait compared to the whole was calculated. The larger the percentage, the more representative it was as a

personality trait of the Filipinos. The literary documents that were subject to analysis are as follows:

1. Carson-Arenas (2004) Introduction to Psychology 2. Dizon, et al. (2003) General Psychology
3. Leonano et al. (2003) Psychology and You. 4. Bauzon, P. (2002) Essentials of Values Education. 5. Salcedo, et al. (2001) General Psychology. 6. Panopio, et al. (2000) Society and Culture.
7. Bustos, et al. (1999) Introduction to Psychology. 8. Limpingco, et al. (1999) Personality. 9. Sanchez, et al. (1999) Psychology. 10. Jocano, F.L. (1997) Filipino Value System. 11. Sevilla, et al. (1997) General Psychology. 12. Avelino, et al. (1996) Personality Development. 13. Andres, T.Q.D. (1996) Understanding the Filipino Values. 14. Palispis, E.S. (1995) Introduction to Values Education. 15. Panopio, et al. (1995) General Sociology. 16. Panopio, et al. (1994) General Sociology. 17. Kabisig People's Movement (1993) Moral Recovery Program. 18. Maslog, C.C. (1992) Communication, Values, and Society. 19. Feliciano, E.M. (1990) Filipino Values and Our Christian Faith. 20. Andres, T.Q.D. (1989) Positive Filipino Values. 21. Lupdag, A.D. (1984) Educational Psychology. 22. Panopio, et al. (1978) General Psychology. 23. Lardizibal, A.S. (1976) Customs, Beliefs, and Superstition. 24. Mendez, et al. (1974) The Filipino Family

(2) Interview Survey

Interview surveys of Filipinos were conducted to gather concrete examples of the personality traits and values of Filipinos selected from the documents in (1). The interviewers were two Filipino graduate students (one male, one female).

Results

The Filipino traits mentioned in the above literary documents were extracted according to document, and then the number of literary documents that had mentioned the trait was counted. The trait most mentioned as a Filipino personality trait in the literary documents was *Pakikisama*. According to the data gathered, 21 out of the 24 documents, which accounts for 87.5%, mentioned *Pakikisama* (cooperation, interpersonal relationships). 14, out of the 24, accounting for 58.3%, mentioned *Hiya* and *Utang na loob*. *Hiya* means embarrassment, shame, and timidity. *Utang na loob* refers to indebtedness, and deep gratitude. The fourth trait, *close family ties* was mentioned in 13 of the 24, accounting for 54.2%. The fifth is *Bahala na*, which refers to submission to luck or fate concerning the results of an action, and includes a "come what may" optimism along with feelings of fate and resignation. This trait is mentioned in 50% (12 out of the 24) of the documents. The sixth is *Amor propio*, which represents honor, dignity and self esteem. 37.5% (9 out of 24) mention this trait. The seventh and eighth traits are *Bayanihan* and *hospitality*, both recording 29.2%, with 7 out of the 24 mentioning these traits. *Bayanihan* means mutual aid and cooperation. *Hospitality* refers to the warm welcome extended, especially to foreigners. The ninth is *Ningas cogon* which means energy deflation, referring to an easily enthusiastic but easily cooled down trait. six out of the 24

mention this trait, which records 25%. The tenth is *respect for elders*, which is mentioned in 5 out of the 24, making it 20.8%. The above 10 traits are those mentioned in over 20% of the literary documents. These can be considered as typical traits of Filipinos. In addition to the above, *Manana*, which refers to procrastination habits was mentioned in 4 of the 24 (16.7%). *Kanyakanya* syndrome which represents a selfish “to each one’s own” attitude, and *Pamamagitan* referring to mediation between parties involved were mentioned in 3 out of the 24 (12.5%). The trait indicating submissiveness, *Sipsip*, colonial mentality and *inferiority* were each mentioned in 2 out of the 24 (8.3%). Finally, *Fiesta Grande* which indicates “feast” and the love for celebrations was mentioned in 1 document (4.2%).

The trait mostly taken up as a Filipino trait was *Pakikisama*. This trait was taken up in over 80% of the documents, and considering the fact that the percentage the next trait recorded was just a bit over 50%, this can be said to be a representative trait of Filipinos. In the Philippines, where English is the official language, this trait is translated as “companionship (or comrade),” and refers to friendship. The reason foreigners feel that Filipinos are friendly lie in this personality trait. It is due to this social trait that Filipinos are accepted all over the world as social support personnel, such as nurses and caregivers. The second and third traits of *Hiya* (shame) and *Utang na loob* (indebtedness) both are mentioned in over 50% of the documents, which indicates a familiarity with psychological traits of the Japanese. The fourth is the strength of family ties. Each of the traits will be explained in detail, along with the concrete results of the interview survey in the following Discussion.

Discussion

1. *Pakikisama*

According to the results of the survey, the Filipino trait most taken up was *Pakikisama*. This indicates that this is a typical Filipino trait. *Pakikisama* refers to an interpersonal relationship where people are friendly with each other. To be with someone and to get along with each other indicates basic human friendliness and affinity. The fact that this tendency was most taken up in Filipino trait studies means that Filipinos are friendly and feel strong affinity towards others. From my own personal experiences, and accounts from foreigners whom I’ve met, Filipinos are friendly. This can be considered as a result of very friendly and amicable tendencies.

Pakikisama is a basic tendency for Filipinos, and is expressed in their private lives, their public workplaces, and in their relationship with their neighbors. According to Feliciano (1990) in “Positive Filipino Values”, this is an essential Filipino trait. Feliciano states that this basic value also expresses the Filipinos’ desire to be treated equally. Filipinos believe that they live and act together with coequals, and consider it only natural that the consideration they show others will be reciprocated. So people show a strong tendency to help, share, and cooperate with those they are with.

This leads to helping each other in difficult situations. Bayanihan, which is to be mentioned later, can be considered to originate from this strong Pakikisama awareness. Palisipis (1995) states that this trait is born from Filipinos' sense of camaraderie, friendship, neighborliness or empathy towards others. Pakikisama comes from the root-word "Sama" (to accompany, to go along with). This also refers to expectations of being together, to make effort not to displease others, and to conform to the majority of the group (Jocano 1997; Mendez & Jocano 1974; Panopion et al 1978). This trait is necessary to facilitate cooperation with others and make the atmosphere a smooth one. This will lead to bettering one's own entire organization, making this an important trait for Filipinos. This trait also indicates the tendency to make efforts to build a better relationship with others (Andres 1989).

This trait is deeply related to relationships with others, especially peer pressures, so one is "forced to conform or accede to group desires" (Jocano 1997). From a social psychological aspect this indicates a strong conformity tendency. There is a period in the growth process of young Filipinos when youths spend time together, which is considered as a period of interpersonal concordance (Andres 1989). Youths with a similar background or of the same age during this period strongly feel compelled to go along with their companions. As a result this trait is considered as a negative trait that forces youths to go beyond the relationships of friendship and closeness to commit acts of delinquency. Not going along with the group will lead to isolation and alienation from the group. A youth will comply with group acts in order to avoid isolation. This is a negative aspect of this trait.

Furthermore Avelino and Sanchez (1996) state that this Pakikisama trait is not limited to meeting and associating with others, but is an innate basic value of wanting to help others.

Results of Interview Survey

- (1) We have a tendency to actively reach out to others. This trait is the basis for Filipinos to smoothly promote interpersonal relationships among fellow Filipinos. In face-to-face interactions, people get along with each other by avoiding outspoken confrontations, gloomy and glum faces, harsh words, overt disagreement of opinion, and physical attacks. On the other hand, it has been pointed out that in cases one is already a member of a certain group, this trait can lead to a tendency to deny the privacy of others (Andres 1989).
- (2) There are cases when Pakikisama negatively affects adults as well as youths. This is clearly indicated in the buying of votes during an election. Buying votes during an election may not be unusual in the Philippines, making elections a contest of not only the candidates' competence, but also of money. Vote buying is done on a very wide scale. Due to this typical Filipino trait and value, large "contributions" and resources used for vote buying to ensure the victory of the candidate are silently accepted or overlooked, because of this Pakikisama towards the candidate or campaign leader. If the politician is elected the supporter will be guaranteed or

promised of a job, and as such, Pakikisama will work to maintain habitual interpersonal relationships.

2. Hiya (Shame)

The Tagalog word Hiya indicates shame, disgrace, embarrassment, sense of modesty and manners, and to lose face. The word involves inadequacy, anxiety, feelings of timidity and reservation (Andres 1989 & 1996; Jocano 1997). Carson-Arenas (2004) defines Hiya as a spreading sense of inferiority. The trait is characterized by the Filipinos' low sense of value as an individual and independence, as well as deference to authority.

Mendez & Jocano (1974) give the following concrete examples of Hiya in the Philippines. The implications of the term Hiya include cases when a child is bashful, embarrassment one feels when a sudden visitor comes and the house is not neatly cleaned or there is not a suitable meal ready to welcome the visitor (Kahiya hiya). One will feel an obligation to apologize, or at least explain why the house is not neatly cleaned. In addition, people who cannot repay an obligation or have not yet returned the favor are said to feel Hiya. These connotations are quite close to the embarrassed emotions that the Japanese feel. Individuals are members of society, willing to accept the rules and expectations of society so as not to alienate oneself from the community. Hiya is used when it so happens that now one is not in a position to be able to conform, but is not intentionally disobeying the rules, and one is ready to comply (Palispis 1995). This term is close to the Japanese word "Hajiiru (show shame)." People use the term Hiya as an excuse to avoid attacks from others. By using the expression Hiya, they are avoiding attack from others, protecting and boosting their self-esteem. Filipinos feel this emotion that is close to the feeling of shame of the Japanese, making it easier for the Filipino supporter and the ones requiring nursing care to understand as well as empathize with each other's emotions, so there will be little emotional misunderstandings, along with the hope of strengthening the ties between each other.

Results of Interview Survey

- (1) "There is the reality that disadvantaged children will experience at the beginning of the school year. Students introduce themselves in each class at the beginning of the school year. It seems that students from the highlands or provinces are shy or timid in introducing themselves than those from the lowlands or the city. This indicates a low sense of worthiness. Sense of inferiority is a major force of low self-esteem, but the student's background, environment, the perspective and intentions towards life also have an effect. These students withdraw from those who are more progressive and "civilized" than they are, and tend to isolate and classify themselves as inferior. The sense of Hiya, or 'shame' lies here. The teacher will encourage everyone to speak up during a class discussion, but there will be a few who would rather not, and prefer listening to the others' opinions. These students are reluctant to participate in the class

because they feel Hiya when comparing themselves to their superior classmates and mistakenly belittle themselves. Inferiority is the reason of this. There are some who withdraw from the others, and are afraid to stand up to voice an opinion because they are afraid of being mistaken or laughed at.”

3. Utang Na Loob

The third trait taken up as a Filipino trait was Utang na loob, which means inner debt of gratitude (Carson-Arenas 2004). This is the tendency to feel grateful to a person who has extended a kindness to them. The term indicates deep gratitude towards the person who has extended kindness, and the heartfelt wish to repay for the kindness. Mendez & Jocano (1974) state that one will feel Utang na loob, that is, inner debt of gratitude in the following everyday life situations: borrowing money, receiving food, getting employed or being promoted, free diagnosis made by a doctor. Typical examples of this trait will also be seen when a family member is saved in times of disasters such as war, fire, typhoons. To the person who was saved, he/she cannot immediately or fully repay the person who saved him/her. This person will feel that he/she can never repay with mere material items. One will feel Utang na loob the strongest in these cases. According to Feliciano (1990), Utang na loob is an interior law which dictates that the recipient of a good act or deed behave generously toward his benefactor as long as he or she lives. This is very close to the Japanese concept of moral indebtedness and debt of gratitude.

Results of Interview Survey

- (1) “In cases people live in a remote location in the Philippines where there are no medical facilities or hospitals, medical emergencies occur often. When an emergency occurs, it becomes the concern of the entire village. The family of the ill person will feel material, financial and even ethical debt to those who helped them. Even if one is able to repay in material or financial terms, one can never fully repay those who helped them for their efforts, concern and actions. An inner debt of gratitude exists. The person who has fallen ill and his family will feel an inner debt of gratitude, Utang na loob, to the neighbor who freely lent his own motorcycle to the family so the patient could immediately be taken to the hospital.”
- (2) “A person also feels ‘debt of gratitude’, Utang na Loob to someone who helps him or her find a job. It is only natural for that person to feel so. That person is morally obliged to reciprocate with good deeds thereafter.”
- (3) “This is a typical trait often seen in situations of working students. This is commonplace among students who come from poor families and cannot afford to study in college or high school. As such, some students will work as part-time helpers or run errands for wealthy families, and as compensation the wealthy families will pay the tuition fees of the student. Even in these cases the student feels a debt of gratitude to the family he or she serves. Thus, after

graduation, he or she is expected to render his services to those who paid for their tuition, and hold feelings of humility and gratitude for the family, because it was because of them that they were able to go to school. Generosity of spirit is fostered in the wealthy families who have paid the tuition fees, while it is important for the student to feel a sense of humility and gratitude. ” This is because as a result of receiving education, they can attain the freedom to decide about their lives.

4. Close Family Ties

Filipinos are said to value and take good care of their family. Although there are times when family ties are so strong that they lead to conflicts between other families, these conflicts also paradoxically represent the closeness of Filipino family members. Dizon et al (2003) state that “it is very evident in the Philippines that close-knit families demonstrate their deep love for each member, such as spouse, children, parents, siblings, grandparents and other relatives. One’s family is the source of personal identity, emotional and material support, and one’s main commitment and responsibility. Genuine concern for the family is manifested in the honor and respect given to parents and elders, in the support and care extended to children and in the great sacrifices one endures for the welfare of the family. It is ordinary for Filipinos to take care of their aging parents at home. This family orientation makes every member develop a feeling of belongingness and sense of safety and security.

According to Andres (1989, 1996) this trait is a strong and innate characteristic of a Filipino. Wherever he or she is, family ties remain. This is the cause of trouble in international marriages between Filipinos and Japanese, because of the financial aid the Filipino spouse will extend to family in the Philippines. It also leads to the extreme way of thinking that theft is justified if it is for the benefit of the family. Newspapers reported a Filipino maid working in Hong Kong who stole money from the piggy bank of the family she worked for, to buy a Christmas present for her child in the Philippines. This news also shows an aspect of Filipinos, that is, feelings of guilt are reduced and replaced by feelings for the family. Intense feelings for the family are a tendency strongly desired in supporters who provide home nursing care for the elderly. Filipinos with this trait can be said to be quite fit for nursing care.

5. Bahala Na

In situations that become problematic, are unable to be resolved, and one ends up in a tight corner, Filipinos will usually say, “Bahala na” (Avelino & Sanchez, 1996). Bahala na, or “come what may” indicates the tendency of Filipinos to resign oneself into the hands of destiny or fate. This “come what may” will lead to “Que sera, sera (What will, will be),” and no matter what happens, Filipinos believe that it is the work of fate. Palispis (1995) states, that Filipinos believe in fate, and that they have no control over their destiny. Their struggling life must be endured because it is the

will of God. They merely have either swerte (good luck) or malas (bad luck).

Bahala Na may seem to be a passive tendency, believing that one has no control over their fate, being passive to negative consequences from an action, and being perceived as reluctant in taking action, but there are indications that it actually represents the bravery of Filipinos to put themselves into the hands of fate and risk danger (Andres 1996). The brave tendency of the Filipinos to take action encourages Filipinos to tackle negative circumstances and fears in order to achieve their goals and ambitions. This generates an optimistic tendency to leave things to chance. Driven by unfortunate circumstances like poverty, a Filipino might muster enough courage to leave one's home for the city or overseas in search for a different world, then simply say, "Bahala Na" and leave everything to fate. This is a positive but daring circumstance that may sometimes lead to frustration and desperation. However, there is always the chance for success. This is one significant psychological aspect that makes it easy for young Filipino workers to go abroad to countries they have never been to, and work as caregivers as well as to relocate.

Results of Interview Survey

(1) One situation that depicts this trait in rural settings, is going fishing during a typhoon. There are cases when Filipino fishermen, especially those living in the remote countryside take the risk of going out to sea despite weather forecast warnings of bad weather. Since these fishermen must fish in order to earn a living, they submit themselves to luck, and believe that God will have the final say on their lives.

6. Amor propio

Amor propio means self esteem, with the meaning expanding to confidence, pride, strength, competence, and aptitude that one is a useful and necessary asset to the world. According to Carson-Arenas (2004), Amor propio represents the need of the Filipino to be treated as a person, not as an object. In other words, it is the desire to be not a gear of an organization, but a person who will move the organization. Andres (1996) defines this trait as "a Spanish word which literally means self-love." Because of Amor propio Filipinos in organizations strongly wish to be recognized as a person who is valuable to the organization. They want to be someone the organization needs, even someone the organization cannot survive without.

7. Bayanihan

This trait involves cooperation and bonding with people. According to Andres (1989), Bayanihan is the Filipino value that denotes camaraderie among the people in the community and helping one another in time of need. A Filipino proverb that depicts this value is "kung sama-sama, kayangkaya" (if we are together, we can do it). Etymologically speaking, Bayanihan comes from the Tagalog word "bayani" which means "hero". Bayanihan, therefore, represents spontaneous

activeness to heroically help others, and Bayanihan spirit indicates the bonding of team members' feelings in order to achieve a particular goal. The fact that the word "hero" does not link with authority, but with the results of cooperation shows that this is a Filipino trait of a mutual supporting nature.

This trait is not limited to camaraderie or groups, but also involves extending help in urgent situations to those who are in desperate need (Avelino & Sanchez 1996). Lardizabal (1976) states that Bayanihan is traditionally based on cooperation during the planting and harvesting of rice, however, today this trait is not limited to those activities, but is also exhibited at parties. Neighbors, friends, and relatives help in cleaning and decorating the house, cooking, carrying water, setting the table, and entertaining the guests. The same spirit of neighborliness is shown not only in times of celebration, but also in times of sickness and sorrow. In cases of demise, everyone in the neighborhood helps the bereaved family in one way or another. This is done by performing chores in the home of the bereaved, such as preparing meals, or by giving financial aid in the form of ambag (contribution; donation). The contributions are used to help pay for expenses for the burial. This mutual aid in the neighborhood has many points in common with traditional Japanese customs. These feelings of bonding and aid are essential and important traits for a caregiver. Though these traits have been developed through the Filipino culture, these are traits characteristic for a caregiver. Further, the commonalities these traits have with traditional Japanese culture are factors which will facilitate the acceptance of caregivers for the elderly in Japan, showing that Filipinos are qualified for care giving.

Results of the Interview Survey

- (1) "In the Philippines, it is quite common to move a house. This must be difficult for a foreigner to imagine, but this practice can be traced to ancestral times and can still be seen, especially in rural areas. People, by combining their efforts will literally lift or move a house to another place using bamboo or tree trunks. Although the house is heavy, it is easily lifted with the help of men who have been called on to help, and those men who have volunteered to help. This is all due to the Bayanihan trait. It is amazing to realize what this Filipino trait can accomplish."
- (2) Help harvesting rice during harvest season is also a basic form of Bayanihan. Today there are cases when workers are hired to harvest the crop, but there are also people in the village who offer their help. The people are given sacks of rice grains in return for their help. As such, harvesting of rice crops is done smoothly and rapidly, while those who have helped also benefit from the harvesting. As an example of a classical scene, someone will play the guitar to entertain those who are working. Likewise there is an annual fiesta celebration to commemorate the founding of the village or to honor a patron saint. In this context, villagers pay great attention to the preparation of the celebration, planning the schedule of activities so it will be a festive celebration. Usually, the villagers will clean the streets and put up buntings and decorations

along the streets. These events are made possible through this Filipino value of “Bayanihan”. These actions are generated from the voluntary cooperation and teamwork among the people.

8. Hospitality

Filipino hospitality is a trait that refers to the warm welcome that the Filipino gives to visitors who come to his or her home, especially strangers and foreigners (Carson-Arenas 2004).

As mentioned in the section for Pakikisama, Filipinos are friendly people by nature, especially to foreigners and they offer great hospitality to visitors. This kindness of the Filipinos is one reason they are loved by tourists. It is easy to imagine that this hospitality will be exhibited not only when foreigners come to the Philippines, but also when Filipinos go to foreign countries to work as social supporters and caregivers. This is another aspect which shows that Filipinos have a vocation for social support.

Results of Interview Survey

- (1) Hospitality is shown by offering one's home to visitors as a place to stay for the night and serving a feast and delicacies, greeting visitors with a warm smile and making arrangements that suit the visitors' convenience. Filipinos usually have a biased tendency to favor foreigners and for this reason, this hospitality seems to be considered a Filipino trait.

9. Ningas Cogon

Ningas Cogon indicates a tendency to be enthusiastic when beginning something, but eventually losing that enthusiasm after a time. At the beginning of a task, energy and enthusiasm will gain speed to reach a climax, but when there ceases to be more excitement or challenge in the task, one will lose interest and passion (Carson-Arenas 2004, Avelino & Sanchez 1996). To be easily warmed up, but just as easily cooled down explains the Filipino trait of Ningas cogon.

Results of Interview Survey

- (1) This phenomenon can sometimes be seen in teachers volunteering to teach in remote or rural areas where there is a lack of elementary and junior high school teachers. Some teachers will volunteer to teach in those areas knowing they will not receive adequate payment. The energy and enthusiasm level of these teachers will be very high when they begin teaching, but as time passes and they hit various obstacles, their enthusiasm gradually diminishes.
- (2) This trait can sometimes be commonly seen as an illness among newly appointed civil officials. Though they will deal with their official duties proficiently, the majority of civil officials appointed to office are prone to becoming “ningas cogon.” They tend to fulfill their civil duties and project tasks when they are first appointed to office, but as time passes they tend to procrastinate. There are even cases when a project is left unfinished.

10. Respect for the Elderly

Palispis (1995) defines this Filipino trait as the respect accorded to people such as in authority, and the elderly.

Filipinos show the utmost respect for the elderly, and the elderly are shown great consideration and care. This is based on the deep love felt towards the elderly. It is natural to care for the elderly, and in their own home. This is an act of paying respect to the elderly. Respect for the elderly is an essential condition in caring for the elderly. The fact that this tendency is strong in the Philippines is enough to see that Filipinos have a vocation to care for the elderly in Japan.

Results of Interview Survey

Kissing the hands of the elderly is an expression of respect in the Philippines. Children and grandchildren alike kiss the hands of their parents and grandparents. Respect is also shown in how a Filipino talks to someone older than himself. This trait can be seen when riding public transportation. When an elderly person is riding public transportation, others on the vehicle will arrange for a seat or offer their own seat so the elderly person can sit down. This trait is seen not only in daily practices, but also in a serious context when the wisdom of an elderly is sought. In cases public opinion is sought for a certain conflict or dispute, when a major problem arises, the wisdom and knowledge of respected elders will be sought after. People have long since been doing so because they consider the elderly as the “fountain of wisdom.”

The above are the ten Filipino personality traits and values extracted from this study. The following are three additional Filipino traits that this authors felt to be noteworthy.

11. Submissiveness

According to Carson-Arenas (2004), submissiveness is a characteristic of the Filipinos which shows his unwillingness to challenge those in authority, his willingness to accept commands and criticisms from others without question. This trait stands out in a country with many people depending on leaders for support. Often the dependent will allow others to make their decisions.

This Filipino characteristic refers to the tendency of quietly obeying people in authority. Its most notable example is the loyalty shown to political leaders. Filipinos will follow all orders of the political leader who is their boss, and obey him/her. This tendency is considered to generate from the effects of the long colonial period, or old practices of the farmer who have had to depend on their landlords for their survival. Filipinos are said to defend their masters, even if it means losing their own lives. This loyalty will have positive effects in caring for the elderly. To loyally work for the elderly, their employer, will be of great help to the elderly to lead a comfortable life.

12. Manana

Filipinos have a strong tendency to procrastinate and put off doing their work or studies. If there is something amusing, what they will do is put aside what they have to do, even if it is of importance, and become absorbed in the amusing event that is in front of them. This is called the Manana habit. It is a matter of course that many are tardy and absent from school or work.

Carson-Arenas (2004) states that whether this “trait which simply means procrastination” is a trait specific to Filipinos or is something inherited and left from the colonial period, is an open question. Nevertheless, Filipinos of today do have procrastination habits.

The tendency to enjoy pleasures or relaxation of the moment without thinking anything about tomorrow is a typical example of this trait. There is a Filipino proverb, “If you can do it tomorrow, then do it tomorrow.” This is the complete opposite of the Japanese proverb, “Don’t put off till tomorrow what you can do today.”

Results of Interview Survey

- (1) “Rushing to file income tax returns just before the deadline is a negative aspect of this trait. Even if there had been more than enough time to file the tax return, people wait till the last minute just before the deadline to do so.”
- (2) There are cases when students receive grades of “Incomplete” at the end of the semester. This is not because of lack of intellectual ability, but because of this Manana habit. Students will do something else today and plan to write their term papers later. The quality of the paper is sacrificed because of this procrastination habit. Students usually set aside tasks that can and should be done now.

13. Fiesta Grande

Filipinos love festivals. Fiesta celebrations are held in honor of the patron saint of the town or region.

Lavish festivals and celebrations are a part of the Filipino culture. Even in times of crisis or economic delay, when it is time for fiesta grande events Filipinos will become engrossed in celebrating in grand style and the gaiety of the festivals. Guests will be served extravagant feasts, and special arrangements will be made. Historically, the custom of fiesta grande has been inherited from the Spanish, who ruled the Philippines during the colonial period. However, Filipinos seem by nature to have traditionally enjoyed festivals. This is thus concluded because other countries in Southeast Asia, such as neighboring Indonesia, have many traditional and classic festivals and dances in their culture. The *Kadayawan* festival of Davao City, *Sinulog* festival of Cebu City and *Ati-atihan* festival of Kalibo, Aklan are the three major festivals. Presentations of their rich culture and traditions are shown, while games are provided to entertain the visitors. All the while feasts are prepared for the guests and visitors. This is a lively and cheerful event, representing the national character of the

Philippines.

Results of Interview Survey

- (1) Filipinos will serve extravagant feasts during the fiesta even if their income is meager. There are even cases when people will borrow money with high interest rates in order to create the impression that they are well off and can afford to serve delicious meals during the fiesta.

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