

# **Successful Return Migration**

## **A Study of Reintegration Experiences of Filipino Permanent Returnees**

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# Abstract

Successful return migration is not to be defined based on theories nor by standards and parameters set by societies, institutions and agencies. It is to be conceived from the lived experiences of migrants who have successfully returned to their country of origin. Using transcendental phenomenology, this study determined the essences of the phenomenon of successful permanent return migration by analyzing the lived experiences of thirty Filipino migrant returnees. This study found out that the migrant returnees attached various meanings to their successful return to the Philippines. Successful return meant for them fulfillment of set goals for migration, accomplishments upon return in the Philippines, bouncing back from difficulties and attaining a better life than they had before migration, 'professional success', attainment of peace of mind, contented and happy life in their home country, helping other migrants and other people in need and gaining recognition because of these engagements, and self-transformation from being migrant workers to becoming accomplished individuals. Key actions undertaken by the migrant returnees (which were the exact opposite of actions of unsuccessful returnees) and important proximate social circumstances (specific personal experiences and relationships) contributed to their successful return. Drawing from the experiences of the Filipino successful returnees, four elements that constitute the phenomenon of successful return migration were identified, namely, 1) migrants with strong sense of purpose and resolve; 2) migration and return migration experiences; 3) meanings of successful return; and 4) key processes, actions and circumstances.

Key words: return migration, lived experiences, meanings of successful return, elements of the phenomenon of successful return migration, transcendental phenomenology

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# Glossary

country of destination	a country where international migrants go to live and work
country of origin	a country that is a source of international migrants
entrepreneurship	“the capacity and willingness to develop, organize and manage a business venture, along with any of its risks in order to make a profit” ( <a href="http://www.businessdictionary.com/definition/entrepreneurship.html">http://www.businessdictionary.com/definition/entrepreneurship.html</a> ).
domestic helper	an individual, usually a female, who performs household services for an individual or a family, from providing care for children to housekeeping
essences of a phenomenon	its invariant meanings and the structural components that constitute it
financial literacy	“possessing the skills and knowledge on financial matters to take effective action confidently that best fulfills an individual’s personal, family and global community goals” ( <a href="https://www.financialeducatorsCouncil.org/financial-literacy-definition/">https://www.financialeducatorsCouncil.org/financial-literacy-definition/</a> )
eidetic reduction	a method or technique in phenomenology which seeks to identify the basic components of a phenomenon
emic perspective	taking in the view of the research participants in understanding the phenomenon being studied
epistemology	study of human knowledge and answers the questions, ‘What is knowledge?’, ‘How is knowledge acquired?’

epoche	setting aside of preconceived notions, <i>a priori</i> explanations and the like that will unduly influence how phenomenon and lived experiences are perceived and understood
horizontalization	identifying the significant statements about a phenomenon made by participants of the study
human agency	capacity of individuals to act independently and to make their own free choices
international migration	movement of persons from one country to another
intuition	an understanding of reality and its components as experienced, not based on researcher's impressions and interpretations
imaginative variation	use of conceptual imagination and reflection, viewing phenomenon from different perspectives and frames of reference
large-scale or structural circumstances	political, social and economic situation/changes/interventions in both host countries and countries of origin
medium enterprise	a business enterprise with assets ranging from PHP15 million to 100 million
microenterprises	businesses with assets below PHP 3 million
migrant resources	savings, investments, skills, knowledge and expertise of migrants
migrant worker	"a person who is to be engaged, is engaged or has been engaged in a remunerated activity in a State of which he or she is not a national" ( <i>Art.2(1), International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members</i> )
ontology	assumptions about the nature and existence of reality

Overseas Filipinos (OFs)	Filipinos outside the Philippines comprised of permanent immigrants, overseas Filipino contract workers and undocumented migrants
Overseas Filipino Workers (OFWs)	land-based and sea-based (seafarers) Filipino contract workers
phenomenological reduction	perceptual and pre-reflective description of experiences of a phenomenon
proximate circumstances	significant personal relationships, work/employment conditions, and life and work experiences of the individual
reintegration	“re-inclusion or re-incorporation of a person into a group or a process, e.g. of a migrant into the society of his country of origin” ( <i>International Migration Law: Glossary on Migration, 2004</i> )
remittances	“monies earned or acquired by non-nationals that are transferred back to their country of origin” ( <i>International Migration Law: Glossary on Migration, 2004</i> )
return migration	“the movement of a person returning to his/her country of origin or habitual residence usually after spending at least one year in another country; this return may or may not be voluntary” ( <i>International migration law: Glossary on migration, 2004</i> )
seafarer	an individual who travels and works on a ship on the sea
small enterprises	businesses with assets ranging from PhP 3 million to PHP15 million
structural description	identifies the meanings, underlying and precipitating factors and conditions that account for the emergence of the phenomenon
textural description	describes what was experienced (features and constituents of the phenomenon)
transcendental phenomenology	a study of lived experiences of people, meanings and essences of a phenomenon

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Augustus T. Añonuevo  
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# Chapter I. Introduction

Return migration is defined as the process of return of a person to his/her country of origin or habitual residence (International Organization for Migration, 2006). It is the process in which migrants return to their home countries after living and working in other countries for some time. Although return migration is considered a component of migratory flows, knowledge of it remains scant and fragmentary. The dearth of data and information explains the absence of a comprehensive appreciation of the return migration phenomenon (Dumont & Spielvogel, 2007). Most studies have focused more on migratory outflows (overseas migration to countries of destination) than on migratory inflows (return migration to countries of origin).

Worldwide, there is a paucity of data on the actual number and demographics of migrant returnees, the types of return migration, and impact and effects of migration on individuals, families and countries where migrants return to. Available data estimates, however, indicate that the numbers of returnees are far from being negligible. Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) records reveal that about “20%-50% of immigrants leave within five years of arrival, either to return home or move to a third country...(Data on) outflows in a few European countries where immigration is predominately from lower income countries, make (it) clear that outflows are far from negligible” (Wahba, 2015, p.2). OECD further reports differences in return rates by country of origin and country of destination, with Chileans who immigrated to Spain with the highest return rate of around 16% and the Mexicans and Argentines who immigrated to the US recording the lowest return rate of 4% (Wahba, p. 4).

Most migrant sending countries do not record the number of migrant returnees as much as they record the number of those who leave their countries to work

abroad. Estimates from some countries who have records also indicate that return migration is far from being insignificant. For instance, “the 2010 Mexican Census documents return migration of 31% for Mexicans who had moved to the US between 2005 and 2010” (Wahba, p. 4). The Pew Research Center Report showed that there was a net loss of 140,000 Mexican immigrants from the United States between 2009-2014. A million Mexican migrants and their families left the United States for Mexico while only about 860,000 Mexicans left Mexico for the United States (Martin, 2016). This was the first time since the 1940s that more Mexicans were leaving than arriving in the United States, a complete reversal in Mexican migration history to the United States (Jordan, 2015).

### **A. Growing interest on return migration**

Return migration has recently gained increasing interest among governments, NGOs and international agencies dealing with international migration. The increasing interest among policymakers is explained by diverse reasons. “Countries of origin, particularly in the temporary migration system, deal constantly with returning migrants, as settlement abroad is often not possible, and their reintegration is perceived both as an opportunity and a challenge” (Battistella, 2018). There is a growing acknowledgement of the probable positive impact of return migration to the development of sending countries. On the other hand, return migration has been viewed in relation to the growing restrictive immigration policies of developed countries. As Bree, Davids & de Haas (2010) observed: “In recent years, return migration has attracted increased attention. Particularly in Europe, it is commonly seen in terms of the restrictive immigration policies that have led to a greater emphasis on (forced or voluntary) return as a policy tool or aim” (p. 489).

Return migration has also generated some attention from academic researchers. They “...have examined the reasons people return, how reintegration takes place, the factors that facilitate reinsertion in society and



labor markets, the impact of return migration on local societies, and failures in the reintegration process that orient migrants to go abroad again” (Battistella, 2018).

Some migrants return to their home country and others opt to stay in their host countries. Those who return to their home country are further classified by Dummont and Spielvogel (2008) as temporary returnees (secondary/repeat migrants) or definitive/permanent migrant returnees. Temporary returnees are those migrants who return to their country for some time temporarily and then migrate again to another country. Definitive/permanent returnees refer to migrants who permanently settled in their home countries.

Some of those who return to their country of origin have done so successfully while others were not that fortunate. Various reasons and social circumstances can explain success upon return. The intent of this study was to understand the phenomenon of successful permanent return migration, more specifically the successful permanent return of migrant Filipinos to the Philippines. Specific typologies of return migration offered by several studies are relevant in this undertaking. For instance, two of King's four typologies of return (from Haour-Knipe and Davies, 2008) namely, return of conservatism and return of innovation are of interest to this study. Return of conservatism speaks of migrants coming home to their country of origin after successful achievement of goals and targets while return of innovation refers to that type of return where migrants bring back new ideas, values and ambitions from the host country and acting as carriers of change in their home country. Some studies indicate that successful return also imply that the returnees have adjusted well socially into their origin country. For instance, Iredale, Rosario and Guo (2003) found out that other than economic conditions in the countries of origin, other social conditions are necessary prerequisites for a successful permanent return. Gmelch (1980) noted that “many migrants are ill prepared for return. They do not realize how much their communities have changed during their absence” (p.143). Return migration, according to Bree, Davids and de Haas (2010) should

“thus best understood as a new phase in which belonging to a ‘place’ and ‘community’ has to be negotiated” (p. 490).

## **B. International migration from and return migration to the Philippines**

The Philippines is one of the top migrant sending countries, a major source of migrants in various professions and occupations in the world. In 2013, an estimated 10.2 million Filipinos were living permanently or working temporarily overseas [Commission on Filipinos Overseas (CFO), 2013]. This is about 10% of the Philippine population.

Overseas Filipinos (OFs) are in more than 200 countries and territories around the world. Overseas Filipinos are a diverse group. It is comprised of about 48 percent permanent emigrants, 41 percent temporary migrants and about 11 percent irregular migrants (CFO, 2013).

Permanent residents include Filipino immigrants, legal permanent residents, and naturalized citizens of different countries around the world. In 2013, it is estimated that there are about 4.87 million Filipinos who permanently reside abroad. The United States, Canada, and Australia, Japan, and Germany, in descending order, have the largest numbers of Filipino permanent residents. About 3 million of the permanent residents are living and working in the United States (CFO, 2013).

Many of these permanent residents have acquired the citizenship of their host countries. A considerable number among them are professionals and spouses of nationals of the host countries, and have attained affluence having had exercised their professions, established businesses or have had good paying jobs for a long time. They have also integrated well socially and culturally in their host countries. Many of them have brought family members and relatives in their host countries, which in turn have raised families of their own, thus, a growing number of second generation overseas Filipinos.

Temporary Filipino migrants, popularly referred to as overseas Filipino workers (OFWs) include the documented land-based and sea-based workers including their dependents allowed to accompany them. They are estimated at 4.21 million (CFO, 2013). Their stay overseas is tied with their jobs and are expected to return to the country at the end of their job contracts. OFWs are further classified as land-based workers and sea-based workers.

The top destination countries of land-based OFWs are as follows: Saudi Arabia (24.4 %), United Arab Emirates (18.8 %), Singapore (10.2 %), Hong Kong, China (7.9 %), and Qatar (7.8 %). Around 70 % of OFWs work in these five countries (Country Migration Report: The Philippines, 2013). Preliminary data in 2012 estimated Filipino seafarers at 366, 865. The Philippines stands as the world's top supplier of seafarers around the world with Filipinos comprising around 20-25 % of the international seafaring crews.

Undocumented or irregular migrants are Filipinos who are not properly documented or without valid residence or work permits, or who are overstaying workers or tourists in a foreign country. Most of the undocumented migrants left the Philippines as tourists but have gained employment in the country they visited, albeit illegally.

Undocumented migrants are estimated at 1.16 million which most people consider as a very conservative estimate. "They are mostly present in Malaysia, especially in the disputed territory of Sabah, which has traditional ties with the Southern Philippines and which remains with an unresolved international dispute concerning sovereignty" (Country Migration Report: The Philippines, p. 4). Many of them also live and work in the United States. Because of their status, undocumented Filipinos work in what is known in migrant NGO parlance as 3D (dirty, demeaning, and dangerous) jobs.

Of the three groups of overseas Filipinos, the OFWs are more likely to return permanently to the Philippines when compared with permanent residents and

undocumented migrants. This is due to their temporary residency status tied with their contracts and the difficulties in gaining permanent residency or citizenship status in their destination countries. Most of the OFWs' immediate families are also living in the Philippines, to whom they would eventually return to. Most of the permanent residents have settled and integrated well in their host countries as permanent residents or as citizens. They are likely to return to visit the Philippines occasionally but are less likely to permanently return to the country especially with their immediate families with them in their host countries. The undocumented migrants with their illegal and vulnerable situation could return to Philippines but most likely in dire circumstances.

Migration from the Philippines has continuously grown for the past 40 years. "As annual emigration for employment continues to rise, so has the base number of rehires. This indicates that the temporary migration of overseas Filipinos (OFs) is gaining some stability—a case of temporary migration becoming permanent—and the overseas employment experience is becoming longer. Consequently, the rate of permanent return is slow, probably because of limited wage-competitive opportunities in the Philippines" (Country Migration Report: The Philippines, 2013, p. 3). Indeed, it can be said that return migration to the Philippines has not yet reached a large proportion, that means, outflows from the Philippines to different destination countries around the world remain a lot larger than return inflows into the country.

Statistics and other information about the number of Filipinos returning into the country, their characteristics, reasons and circumstances of return, and actual situation upon return, sad to say, remain fragmentary. Estimates for the Philippines, which has a high proportion of temporary contract workers, suggest that there are around 3.5–4.5 million returnees in the country" (Wahba, p. 4). In the years to come, due to various circumstances and reasons like economic crisis and difficulties in host countries of migrant Filipinos (as experienced by Italy, Qatar, and Saudi Arabia), wars and conflicts especially in the Middle East, adverse and stricter migration policies of various

governments around the world that play host to millions of Filipinos overseas, familial problems and other factors, it is expected that return migration flow of Filipinos to the Philippines will be larger than what it is today. Despite this looming possibility, the Philippines like many other countries in the world, does not pay much attention on return migration of its people. It does not have “a mechanism for systematically collecting data on returning migrants, be they skilled or unskilled workers, students or retirees. There is lack of data on the magnitude of return migration and the rate of re-migration, the characteristics of returnees and the circumstances under which they return” (Go, 2012, p. 14).

Academicians and researchers in the country do not fare better than the Philippine government. The topic of return migration and for that matter, even the subject matter of international migration of Filipinos has not gained their keen interest and concern. There is a dearth of studies in the Philippines on the topic of international migration of Filipinos. There is also a scarcity of studies that explain return migration of Filipinos, most scarce are studies of successful migrant return to the Philippines. There is an obvious lack of data about the magnitude, typologies, and characteristics of Filipino migrant returnees, thus, very little is known about the phenomenon of Filipino return migration. Without a doubt, a wide research gap exists on the topic of return migration of Filipinos. This study sought to help fill in that gap by interrogating the concept of successful return migration as lived by Filipino return migrants. It also sought to contribute to the international literature on return migration and reintegration.

In 2002, together with Atikha, a non-government organization (NGO) in the Philippines, I did an earlier study, the findings of which were in a book entitled *Coming home: Women, migration and reintegration*. The study dealt more extensively on the social costs of international migration of Filipinos to children and families but also touched on reintegration experiences of overseas Filipino workers who worked in Hong Kong and Italy. This study should be viewed as part of a continuing effort on my part to deal with the topic of successful return/reintegration of migrant Filipinos.

Filipino migrants return to the Philippines but not all return permanently and successfully. Successful and permanent return migration is undoubtedly experienced by few individual Filipinos. A phenomenological research design fits well a study which seeks an understanding of the views and experiences of a select few individuals on a specific phenomenon like return migration. Hence, a qualitative and phenomenological study was pursued to capture the essence, processes and circumstances of successful and permanent return migration of Filipinos. Taking in an emic perspective, the study sought to understand the lived experiences of successful return of migrant Filipinos to the Philippines. Cognizant of the multifarious character of overseas Filipino migration, this study accounted for the migrant returnees' diversity in terms of gender, previous work experience while abroad, and personal and social circumstances in understanding the phenomenon of return migration.

### **C. Research questions**

The purpose of the study was to understand successful return migration from successful Filipino migrant returnees' experiences. It sought to describe and explain the meanings, essences and processes of successful and permanent Filipino return migration. The study was guided by the following research questions:

1. What individual reasons and social circumstances while abroad have led to the Filipino migrants' decision to return to the Philippines?
2. What did Filipino migrant returnees experience in the process of return and reintegration to the Philippines?
3. What is meant by successful return migration from the views and lived experiences of migrant returnees?
4. What individual reasons and social circumstances explain their actual successful return and current stay in the Philippines?

## **D. Relevance of the study**

Studies on Filipino international migration and return migration are obviously scarce. Academic studies in the Philippines have not come to terms with understanding the return flow of migrant Filipinos, whether voluntarily or forced, much more with the successful return of some migrant Filipinos. This is one of the few studies on return migration of Filipinos in the Philippines and the first one that employed transcendental phenomenology in understanding the phenomenon of successful return migration.

It is an opportune time that studies on return migration of Filipinos be pursued. This is in recognition of the following: 1) a segment of the Filipino migrant population is getting old and would eventually retire to the Philippines and 2) return migration is expected to grow because of changing restrictive migration policies of destination countries and prevailing economic difficulties and political turmoil around the world.

The study seeks to contribute to the understanding of the return migration phenomenon and thus to crafting of viable reintegration policies and programs in the Philippines. Focusing on the experiences of successful Filipino migrant returnees, the study's findings could provide valuable insights in crafting policies and programs for migrants and returnees. The insights and experiences of successful returnees are valuable in helping more migrants to return and reintegrate successfully in the Philippines.

## **E. Structure of the manuscript**

This dissertation is divided into eight major chapters:

I. Introduction

II. Review of Literature

- III. Transcendental Phenomenology and the Study of the Phenomenon of Successful Return Migration of Filipinos
- IV. Research Methodology
- V. Phenomenological Analysis of the Lived Experiences of Successful Return of Filipino Migrants by Occupation and by Sex
- VI. Essences of Filipino Migrants' Experiences of Successful Return Migration
- VII. Significance and Implications of the Study
- VIII. Summary of the Study and Recommendations for Further Studies

Chapter II discusses various theoretical approaches on migration and return migration, presents the findings of studies on the demographics and determinants of return migration, successful return and reintegration and some studies on return to the Philippines of migrant Filipinos. In this chapter, I pointed out the research gap that I wished to address—that of understanding return migration from the points of view and experiences of the successful returnees themselves.

Chapter III explains the research epistemology and processes of transcendental phenomenology by comparing it with other qualitative and interpretive research designs and other variants of phenomenological research. The Chapter also justifies the use of transcendental phenomenology towards the attainment of the research objectives.

Chapter IV discusses the selection of research participants, methods of data collection and the procedures undertaken in the conduct of phenomenological data analysis. It cited my experiences throughout the data collection phase and cited examples on how data analyses were done.

Chapter V presents the findings on the essences, meanings, and structures of the lived experiences of successful return of four Filipino migrant groups—domestic helpers, seafarers, professionals and workers. It also discusses the



similarities and differences of successful return experiences between men and women migrants.

Chapter VI discusses the textural and structural descriptions and essences of the successful return migration phenomenon as lived by migrant Filipinos. It presents what successful return migration meant for the migrants and how they achieved their successful return to the Philippines by citing social circumstances and actions that they have undertaken in the return process. Further, it discusses the constituent elements of the phenomenon of successful return migration.

Chapter VII discusses similarities and differences of the study's findings with the findings of other international migration and return migration studies. It also discusses the relevance of the research findings on programs for migrants and their families in the Philippines.

Chapter VIII summarizes the conduct and findings of the study. It proposes some recommendations for future studies on the topic of return migration.

# Chapter II. Review of Literature

This review of related literature does the following: 1) presents the various theoretical approaches that explain migration and return migration 2) discusses the various typologies of return migration; 3) discusses the demographics and determinants of return migration; 4) explains the concepts of successful return migration and reintegration; and 5) presents the findings of some studies on return migration of Filipinos.

## A. Theoretical Approaches to Migration and Return Migration

Migration has been subjected to various theoretical approaches with different propositions. These approaches stem from basically five labor migration theories, namely: 1) neoclassical economics; 2) new economics of labor migration (NELM); 3) structuralism; 4) transnationalism; and 5) social network theory. Neoclassical economics, new economics of labor migration, and structuralism theories are approaches that seek to explain why and how migration to other countries come about. The last two theoretical approaches, transnationalism and social network theories are deemed by Massey, et al. (1993) as theories that explain how international migration is further perpetuated and maintained. These five theoretical approaches offer also insights and explanations of return migration.

Neoclassical Economics is based and focuses on differentials in wages and employment conditions that exist between migrant receiving and sending countries as well as on migrant workers' expectations for higher earnings that they can get from their host countries (Cassarino, 2004; Massey, et al., 1993). The theory of neoclassical economics conceives of migration as a movement based on individual decision for income maximization (Massey, et al., 1993). Return migration is, thus, viewed as the outcome of failed migration experience which did not yield expected benefits (Cassarino, 2004).

Proponents of New Economics of Labor Migration (NELM) view migration as essentially "...a household decision that is taken to minimize risks to family income or to overcome capital constraints on family production activities" (Massey, et al., 1993, p. 436). Scholars following NELM, thus, views return migration "as a logical outcome of a 'calculated strategy', defined at the level of the migrant's household, and resulting from the successful achievement of goals or target" (Cassarino, 2004, p. 255).

The basic strength of the two approaches lie in their insights regarding the reasons why people migrate and return later to their counties of origin. The interrelated shortcomings of the two approaches as cited by Cassarino (2004) are as follows:

1. The migrants and their motivations to return as viewed by the two approaches are basically determined by financial and economic factors only.
2. The social, economic, and political environments, both in the receiving and sending countries and the interaction that happens beyond the returnees' families or households are not seen as important factors of migration and return migration.
3. The success (NELM) and failure (Neoclassical Economics) theories cannot fully explain return migration. The two approaches tend to separate individual decisions and plans of returnees from their social and political contexts.

Massey et al. (1993) subdivided the structural approach to migration into two distinct theories: Dual Labor Market Theory and World Systems Theory. The Dual Labor Market Theory links labor immigration to the structural requirements of modern industrial economies. Among the requirements of modern countries is the permanent demand for immigrant labor (Piore, 1979 as cited in Massey, et al., 1993). Massey, et al. (1993) maintains that immigration is not caused by

push factors in sending countries (e.g. low wages and high unemployment) but by pull factors in receiving countries (chronic and unavoidable need for foreign workers) because of structural inflation, motivational problems, economic dualism, and demography of labor supply that exist in modern societies.

The World Systems Theory views immigration as a product of economic globalization and market penetration of developing and underdeveloped countries. Market penetration according to the theory creates a mobile population that is prone to migrate abroad. Thus, the structural approach views migration and return migration not only as personal but also as social issues that are heavily influenced by situational factors.

The main ideas of the structuralism, particularly as they are relevant to the issue of return migration, are outlined as follows:

1. Like NELM, the structural approach shows how crucial in the return decision and the reintegration of the migrants are the financial and economic resources that migrants bring back to their home countries. They can help spell success or failure of return.
2. As illustrated in Cerase's typology of return migration (return of failure, return of conservatism, return of retirement, return of innovation) the situational factors in origin countries contribute to success or failure of return. Return migration is influenced by opportunities that migrants expect to find in their countries of origin.
3. Return migration cannot be planned properly as situational factors need to be gauged *posteriori* by the migrants. It cannot be thoroughly planned because it is difficult for migrants to gather all the necessary information about

the changes that have occurred in their countries of origin (Massey et al., 1993).

4. Situational factors are also important on enhancing the returnees' capacity to innovate and move as actors of change. In contrast to neoclassical economics and NELM, the structural approach believes on the possibility of returnees' impact on the development of their countries of origin. But according to the approach, a business-friendly environment as well as economic progress in countries of origin is crucial in harnessing the productive contributions of migrants and returning migrants.

5. The returnees' initiatives, however, is assessed in the main pessimistically by the structural approach. It maintains that returnees have remained far too long outside the countries of origin that they lose their networks of social relationships in their home countries which make it difficult for them to contribute to their home country's development.

Transnationalism believes that there are dynamic linkages between sending and receiving countries, which are overlooked by structuralism. The approach states that the strong social and economic links between host and countries of origin influence the identities of migrants and their propensity to contribute to development efforts in the host countries. Transnationalism maintains that migrants prepare for their reintegration at home through periodical or regular visits to their countries of origin. Migrants also periodically send remittances to households and even collective remittances to different development endeavors in their home countries. Migrants are believed to have developed transnational identities or double identities that are not conflicting identities. Migrants are believed to have developed the capacity to negotiate their places in and become part of society, whether the country is their host or origin country. Transnationalism is of a firm belief that migrants can be attached to

their host countries but can remain emotionally committed with their countries of origin (Massey, et al., 1993).

Social Network Theory defines networks as "... sets of interpersonal ties that connect migrants, former migrants, and non-migrants in origin and destination areas through kinship, friendship, and shared community of origin". These networks lower the costs and risks of movement and increase the expected returns of migration (Massey, et al., 1993). The theory also views migrants as actors who gather resources needed to secure and prepare their return that includes harnessing their interpersonal relationships that they have developed during their migration.

The theories cited above conceptualize migration and return migration as processes at different levels of analysis---the individual, household, the national and international. Although these theories are different in assumptions, premises and assertions, they cannot be assumed, however, to be inherently incompatible. Massey, et.al. (1993) believes that "it is quite possible, for example, that individuals act to maximize income while families minimize risk, and that the context within which decisions are made, is shaped by structural forces operating at the national and international levels" (p. 433). They caution us that "we should be skeptical of both of atomistic theories that deny the importance of structural constraints on individual decisions and of structural theories that deny agency to individuals and families" (p. 455).

In as much as this study is phenomenological by design, it treated the theoretical approaches discussed above not as possible theoretical frameworks that would guide the conduct of research but used them, in the words of Moustakas (1994), in "framing the research problem and setting the stage for inquiry." The phenomenon of return migration, this phenomenological study maintains is explicable by understanding the lived experiences of migrant returnees and not by any preconceived theory.

## **B. Various Typologies of Return Migration**

Return migration refers to “the movement of a person returning to his/her country of origin or habitual residence usually after spending at least one year in another country” (International Organization for Migration, 2004, p. 56). Return migration was earlier seen as the end of a migration cycle as it is being defined as simply returning home. The simple definition of return as situation in which migrants return to their home country does not capture the concrete situations that migrants are in. Return for many migrants, for instance, does not necessarily mean a permanent return but a temporary return and can just be a prelude for later episodes of spatial mobility (Cassarino, 2004 as cited in Haour-Knipe and Davies, 2008). Return migration can be viewed as a phase and not necessarily the end of the migration process.

Dummont and Spielvogel (2008) view return migration as a case of re-emigration to differentiate it with secondary emigration. Return migration is re-emigration in which the new country of destination is the same as the country of origin while secondary emigration is re-emigration when the new country of destination is different from the country of origin. Vadean and Piracha (2009) stated that after returning to the country of origin, migrants have two options: one to stay permanently (permanent return) or re-emigrate to another country (circular migration). Circular migration is defined by them as “the repeated back and forth movements between the home country and one or more countries of destinations” (p.1).

“Return migration is not a homogenous phenomenon. Different migrant populations which vary in terms of reasons and circumstances of return, etc. return to their home countries. That would explain why there exist different typologies of return migration/migrant returnees that are offered by different scholars” (Battistella, 2018).

Two sets of typologies of return migration offered by King and Battistella are discussed here. These typologies are pertinent in this study of the phenomenon of successful return migration of Filipinos.

King (2000 as cited in Haour-Knipe & Davies, 2008) provided several ways of classifying return and their corresponding types of return migration. These are summarized in the following table:

Table 1 Typologies of Return Migration (King, 2000)

<b>Ways of Viewing Return</b>	<b>Types of Return Migration</b>
Seeing the return of migrants by the development of their host countries and home countries	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. return from less developed to more highly developed countries</li> <li>2. return from developed industrial countries to less developed home countries</li> <li>3. return from and to countries of equal economic status</li> </ol>
Seeing the return of migrants by the length of time that they spent in their home country	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. occasional returns: when migrants make short-term and periodic visits to home country (i.e. to see relatives, to stay for a holiday and other reasons)</li> <li>2. seasonal returns as dictated by the nature of job of the migrant</li> <li>3. temporary returns: when migrant returns home, but later, re-emigrate abroad</li> <li>4. permanent returns: when migrant resettles in the home country for good</li> </ol>
Distinguishing between the intention and actual migration outcome	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. migrant intends to return and in fact, returns home: the migrant goes abroad with a specific aim in mind and returns home when the target is reached</li> <li>2. migrant intends to temporary work abroad, but return is continuously postponed until it never happens because of various reasons</li> <li>3. migrant intends to permanently work and live abroad but eventually returns because of personal and external reasons</li> </ol>



Ways of Viewing Return	Types of Return Migration
	4. migrant intends to permanently stay abroad and does not return yet but the idea of return is still seen as important
Seeing the return of migrants by the evolution of the migration process and of acculturation (from Cerase, 1970 and adapted by King)	1. return of retirement: when migrant reaches retirement age and returns home  2. return of failure: when migrant fails to adapt to host country and returns home  3. return of conservatism: when migrant returns after successful achievement of goals  4. return of innovation: when migrant remains in the host country beyond the target time of return, and may have adapted to the host country's cultural values, but later realized that his/her acculturation can never be complete and thus, returns home. He/She believes that the skills he/she has acquired abroad makes him/her as an 'agent of change'.

Source: Haour-Knipe & Davies, 2008, p.7.

Battistella (2018) offered a continuum of types of return that utilized two considerations: 1) time of return of migrant (before or at the end of the migration project) and 2) decision to return of migrant (voluntary and involuntary).

Return migration can then be classified as:

*Return of achievement:* the migrant returns voluntarily at the end of the migration project (or contract) having achieved the purpose for which he or she went abroad.

*Return of completion:* the migrant returns after completing the contract, but it is not a voluntary return, because the migrant would like to stay abroad for another period or to go abroad again; however, it is not possible.

*Return of setback*: the migrant returns voluntarily but before the end of the migration process, for various reasons, including unhappiness at working conditions, family reasons, experience of abuse, or trafficking. It is a setback from the perspective of the original migration project.

*Return of crisis (forced return)*: caused by situations like political upheaval or environmental disaster; It is an involuntary return: the migrant is forced to leave for reasons of security or political decisions made by the country of origin or destination. This scenario can also include the repatriation of irregular migrants" (Battistella, 2018).

This study focuses on permanent and successful return of migrants who returned from developed industrial countries to less developed home countries, in this case the Philippines. Hence, the types of return offered by Cerase and adapted by King, specifically return of retirement, return of failure, return of conservatism and return of innovation and Battistella's return of achievement are of prime interest to this study. These types or categories of return migration are related to the concept of successful return migration which this study sought to describe and explain. These categories also helped in determining the exclusion and inclusion criteria for the selection of the study participants.

### **C. Demographics and Determinants of Return Migration and Successful Return Migration**

Dummont and Spielvogel (2008) found out the following in their study of return migration of Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) countries:

1) In OECD countries, about 20% to 50% of immigrants leave in five years after their arrival either to return home or to move to a third country. Canada, United

States and New Zealand retain more immigrants and thus, have smaller migrant return rates. It was also ascertained that the longer the migrant stays in the host country, the less likely he is to return home or emigrate in a third country.

2) The return rate does not generally differ much by gender. It was found, however, that the return rates are higher for young migrants than their older counterparts. Higher rates of return are also observed at the extremities of education spectrum, that means, that those with the highest and lowest educational attainment are expected to return home than those at the middle.

3) Return migration is greater between countries of similar levels of development and is lesser between countries of income disparity.

Jaso & Rosenberg (1982), Borjas & Bratsberg (1996) (as cited in Zakharenko, 2008) also had a similar finding in their separate studies: Migrants are more likely to return to geographically proximate and richer countries compared to their host countries. Zakharenko (2008) also found that “the difference in terms of propensity to return between recent immigrants and other immigrants is greater than the difference between men and women, or skilled and unskilled migrants. Assimilation rather than education or gender differentiates decision to return.”

Using the Albanian Household Survey data, Vadean and Piracha (2009) found out that circular migrants tend to be male, have primary education, and come from rural and less developed areas when compared with circular migrants. Anarfi & Jagare (2005) in another study revealed that less skilled migrant returnees are older than their elite counterparts upon return to their home country, especially among females.

Migrants with permanent residence permits are free to make the decision to return with few constraints compared with those without permits (Dummont & Spielvogel, 2008). In a study of four Asian countries, Iredale, Rosario and Guo (2003 as cited in Haour-Knipe & Davies, 2008) found out that among other migrants, skilled and those engage in business are reluctant return “unless there is overall development and social transformation” (p.23).

*Determinants of return migration.* Return migration is determined by micro and macro factors, individual and structural factors. Koser and Kuschminder (2015) cited the following factors that determine return migration: “(1) structural factors (for example, conditions in the origin country), (2) individual factors (for example, age, gender, and social relations), and (3) policy interventions by destination and origin countries that serve as incentives or disincentives in the context of reintegration” (p. 5). Similarly, Haase and Honerath (2016) identified individual resources and factors (e.g. residence status in country of destination, social and financial capital, etc.), structural factors and possible areas of intervention in both countries of destination (e.g. residence laws, migration and return counseling, diaspora support networks, etc.) and in countries of origin (e.g. reintegration policies, labor market access, etc.) that determine migrants' willingness to return and readiness to return.

In their study of Turkish immigrants, Senyurekli and Menjivar (2012) claim that micro and macro level factors in both home and host countries interact over time to influence migrants' decision to return or not to return. In similar vein, Iredale, Rosario and Guo (as cited in Haour-Knipe & Davies, 2008) stated that the “decisions to return home are made in response to careful weighing up of personal factors, career related prospects and economic, political and environmental climate” (p. 12). They added that personal factors which includes “family factors maybe more important when successful integration has not occurred in the host country and when the emphasis on extended families and national pride is still very strong” (p.12).

*Micro and structural factors of return.* King (2000 as cited in Haour-Knipe & Davies, 2008) categorizes the causes of return migration into four, namely economic, social, family life cycle, and political factors. Economic factors for return involve push factors in the host country like economic downturn or pull factors from the country of origin, such as economic development. Social reasons for returning to home country include factors like racism or difficulty in integrating in the host country. Pull factors include homesickness and the probability of an enhanced status when one comes home. Family or life cycle factors, according to King, may include reasons like retiring, finding a spouse, and having one's children educated in one's own country. Political factors involve restrictions enforced by the host country (e.g. non-renewal of permits) or pull factors from home country (e.g. policies that encourage return).

King (2000, as cited in Haour-Knipe & Davies, 2008) concludes in his review of various studies that "pull factors generally have more influence in the decision to return than push factors, and that non-economic factors generally weigh more heavily than do economic factors" (p. 9). King noted that this is the exact opposite of the original decision to migrate, which is often strongly determined by economic motives, at least at the micro level. At the macro level, several studies point to unfavorable economic conditions like recession in the immigration country as the key to episodes of mass return.

*Individual motives and reasons of return.* Thomas-Hope's study of migrants returning to Jamaica (as cited in Haour-Knipe & Davies, 2008) cites two sets of reasons of return: 1) personal and domestic circumstances of individual and his or her family (e.g. age and stage in career and household life cycle) and 2) migrant's perception of the conditions in the country of origin (e. g. cost of living, opportunity for investment, political stability).

Dummont and Spielvogel (2008) cited three main reasons that explain return migration: 1) migrants' failure to integrate into the host country; 2) individuals' preferences for their home country; 3) achievement of savings goal or

presence of employment opportunities in the home country. They further argued that there is a connection between migration, savings, return, and investment.

Reviewing studies of return migration to different countries of origin, Gmelch (1980) pointed out the following most cited reasons by migrant returnees: “1) desire to be in the company of one’s family and friends; 2) feelings of loyalty and allegiance to country of origin; and 3) painful experiences of racial discrimination in the host countries” (pp. 139-140).

Residency status of migrants in the host countries also affects the decision to return. Klinthäll (2006) pointed out that constraints imposed on different migrants vary and affect their decision to return: (1) migrants with permanent residency status, (2) migrants with temporary residency status (3) refugees granted with unlimited residency, and (4) migrants under temporary protection for humanitarian considerations.

Tsuda (2009 as cited in Konuruglu, van de Vijver and Yagmur, 2016) examined why millions of migrants returned to Japan and found out that although economic motives were the primary return motive, ethnic ties and emotional reasons were important considerations in migrants’ return decision. “Migrants’ self-identification as well as the perception of the ‘homeland’ are taken to influence their return decision” (Cassarino, 2004 as cited in Konuruglu, van de Vijver and Yagmur, 2016, p. 9). Konuruglu, van de Vijver and Yagmur (2016) cited several studies that found that unfavorable conditions in host countries like negative attitudes towards migrants, perceived discrimination and racism affect migrants’ sense of belonging in their host countries and thus, push them to return home.

#### **D. Successful Return Migration and Reintegration**

*The concepts of successful return and reintegration.* Successful return migration can be equated to Anarfi & Jagare’s (2005) concept of sustainable

return. For them, sustainable return which means the absence of re-migration entails the migrant's attainment of socioeconomic success and the guarantee of returnee's rights to public and social services and freedom of movement.

Reintegration is viewed by some scholars as synonymous to successful return and is defined as "...a process by which migrants after their return from overseas employment resettle themselves into the social and economic structure of their countries of origin" (Amjad, 1989, Canal, 1992 & Shah, 1994 as cited in Arif, 1998, p.100). Haour-Knipe & Davies (2008) echoing Said (1999) stated that there is no uncomplicated return to one's home country because communities of origin have changed and so have the returnees' attitudes and actions. Hence, return always entail readjustments. Returnees must reintegrate into their own country of origin. "Return migrants attach new meanings to culture, identity home and place in their country of origin... return migration is thus best understood as a new phase in which belonging to "a place and community has to be renegotiated" (Hammond, 1999 as cited in de Bree, Davids & de Haas, 2010). Returnees who can reconcile "public social (local) expectations and private (transnational) spheres" are most likely to be successful upon return (de Bree, Davids, & de Haas, 2010). They added that besides the current practices of migrant returnees, their past practices in their host country are to be accounted in understanding their demeanor and behavior upon return. They claim that these past social and economic practices affect post-return belonging and can ease reintegration.

On the other hand, some scholars view return migration and reintegration as two distinct yet interrelated concepts. Return migration is described as a "situation where the migrants return to their country of origin, by their own will, after a significant period abroad" (Dustmann & Weiss, 2007, p. 238). Reintegration is viewed by some scholars as more than return. it includes assimilation to home country's culture, politics and social life. It also includes what the migrant does and what society does in re-integrating. Kushminder (2014) stated that reintegration includes the structural environment of return

and the returnees' reintegration strategy. By structural environment of return, she meant the home societies attitudes toward the returnees and their openness to the cultural diversity that returnees may bring with them upon return. The structural environment includes government policies and citizens' perspectives towards returnees. Kushminder said that "...much like integration, return migrants must go through a process of reintegration, and how they reintegrate will be dependent upon their experiences and choices. Agency and the life cycle of the migrant are critical elements in determining the returnees' reintegration strategy. Networks have a critical role in this process as they provide access to resources and information regarding return and reintegration" (p. 33).

As far as this study is concerned, successful return and reintegration are used synonymously. Following the logic of transcendental phenomenology, this study offered no conceptual definition at the start because the conceptions of successful return migration must be derived from the lived experiences of successful migrants. No *a priori* conceptual definition of successful return migration was necessary.

The study could possibly end up touching on concepts of successful return migration and reintegration as enunciated by scholars or it may not. It all depends on whether the participants' own conception and experiences would end up similar or different to what has been conceived in the literature as far as the concepts of return migration and reintegration are concerned. In this study, return migration and reintegration were loosely used to refer to experiences of "*pagbabalik sa Pilipinas*" (return to the Philippines) and "*nag-for good na*" (returned to permanently stay in the Philippines), terms that migrant returnees use to refer to their coming home and permanently staying in the Philippines. This is in keeping with the dictum of phenomenological research that it is the people who have lived the phenomenon who would be



in the best position to define, put meaning and characterize their experiences surrounding the phenomenon.

*Factors of successful return migration/reintegration.* Cassarino (2014) argued that migrants' decision to return also depend on their return preparedness which in turn is determined by migrants' willingness and readiness to return. "Willingness refers to the act of deciding to return, on one's own initiative, and in the absence of any external pressure... Naturally, an individual will have to weigh up the costs and benefits of their decision to return... Willingness refers to whether one considers that the time is right to return" (p. 3). He defined readiness as "the extent to which migrants have been able to mobilize the adequate tangible (that is financial capital) and intangible resources (that is contacts, relationships, skills, networks) needed to secure their return, be it temporary or permanent" (p.4).

Migrants' intention and decision to return to their home countries are heavily influenced whether their expectations about their countries are met or not (Cassarino, 2004 as cited by Debnath, 2016). Gmelch (1980 as cited in Debnath, 2016) finds migrants ill-prepared for return because situational factors can only be evaluated after return. If the social, economic or political conditions of the home country is not consistent with the expectations of the returnee, the reintegration becomes difficult. Debnath (2016) observed that "...several countries of origin have made significant efforts to encourage their highly skilled migrants to return. These efforts include offering a range of financial and social incentives to help with the overall reintegration process. Some of these governments have also established dedicated agencies or ministries, research hubs and centers, and virtual databases and networks to connect potential returnees with opportunities in the countries of origin" (p. 10).

## **E. International Migration of Filipinos and Studies on Filipino Return Migration**

### *International Migration of Filipinos*

Migration from the Philippines has continuously grown for the past 40 years. Through the years, there is an annual increase in the number of Filipinos getting out of the country to live and work abroad.

In 2010, I delivered a professorial lecture entitled '*Addressing the Social Costs of International Migration to Filipino Families and Children*'. In the lecture, I cited what I deemed as the major patterns and features of international migration of Filipinos. The main points on patterns and features of migration and corresponding concerns that I raised in the lecture are summarized and presented here in this section. These patterns and features continue to characterize international migration from the Philippines and so are the issues and concerns that accompany them.

The patterns and features of international migration from the Philippines are as follows: 1) unabated and continuous rise of Filipinos migrating and working abroad; 2) a bigger number of temporary workers and undocumented workers than permanent residents; 3) Overseas Filipinos in various occupations but securing niches; and 4) a growing feminization of international migration.

*Unabated and continuous rise of Filipinos migrating and working abroad.* Recent estimates place the total number of overseas Filipinos at about 10.2 million who are dispersed in more than 200 countries and in major ocean plying vessels in the world. That would mean that one out 10 Filipinos is out of the country and is now working and living abroad.

Asis (2008) cited three reasons why international migration of Filipinos has reached its magnitude and is still expected to rise in the coming years: 1)

economic difficulties and lack of opportunities and employment that has perennially characterized the Philippine economy which drive people to seek employment abroad; 2) aggressive government policy of deploying Filipino workers abroad; and 3) culture of migration which further emphasizes feelings of relative deprivation and the idea of migration as the ultimate alternative strategy for a better life.

*A higher percentage of temporary workers and undocumented workers than permanent residents.* The Filipino diaspora or overseas Filipino population is comprised of permanent residents (48%), temporary contract workers or OFWs (41%) and undocumented migrants (11%) (CFO, 2013). OFWs and undocumented workers when combined are larger in number than permanent residents. That would mean that we should expect that more Filipinos will eventually return to the country than those who will settle in their host countries. Hence, the Philippine government must be ready to absorb returning migrants, whether they have been forced to move out of their host countries or they return to the Philippines on their own volition.

*Overseas Filipinos in various occupations but securing niches.* Filipinos take on various occupations abroad, from less skilled to highly skilled work. Young Filipinos have also secured a niche in domestic work, nursing, and seafaring (Asis, 2008). It is, thus, not surprising that fears of both brain drain (depletion of the country's professionals) and brawn drain (depletion of young and able bodied workers) have been raised. The brain drain concern has been raised because the Philippines has continuously sent big numbers of professionals like nurses, pilots, captains of the ship, and teachers to other countries. The fear of a brawn drain in the long term has also been voiced out because a large percentage of workers sent abroad are young and able-bodied Filipinos.

*Increasing flows of remittances and their growing impact.* The OFW remittances in 1975 (about the time when the Philippine government started

its overseas employment program) was mere US \$103 million. In 2017, the Philippines ranks third (\$33 billion) in the world in terms of remittances received behind India (\$69 billion), and China (\$64 billion) (World Bank, 2018). The Country Migration Report: The Philippines in 2013 observed: "Remittances have increased tremendously, particularly in the past 10 years. It took 15 years to reach 1 billion USD, 12 (years) to reach 10 billion USD and only 7 (years) to surpass 20 billion USD, the latest recorded peak in 2012" (p. 6).

From such huge volume of remittances, the Philippines and families of migrant workers abroad have reaped huge benefits. A concern, however, has been raised with this pattern: Is the country becoming dependent on migrant remittances and thus, is suffering from the Dutch disease? Dutch disease is a situation in which a booming sector adversely affects the growth and performance of other sectors of an economy. Ofreneo (2017) explains: "Some observers claim that migration is the "oil well" of the Philippines. The remittances of the 11 million or so overseas Filipino workers (OFWs), amounting to over \$30 billion a year, help sustain the growth of the economy even if our industry and agriculture are eroded and unemployment affects three million Filipinos. This is the reason some economists even call migration as the country's "Dutch disease...it is argued by some observers that our highly-successful labor migration lulls us not to do much in nurturing local industry and agriculture because remittances and jobs overseas keep the economy alive. Remittance inflows tend to spur the appreciation of the peso and weaken manufacturing at home".

Another similar concern is also raised: What are the consequences of having migrant remittances-dependent families in the Philippines? Anecdotal evidence suggests that more and more members of the migrant families in the Philippines are without work and have become totally dependent on the monthly remittances that they receive from their migrant relatives abroad.

*Feminization of international migration.* In contrast to the earlier waves of international migration from the Philippines, “Filipino women are very visible in international migration. They not only compose the majority of permanent settlers, i.e., as part of family migration, but are as prominent as men in labor migration. In fact, since 1992, females have generally outnumbered men among the newly hired land-based workers legally deployed every year. In 2015, domestic work was the top occupation for new hires, at 38 percent” (Asis, 2017). This pattern where more and more women migrate in comparison with men is popularly known as the feminization of international migration.

There are no recent estimates of how many Filipino families are without both parents or father or mother in the Philippines because they are abroad working as migrants. In 2007, Coronel and Unterreiner estimated that about 1.4 million families have mothers working abroad and around 1.2 million more have absent fathers. According to them, these figures mean that about 15% of total families then in the country have children growing up without either a father or a mother who would have ensured their care, guidance and protection. Such figures raise the concern on the adverse effects of separation of parents, especially of mothers on children and families left behind in the Philippines.

#### *Studies on Return Migration of Filipinos*

Overseas Filipinos are a diverse group and is composed of permanent emigrants, temporary migrants or OFWs and irregular migrants. Permanent residents are Filipino immigrants, legal permanent residents, and naturalized citizens of different countries. Many of them acquired the citizenship of their host countries, are professionals and spouses of nationals of the host countries. Many of them have attained affluence having had exercised their professions, established businesses or have had good paying jobs for a long time. They have also integrated well socially and culturally in their host countries. OFWs include documented land-based and sea-based workers. Their stay overseas is tied with their jobs and are expected to return to the country at the end of

their job contracts. Undocumented Filipino migrants are not properly documented or without valid residence or work permits, or who are overstaying workers or tourists in a foreign country.

Of the three groups of overseas Filipinos, the OFWs are more likely to return permanently to the Philippines when compared with permanent residents and undocumented migrants. This is due to their temporary residency status tied with their contracts and the difficulties in gaining permanent residency status or citizenship status in their destination countries like those in the Middle East where most of OFWs are working. Most of the immediate families of the OFWs are also living in the Philippines, to whom these workers would eventually permanently return to. Most of the Filipino permanent residents in the traditional emigration countries like the United States and Canada have settled and integrated well in these host countries as permanent residents or as citizens. Acquiring permanent residency or citizenship is allowed in these countries unlike in most destination countries of OFWs where the possibility of permanent residency or citizenship is difficult if not impossible. Filipino permanent residents are likely to return to visit the Philippines occasionally but are less likely to permanently return to the country especially with their immediate families with them in their host countries. The undocumented migrants with their illegal and vulnerable situation could return to Philippines but most likely in dire circumstances.

With the above-cited differences in the situation, residency status and propensity to return permanently to their home country of the different groups of overseas Filipinos, this study focused on the successful return migration of former OFWs to the Philippines.

In general, Filipino migrant workers are no different from other migrants who are ambivalent about returning to their home country. Sri Tharan (2009 as cited in Senyurekli & Menjivar, 2012) explained that Filipino migrant workers were ambivalent in returning to the Philippines out of economic and psychosocial

considerations like being able to continue sending remittances and supporting the achieved family's higher status at home.

Rodriguez and Horton (1996) found that overseas Filipinos returned to the Philippines sometime between three and six years after migrating and were significantly affected by the unemployment situation in the region of return. They concluded in their study that "the higher the unemployment rate was in the region of return, the less likely the migrant worker was to return home. The researchers also found that a 1 per cent increase in unemployment decreased the probability of return by 12–20 per cent; immigrants with permanent residence visas also had lower rates of return" (Go, 2012, p. 14).

Asis (2001 as cited in Go, 2012) listed the following reasons of women migrant returnees for their return to the Philippines: end of the contract, family reasons, including family problems, and work-related problems. It was found out that a mere 6 per cent have returned because they had achieved their goals. A big majority, about 76 per cent of the women returnees wanted to migrate and work again overseas. Yang (2006) in another study found a correlation between returning home and exchange rate. He found out that "on average, a 10 per cent improvement in the exchange rate reduced the 12-month migrant return rate by 1.4 percentage points" (Go, 2012, p.15).

Go (2012), in her own separate rapid appraisal study of return migration and reintegration, described that the return to the country of Filipino migrant workers was not a free and voluntary choice and decision. "They were forced to return for various reasons, such as labor exploitation, physical abuse, deportation, personal illness or family-related matters (such as illness or death in the family). All agreed that had circumstances not made it necessary for them to return, they would have wanted to continue working abroad" (p. 22).

Yu (2015) studied the changes with and challenges faced by Filipino migrant returnees upon return and their return's impact to their communities. The study found significant changes in the personal identities and social behavior of

migrant returnees upon return except for their high regard to family ties and religion which have remained the same if not stronger. Some returnees faced discrimination and/or misjudgment, dealt with unemployment and were challenged by the stark difference between the socio-economic development of their former host countries and the Philippines. Yu noted positive effects of returnees to the communities, noteworthy of which is their contributions to their communities' socioeconomic development. Likewise, some negative effects of returnees were also observed like exhibited attitudes of arrogance and practices of materialism and overindulgence of children, among others.

Dizon-Anonuevo (2002 in Dizon Anonuevo & Anonuevo, 2002) cited the requisites of successful reintegration based on interviews of Filipino migrant returnees and discussions with government and non-government organizations involved in reintegration: "(1). Migration must be a family decision. The whole family must set the goals and time frame of migration; (2) While working abroad, OFWs must save money and acquire skills for future investments. They should also be in constant communication with the families they left behind; (3) The OFW family must have responsible caretakers for the children, contribute to the family income and maintain regular communication with the migrant; (4) During the return phase, a reintegration program must be implemented in the communities; (5). Throughout the three phases of migration, the national and local governments, NGOs and other sectors of the community must provide a favorable environment for reintegration" (p. 145).

Senyurekli and Menjivar (2012) observed that return migration has received attention in the past but research interest on it has waned or "has been somewhat subsumed under the general rubric of transnational studies of migration..." (p. 1). An extensive review of literature by Carling, Mortensen and Wu (2011) revealed the scarcity of recent return migration studies, both at the



international level and in the Philippines. Exceptional was the return migration of Mexicans from the United States which was covered by many publications. Many of the studies focused on the demographics of return, individual reasons, and micro and macro level factors that influence the decision to return. Not much has been done in understanding the experiences of return and the situation of migrant returnees. Obviously, the topic of successful return is barely touched by the studies on return migration. It is in this light that this phenomenological research on the successful return migration of Filipino migrants become more important and relevant.

# **Chapter III. Transcendental Phenomenology and the Study of the Phenomenon of Successful Return Migration of Filipinos**

The study employed transcendental phenomenology to ferret out the essences of the successful return migration of Filipinos. This chapter explains why Moustakas' transcendental phenomenology was employed for this study. The chapter does the following: 1) differentiates phenomenology from other qualitative research designs; and 2) discusses the core processes of Moustakas' transcendental phenomenology towards the derivation of knowledge.

## **A. Phenomenology and Other Qualitative Research Designs**

### *1. Major Research Approaches*

Sociologists and other social scientists conduct empirical studies using any of the three major research approaches--- positivist, interpretive, or critical approaches. These approaches are fundamentally different in terms of their ontology (view of social reality) and epistemology (what is knowledge and how it is created).

Ontologically, the positivist approach views social reality as an objective and a material reality. There exist physical and social worlds out there, the laws and patterns of which are to be discovered and understood. Epistemologically, the positivist approach asserts that knowledge is derived from what is observed and measured. Ideas about the social reality are validated and proven correct when they exist and are observed. "Positivism emphasizes the

quantifiability and predictability of mental and behavioral processes. Models and methods from the natural sciences are frequently applied to the study of human affairs" (Israel, 1999).

The critical approach like positivism views social reality as a material and objective world. But it is a world characterized by exploitation and domination. Knowledge is derived from empirical investigation of the world. The proponents of the critical approach seek to change the social world for the better. "Critical research ontology, like interpretive ontology, views human behavior from the standpoint of meanings and intentions, but it also emphasizes people as creators of action. It assumes that people and organizations have norms and strategies that dictate regular patterns of behavior and performance. Those patterns can become dysfunctional when beliefs and actions become contradictory. Its epistemological view is that knowledge is the result of past attempts to deal with problematic situations. Knowledge is therefore gained by acting on beliefs and this is how we construct our own reality. Critical research does not separate theory from practice and empirical theory from normative theory" (Israel, 1999, p. 1).

The interpretive approach views social reality as a product of fluid definitions of situations created by human actors in interaction and maintains that knowledge about this world is produced by understanding and describing the meaningful social actions that individuals make (Neuman, 2011). Interpretive ontology views reality as subjective reality. "Its epistemology requires that the researcher be much closer to the situation to, in effect, interpret life through the human experience. In fact, the scientific process is really an engagement between the researcher and participant(s)... It says our knowledge of the world is constrained by conceptual frameworks and language that have been learned, and only through acting on our beliefs do we gain real knowledge. It rejects positivist type causal explanations and seeks rather to understand the human situation through meanings, intentions and actions. Rather than the

positivist emphasis on what is generalizable and universal, interpretive epistemology focuses on what is unique and particular about each and every human situation" (Israel, 1999, pp. 2-3).

## *2. Phenomenology and Its Variants*

Phenomenological research belongs to the interpretive approach in understanding social reality. The primary objective of a phenomenological research is to "explicate the meaning, structure, and essence of the lived experiences of a person, or a group of people, around a specific phenomenon" (Simon & Goes, n.d.). A phenomenological study taking in an emic perspective seeks to understand a phenomenon through the eyes of the study participants themselves.

The phenomenological design in qualitative research has two variants, namely, hermeneutic phenomenology and transcendental phenomenology. Hermeneutic phenomenology seeks not only a description of the lived experiences of people but a researcher's interpretation of the meaning of those lived experiences (van Manen, 1990, p.26). It is both descriptive and interpretive in its approach about a phenomenon experienced by people. Transcendental phenomenology is focused more on describing the individual experiences from a viewpoint of a detached observer rather than the observer interpreting these experiences of the phenomenon. In addition, in transcendental phenomenology, the researcher employs "*epoche* in which the investigator sets aside as much as possible his or her experiences [or prejudice] to take a fresh perspective of the phenomenon under examination" (Creswell et al., 2005, p. 254).

### 3. Phenomenology and Other Qualitative Research Designs

Qualitative social science researchers employ the following research designs: narrative research, case study, grounded theory, phenomenology and participatory action research. Creswell, Hanson, Clark & Morales (2007) differentiated these research designs in Table 2, in terms of the type of research problem best suited for each one of them, the academic discipline from which they originated, the data collection methods they commonly employ, the methods of data analysis they use and the degree of structure in their research methods.

Table 2 Contrasting Characteristics of Five Qualitative Research Designs

<b>Characteristic</b>	<b>Narrative research</b>	<b>Case study</b>	<b>Grounded Theory</b>	<b>Phenomenology</b>	<b>Participatory Action Research</b>
Type of problem best suited for design	When detailed stories help understand the problem	When researcher has a case bounded by time or place that can inform a problem	When no theory exists or existing theories are inadequate	When the researcher seeks to understand the lived experiences of persons about a phenomenon	When a community issue needs to be addressed so that change can occur
Discipline background	Humanities	Psychology, law, political science, medicine	Sociology	Psychology, education	Philosophy, broadly in the social sciences
Data collection forms	Interviews, documents	Multiple forms: interviews, observations, documents, artifacts	Primarily interviews	Primarily interviews, although documents, observations, and art may also be considered	Depends on the community needs; can be both quantitative and qualitative

<b>Characteristic</b>	<b>Narrative research</b>	<b>Case study</b>	<b>Grounded Theory</b>	<b>Phenomenology</b>	<b>Participatory Action Research</b>
Data analysis strategies	Chronology, elements of a story, restorying	Description of the case and themes of the case as well as cross-case themes	Open coding, axial coding, selective coding	Bracketing, statements, meaning units or themes, textual description, structural description, essence of the phenomenon	Involve the community in decisions as to how to analyze the data
Degree of structure in methods	Little set structure	Some structure	High level of structure depending on "camp"	Structured approach in data analysis	Little set structure

Source: Creswell, Hanson, Clark & Morales (2007), pp. 241-242

Phenomenology was a philosophy that originated in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Its primary objective was "...the direct investigation and description of phenomena as consciously experienced, without theories about their causal explanation and as free as possible from unexamined preconceptions and presuppositions" (<https://www.britannica.com/topic/phenomenology#ref560935>). Husserl, considered as the father of phenomenology, influenced the growth and development of phenomenology. "... (All) those who consider themselves phenomenologists subscribe...to his watchword, *zu den Sachen selbst* ("to the things themselves"), by which they meant the taking of a fresh approach to concretely experienced phenomena---an approach as free as possible from conceptual presuppositions---and the attempt to describe them as faithfully as possible" (<https://www.britannica.com/topic/phenomenology#ref560935>).

Data primarily come from participants who experience the phenomenon themselves. It is the firm belief of transcendental phenomenologists that is the individual that "...knows himself more profoundly than anyone else, it is imperative that he be allowed to tell his story without outside persuasion, input,

or counsel" (Baker, 2012, p. 58). Phenomenology "does not begin with pre-existing theories, nor does it test hypotheses, and it does not explain human experience with reference to neurological or environmental causes. Instead, phenomenology aims to describe "what the experience (under investigation) is," including the modes of apprehension and the significance of the lived situations" (Wetz, n.d., p. 2).

Narrative research is a research design in which "narrative is understood as a spoken or written text giving an account of an event/action or series of events/actions, chronologically connected" (Czarniawska, 2004, p. 17). A narrative research normally focuses on one or two individuals, collect their stories, write their individual experiences, and order the meaning of those experiences chronologically (Creswell, Hanson, Clark & Morales, 2007).

Wertz (n.d.) pointed out that "(w)hereas phenomenology finds meanings inherent in the intentional structure of both verbal and non-verbal lived experience, narrative researchers tend to view meaning as originating in words... Phenomenologists attempt to suspend their preconceptions and seek access to the phenomena themselves, whereas narrative researchers self-consciously employ a variety of heuristic frameworks such as feminism and psychoanalysis in interpretation" (p. 30).

Case study research is a qualitative design in which the researcher analyzes case or cases (e.g. individual, multiple individuals, program, activity) "over time through detailed, in-depth data collection involving multiple sources of information (e.g., observations, interviews, audiovisual material, and documents and reports) and reports a case description and case-based themes" (Creswell, Hanson, Clark & Morales, 2007, p. 245). Case studies focus on an issue with the case(s) selected to provide an understanding of an issue.

While case study research deals with cases, phenomenological research deals with concrete experiences. Phenomenological research “aims at knowledge of their essence, that is, what these experiences are, what they are examples of” (Wertz, n.d., p. 3). Phenomenological research “draws not only on the examination of empirical or factual examples of the phenomenon under investigation but employs the procedure of free imaginative variation of examples which enables the researcher to recognize what makes individual experiences examples of (a phenomenon), that is, the invariant, essential or universal features that make (the phenomenon),...what it is” (Wertz, n.d., p.3).

Grounded theory is that research design in which the researcher seeks a general explanation of an action, process, interaction or an event. Creswell, Hanson, Clark & Morales (2007) pointed out that “in contrast to the *a priori*, theoretical orientations in sociology, grounded theorists held that theories should be grounded in data from the field, especially in the actions, interactions, and social processes of people” (p. 249).

Wertz (n.d.) clearly pointed out the essential differences between grounded theory and phenomenology: “Although both phenomenological research and grounded theory begin with concrete instances of human experience and attend very meticulously to their moment by moment unfolding, phenomenological analysis remains descriptive and does not construct a theoretical model that yields hypotheses, as does grounded theory. Phenomenology’s reflective, eidetic analysis does not “code” data, employ inductive logic, emphasize the frequency of themes, or explain experience by means of functional relations of variables outside immediate experience... Grounded theory assumes that meaning must be constructed, hence, the importance of theory. Phenomenology views experience as always already meaningfully organized and therefore intrinsically intelligible without theory, only in need of descriptive conceptualization” (p. 27).



Participatory Action Research (PAR) is also called action research. It is that research design that seeks to improve and change the lives of individuals and communities by studying the problems that they are confronted with. "Thus, the intention of action research is to produce change and solve social problems" (Creswell, Hanson, Clark & Morales, 2007, p. 257).

Phenomenological research, obviously, does not seek to institute changes in the lives of people and communities as PAR does; it aims to understand the essences and structures of lived experiences of people.

## **B. Core Processes of Moustakas' Transcendental Phenomenology Towards the Derivation of Knowledge**

Moustakas and other proponents of transcendental phenomenology were inspired and influenced by Husserl's ideas of experiential structures of embodiment, intentionality and life world. The concept of experiential structure of embodiment puts emphasis on the people's experiences as the focus of phenomenology. Intentionality speaks of the need to understand the individual consciousness and individual experiences while the lifeworld refers to the immediate experiences, activities and relationships that make up the world of the individual (Moerer-Urdahl & Creswell, 2004).

Moustaka's transcendental phenomenology provides a systematic, thorough, deliberate and detailed set of processes and procedures in deriving knowledge from a full description of the lived experiences of people in relation to the phenomenon under study. Inspired and influenced by Husserl, Moustakas (1994) named four processes and steps in conducting phenomenological research. These are 1) epoche; 2) phenomenological reduction; 3) imaginative variation; and 4) synthesis of meanings and essences.

## *1. Epoche*

The first process in conducting transcendental phenomenology as advocated by Moustakas is the researcher's conduct of epoche. Epoche is a Greek word which means to refrain from judgement. It is an approach taken at the start of the study and maintained at the very end that entails the setting aside of all prejudgments about the phenomenon. Documenting the researcher's ideas and experiences with the phenomenon under study is done to remove the possible biases from the research process and to direct the focus of the researcher only on the participants' views and lived experiences.

Moustakas (1994) viewed epoche "as a preparation for deriving new knowledge but also an experience in itself, a process of setting aside predilections, prejudices, predispositions, and allowing things, events, and people to enter anew into consciousness, and to look and see them again, as if for the first time" (p.100). Moustakas further explained the epoche process: "What is doubted are the scientific "facts", the knowing of things in advance, from an external base rather than from internal reflection and meaning" (p. 100). Moerer-Urdahl and Cresswell (2004) added that "(r)eferences to others, their perceptions and judgments must be put aside to achieve epoche and only the researcher's perceptions are retained as indicators of knowledge meaning and truth" (p. 7).

Epoche is "the pure state of being for fresh perceiving and experiencing" (Moustakas, 1994, p.102). Through the process of epoche, the researcher will be able to see and treat the phenomenon in a fresh perspective. Moustakas asserted that epoche is necessary in the conduct of phenomenological studies where "scientific investigation is valid when knowledge is arrived at through descriptions that make possible an understanding of the meanings and essences of experience" (p. 99). According to him, "although epoche is rarely perfectly achieved, the process significantly reduces the influence of preconceived thoughts, judgements and biases" (p. 104) and thus, enabling

researchers “to create new ideas, new feelings, new awareness and understandings” (p. 101).

Epoche is practiced at the very beginning of the research, during data collection and data analyses phases. This is to ensure that at no given time, the researcher's viewpoints and interpretations interfere in the unraveling of the essences, meanings and structures of the phenomenon as experienced by people.

## *2. Phenomenological Reduction*

The second process in conducting Moustakas' transcendental phenomenology is phenomenological reduction. The task of phenomenological reduction is “that of describing in textural language just what one sees. The process involves a pre-reflective description of things just as they appear and a reduction to what is horizontal and thematic” (Moustakas, 1994, p.105).

In phenomenological reduction, Moustakas (1994) stated that “(t)he phenomenon is perceived and described in its totality, in a fresh and open way” (p. 49). He added: “The whole process of reducing toward what is texturally meaningful and essential in its phenomenal and experiential components depends on competent and clear reflectiveness, on ability to attend, recognize and describe with clarity. Reflection becomes more exact and fuller with continuing attention and perception with continued looking with the adding of new perspectives” (p.108).

The outcome of phenomenological reduction according to Moustakas is a complete textural description of the experience—where “...qualities are recognized and described, every perception is granted equal value, non-repetitive constituents of the experience are linked thematically and full

description is derived" (p.111). A textural description according to him is "a full description of ...conscious experience..." "and includes feelings, examples, ideas, situations that portray what comprises the experience" (p. 62). By committing to descriptions of experiences, not explanations and analyses, the researcher remains true and faithful to what was experienced and not interpret nor provide explanations for people's experiences.

Being true to what people experienced is important because errors can be committed in understanding their experiences. Giorgi (2008) wrote: "Many experiential errors are committed when current experiences provoke associations with former experiences and then are subsumed under the latter as identical whereas they may be only similar, and the differences could be important. Thus, Husserl recommends that one examines the ongoing experience very carefully before relating it to other similar experiences or to relevant knowledge gained in other ways. Similarly, one often imagines that a situation is in fact exactly the way that one experienced it only to discover later that that was not the case. So, Husserl wants to limit our epistemological claim to the way that an event was experienced rather than allow for leaping to the claim that the event really was the way it was experienced. To make the latter claim is to make an existential or reality affirmation rather than staying within the confines of experience. To limit oneself to experiential claims is to stay within the phenomenal realm" (p. 3).

Moustakas outlined the following steps of phenomenological reduction: (Note: The steps are numbered for clarity.)

1. "Bracketing, focus of the research is placed in brackets, everything else is set aside so that the research process is rooted solely on the topic and question;
2. Horizontalizing, every statement is initially treated as having equal value."
3. Later, statements irrelevant to the topic and question as well as those that are repetitive or overlapping are deleted, leaving only the Horizons (the textural meanings and invariant constituents of the phenomenon);

4. Clustering the Horizons into Themes" and
5. Organizing the Horizons and Themes into a Coherent Textural Description of the Phenomenon" (p. 112).

Bracketing is a part of the larger process of epoche. Bracketing an experience/experiences around a phenomenon means focusing on them to the detriment of others. This leads to horizontalization which means deleting insignificant statements/experiences, thoughts and actions, and leaving only those which are significant and related to the phenomenon. These statements of experiences that describe and or are related to the phenomenon (horizons) are left for consideration. These horizons are then clustered in to meaningful themes. Lastly, these themes of the experiences are used to make a textural description of the lived experiences of the phenomenon, the outcome of the process of phenomenological reduction.

### *3. Imaginative Variation*

From the textural descriptions of the experiences obtained from phenomenological reduction, the structural description of the experiences is obtained. Using "imagination, varying frames of reference, and approaching the phenomenon from different perspectives", the process of imaginative variation seeks "to arrive at structural descriptions of an experience, the underlying and precipitating factors that account for what is being experienced; in other words, the "how' that speaks to conditions that illuminate the "what" of experience" (Moustakas, 1994, p.112).

Moustakas pointed out that in the imaginative variation phase of phenomenological research, "the structures of the experience are revealed; these are the conditions that must exist for something to appear" (p.113). The steps of imaginative variation are the following:

1. "Systematic varying of possible structural meanings that underlie the textural meanings;
2. Recognizing the underlying themes or contexts that account for the emergence of the phenomenon;
3. Considering the universal structures that precipitate feelings, and thoughts regarding the phenomenon, such as the structure of time, space, bodily concerns, materiality, causality, relation to self, or relation to others;
4. Searching for exemplifications that vividly illustrate the invariant structural themes and facilitate the development of a structural description of the phenomenon" (pp.113-114).

A structural description which identifies and highlights the underlying and precipitating factors of the experiences of the phenomenon (i.e. the actions and circumstances that brought about the phenomenon) is the outcome of the process of imaginative variation.

#### *4. Synthesis of Meanings and Essences*

Phenomenological research ultimately "seeks meanings from appearances and arrives at essences through intuition and reflection on conscious acts of experience leading to ideas, concepts, judgments and understandings" (Moustakas, 1994, p. 73). By essence is meant "which is common or universal, the condition or quality without which a thing would not be what it is" (Husserl, 1931 as cited in Moustakas. 1994, p. 115). From the individual experiences of the phenomenon, what are common and shared are identified, the logic being, is that the essence of the phenomenon is manifested in the common experiences. Phenomenologists, more precisely refer to these as invariant experiences, invariant meanings attached to the experiences and invariant structures and circumstances that brought about the phenomenon. These all constitute the essence of the phenomenon.

Thus, the last process in transcendental phenomenology is the “intuitive integration of the fundamental textural and structural descriptions into a unified statement of the essences of the experience of the phenomenon as a whole” (p.115). From the textural and structural descriptions of many individuals’ experiences with the phenomenon, a composite description is arrived at. By synthesizing the textural and structural descriptions, the meanings of the experiences/phenomenon and the important factors that brought about the phenomenon that constitute the essences of the experiences/phenomenon are laid to bare. According to Moustakas, the description of the essence of any phenomenon is never totally achieved. To him, the unified and composite statement arrived at the end of a phenomenological research “represents the essences at a particular time and place from the vantage point of an individual researcher following an exhaustive imaginative and reflective study of the phenomenon” (p.115).

To speak of the process of synthesis of textural and structural descriptions seem a mechanical process and do not involve much imagination, reflection and intuition on the part of the researcher in ferreting out the essences of the phenomenon. The concept of eidetic reduction process as enunciated by Husserl helps to understand how the essences of the phenomenon are ferreted out. Here in this study, as it is also used in the literature, eidetic reduction is synonymous to imaginative variation or a form of imaginative variation.

Eidetic comes from the Greek word *eidos* which means “image,” “form,” or “shape”, “essence” of things”. Eidetic reduction is a Husserlian technique which eliminates the surface appearances “...to identify the essential components of the given phenomenon or experience. For each kind of phenomenon or experience, phenomenologists ask what the unique and essential components that make the phenomenon or the experience unique, distinguishable from all other kinds of phenomena or experiences.” ([http://www.newworldencyclopedia.org/entry/Eidetic\\_reduction](http://www.newworldencyclopedia.org/entry/Eidetic_reduction)). It is a

*Wessenschau*, a way of grasping the essence or the intuition of essences and essential structures (<https://www.britannica.com/topic/phenomenology#ref560935>).

Intuition employed by phenomenology is different from interpretation, often used by positivist science. Intuition is perceiving, reflecting and conceiving the essences of a phenomenon as it appears to others in their lived experiences. Interpretation uses one's own perspective or a theoretical perspective or a conceptual frame in explaining a phenomenon.

In sum, the knowledge derived from transcendental phenomenology is the essence of a phenomenon as lived by a select group of people. To ferret out the essences of the phenomenon—its invariant meanings and the structural components that constitute it—transcendental phenomenologists undertake the methodological processes of *epoche*, phenomenological reduction, imaginative variation, and synthesis of meanings and essences and eidetic reduction.

The processes of transcendental phenomenology (from phenomenological reduction to imaginative variation and eidetic reduction) is vividly described by Moustakas as follows: "Through perceptions we fulfill the requirements of bracketing and phenomenological reduction and are able to develop full textural descriptions. As the reflective process becomes more pronounced and needed, the focus of attention shift from percept to concept, from texture to structure, from what is immediate to possible meanings...Perceptions bring textural descriptions to life, in explicating the "what" of our experience; whereas reflection and conceptualization ferret out undisclosed meanings" (Moustakas, 1994, p. 96).

These methodological processes and their outcomes are summarized in Table 3. These processes guided this study which led ultimately to the identification



of essence of the phenomenon of successful return migration---its meanings and structures.

Table 3 Processes and Outcomes of Moustakas' Transcendental Phenomenology

Processes	Outcomes
<p><b>Epoche:</b> setting aside of preconceived notions, a priori explanations and the like that will unduly influence how phenomenon and lived experiences are perceived and understood</p>	<p><b>Descriptions and analysis of lived experiences of the phenomenon</b> that make possible an understanding of the meanings and essences of the experiences or phenomenon</p>
<p><b>Phenomenological Reduction:</b> perceptual and pre-reflective description of experiences and phenomenon; involves bracketing, horizontalizing and clustering the horizons of the experiences into meaningful themes</p>	<p><b>Textural description of the experiences</b>—understanding of what were experienced; description of features and constituents of the phenomenon</p>
<p><b>Imaginative Variation:</b> use of conceptual imagination and reflection, viewing phenomenon from different perspectives and frames of reference</p>	<p><b>Structural description of the experiences</b>---meanings and underlying and precipitating factors and conditions that account for the emergence of the phenomenon</p>
<p><b>Synthesis of Meanings and Essences:</b> integration of textural and structural descriptions of the experiences; uses reflection and conceptualization (eidetic reduction) to discover veiled meanings and structures of the phenomenon</p>	<p><b>Identification of the essences of the phenomenon</b>---invariant meanings attached to the experiences and structural components that constitute the phenomenon</p>

### C. Appropriateness of Transcendental Phenomenological Research Design in Studying the Successful Return Migration of Filipinos

This study sought to describe the essences of the return and reintegration experiences of overseas Filipinos. Instead of employing the positivist approach which would rely on the researcher's own interpretation of the experiences of

migrant returnees, I deemed it appropriate to use the interpretive approach and employ a phenomenological research design. Phenomenology explains a phenomenon by taking in the views and experiences of those who have experienced the phenomenon. Their very own experiences, views and insights are enough to explicate the phenomenon of successful return migration. No *a priori* theoretical frame is necessary to understand the phenomenon of successful return migration. I maintain, that the phenomenon of successful return migration can only be fully understood through the lived experiences of migrants who have successfully returned. They alone could verbalize the meanings and essences that they attach to their successful return migration experience.

This study adopted the transcendental phenomenological design for it is most appropriate especially when it comes to addressing a small group of participants who shared the same experience (Moerer-Urdahl & Creswell, 2004), in this case, the experiences of few migrants who have successfully returned to the Philippines. Transcendental phenomenology was employed to understand and explain the phenomenon of return migration as lived by a select group of migrant returnees. By transcendental is meant that "...everything is perceived freshly, as if for the first time" which results in acquiring knowledge derived not from preconceived notions but from the meanings and essence of the lived experiences of people (Moustakas, 1994, p.34). From the various accounts of individuals who have experienced the phenomenon, transcendental phenomenology seeks to describe a composite and integrated description of these experiences. That means, identifying their shared/common experiences related to the phenomenon. With the use of transcendental phenomenology, the "what" and the "how" of Filipino migrants' successful return migration experiences were drawn and described. The final outcome of this study was a composite and integrated description of the participants' lived experiences about successfully returning to the Philippines. This composite description of the lived experiences of successful

Filipino migrant returnees, in turn, led to an understanding of the meanings and essences of the phenomenon of successful return migration.

Further, this study adopted Moustaka's transcendental phenomenology for it provides a systematic, thorough, deliberate and detailed set of procedures in deriving knowledge from a full description of the lived experiences of people. Moustakas also provided a systematic conduct of phenomenological data analysis.

# Chapter IV. Research Methodology

The methodology section of this dissertation is divided into the following sections: A. Selection of and Profile of Participants of the Study; B. Methods of Data Collection; C. Researcher's Epoche; and D. Stages, Steps and Procedures Undertaken in Conducting Phenomenological Data Analysis.

## A. Selection of and Profile of Participants of the Study

### *1. Selection of Participants*

Like any other qualitative research, this study employed purposive sampling. In purposive sampling, participants are selected based on the "criteria relevant to the particular research question...Sample sizes, which may or may not be fixed prior to data collection, depend on the resources and time available, as well as the study's objectives. Purposive sample sizes are often determined based on theoretical saturation (the point in data collection when new data no longer bring additional insights to the research questions)" (Mack, Woodsong, MacQueen, Guest & Namey, 2005, p. 6). This study employed maximum variation (purposive) sampling. In maximum variation sampling, participants of the study are selected to ensure "a wide range of variation on the dimensions of interest", the purpose of which is "to document diverse variations" and identify common patterns that cut across variations" (Bricki & Green, n.d., p. 10).

In accordance with purposive sampling procedure, this study limited its selection of participants to those who have successfully returned to the Philippines. Furthermore, to ensure maximum variation, participants were purposively selected in terms of previous occupation as migrants and in terms of sex. This allowed the study to examine different return migration experiences of different occupational groups and sexes of Filipino migrant returnees.

Successful overseas Filipino migrant returnees who were initially selected as participants of the study were those 1) who were born in the Philippines and have returned permanently to the country; 2) who have worked and lived in another country other than the Philippines in a short or long period of time as an OFW; and 3) who have been regarded and endorsed by a government or a private institution or an NGO involved in migration and development work that after their return to the Philippines as a) having been 'successful' in their chosen economic undertaking; b) have been leading a stable and happy family life; and c) have integrated well and regarded as good citizens in the community where they presently live.

The Overseas Workers Welfare Administration (OWWA) and Atikha Overseas Workers and Communities Initiative, Inc. (Atikha) were sought to help in the initial selection of 'successful' returnees. OWWA is a government agency under the Department of Labor and Employment in the Philippines. It is tasked to implement various programs to protect and promote the interests and welfare of OFWs and their families by providing legal services, training, loans and other forms of assistance. Together with another agency attached to it, the National Reintegration Center for OFWs (NRCO), OWWA is embarking on a reintegration program for returning Filipino migrants. OWWA annually awards outstanding overseas Filipino workers and families. Atikha Overseas Workers and Communities Initiative, Inc. (Atikha), an NGO implements migration and development projects in about 10 provinces in the Philippines and among overseas Filipinos in about four countries of destination.

Initial lists of possible participants were drawn from OWWA National Office and its regional offices in National Capital Region, and Region IV-A. OWWA conducts an annual search for Most Outstanding OFW Family Awardees (MOFYA) at the regional and national levels. A total of 34 MOFYA regional and two national awardees are recognized yearly since 2005. The criteria for the selection of the regional and national awardees are wholesomeness, strength

and solidarity of the family, success in their education and profession, success in business and financial management and civic or community involvement or leadership. Not all families who were awarded though had migrant returnees as members, many have family members who are still working abroad. Only the migrant returnees from the OWWA's list of family awardees were considered for the final selection of the study's participants.

Atikha was asked to come up with its own list of outstanding migrant returnees. The NGO has continuously worked with local government units, migrant associations, migrant returnee and family organizations and is thus capable of identifying possible participants of the study. The initial long list drawn from the lists of OWWA and Atikha were further reduced by subjecting the possible participants to the other selection criteria discussed in the next paragraph. Availability and consent of the possible participants also naturally reduced the initial long list.

Initially, years of stay in the country was set as a restricting inclusion criterion, only overseas Filipino returnees who have continuously stayed in the Philippines for more than five years would be considered as participants of the study. The period of five years of stay in the country would indicate semblance of 'permanency'. However, this criterion was set aside for some of the participants have returned to the Philippines for less than five years but despite that have been regarded as successful in their return by OWWA, Atikha and people who have recommended them. I decided to relax this initially set criterion and included those who have returned to the country for less than five years. It turned out that these migrant returnees have prepared well for their return and have invested in the Philippines even when they were still abroad.

Two demographic criteria were set in the final selection of participants such as sex (ensuring an equivalent number of males and females), occupation while abroad as an OFW (ensuring an equivalent number of professionals, skilled and

non-skilled workers, domestic helpers and seafarers). The two demographic criteria reflect the heterogeneity of OFW migrant returnees and are of utility in understanding the varied array of return migration experiences of migrant Filipinos.

A total of 30 migrant returnees participated in the study (7 domestic helpers, 7 seafarers, 8 workers and 8 professionals). Initially, a maximum of 24 and a minimum of 16 participants was targeted. This target was examined and later enlarged to include more participants during the period of data collection. Additional participants were added to have more variety in terms of work experience (different professions and type of skilled and semi-skilled work), countries of destination and current provinces of residence. Specifically, migrants who worked from other countries other than Saudi Arabia (who dominated those who were earlier interviewed) were added. Professionals other than engineers (who were dominant among those earlier interviewed) and factory workers were added as participants. More participants who are currently residing in the provinces of Visayas and Mindanao islands were added for there were already participants from the island of Luzon. (The Philippines is composed of three major island groupings, namely Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao.)

With 30 participants interviewed, I felt that I had drawn enough yet varied experiences and following the principle of theoretical saturation stopped adding more participants. The sample size of 30 enabled the study to draw and compare the successful return experiences of various groupings of returnees based on sex and previous overseas profession and occupation. The sample size that incorporated the described inclusion criteria above is reflected in the sampling grid in Table 4.

Table 4 Sample of the Study

	Work/Occupation				
	Professionals	Factory/Service Workers	Domestic Helpers (DHs)	Seafarers	Total
Males	4	4	0	7	15
Females	4	4	7	0	15
Total	8	8	7	7	30

The Filipino domestic household worker or domestic helper population is largely female while the seafarer population is largely male. These characteristic compositions are reflected in the sample size of the study where DHs interviewed were all women and seafarers were all men. An equivalent number of male and female professionals and workers were engaged in this study to ensure an equivalent number of men and women participants of the study.

The participants did not come from a specific location in the Philippines. The successful migrant returnees are currently residing and working in the different provinces of the Philippines. Location was not an exclusion criterion in the selection of participants. I made sure that the participants come from the different provinces in the Philippines. Marital status was also not seen as an exclusion criterion and was regarded to have contributed to the differences in experiences of the migrant returnees.

The 30 participants were engaged through the following means:

- referred by Atikha: 13 participants
- pursued from the regional and national lists of MOFYA Awardees: 5 participants
- referred by government agencies (OWWA regional offices, National Reintegration Center for OFWs (NRCO), Provincial Migration and Development Committee): 5 participants
- referred by study participants themselves: 3 participants



- referred by a colleague in the University of the Philippines - Los Banos (UPLB): 1 participant
- asked after their talks in an OWWA event awarding outstanding women: 2 participants
- referred by an Atikha training participant: 1 participant

Two individuals I interviewed were not included in the study. One was not considered in the study because during the interview, she had misgivings to be interviewed because she did not consider her return as successful. The participants of the study confidently regarded themselves as successful migrant returnees. Another one was scrapped from the list of participants because she only stayed abroad for months as she was a victim of trafficking and immediately returned to the country.

## 2. Profile of the Participants

Table 5 shows the characteristics of the participants of the study. As shown in the table, the study drew various experiences of return migration by engaging former OFW participants with different characteristics and backgrounds. I engaged the participation of migrant returnees of different educational background, of varied occupations before, during and after migration, of different lengths of time working abroad and lengths of time of permanent return, from different countries where they worked as migrants and from different provinces in the Philippines where they returned permanently.

Table 5 Profile of Participants of the Study

Name	Age	Sex	Educational Attainment	Occupation Before Migration	Occupation Abroad/ Country of Work/ Years Abroad	Occupation Upon Return	Town, City/Province/ Major Island of Residence/ Years of Permanent Return
1. Jaime Sequio	64	M	college graduate Marine Engineering	assistant to the manager of a fire protection company	worked in fire protection maintenance	owner of 10-room hotel in Guimaras; former	Guimaras (Visayas)

Name	Age	Sex	Educational Attainment	Occupation Before Migration	Occupation Abroad/ Country of Work/ Years Abroad	Occupation Upon Return	Town, City/Province/ Major Island of Residence/ Years of Permanent Return
					Kingdom of Saudi Arabia  19 years	municipal councilor	17 years
2. Rebecca Tubong-bana	54	F	college graduate  BS Chemistry	private high school teacher	household service worker  Hong Kong  6 years	CEO of McNester, a mango and other fruit processing company	Guimaras  (Visayas)  26 years
3. Herminigildo Dalida	67	M	college graduate  Marine Engineering	able bodied seaman/ apprentice	seafarer (Chief Engineer)  42 years	farmer-businessman, owner of 20-ha. farm	Pototan, Iloilo  (Visayas)  3 years
4. Sofronio Dumael	60	M	college graduate  Marine Engineering	engaged in family business	Seafarer (Fourth Engineer)   4 years	businessman, feeds, carton packages, grocery store, rental of business spaces of a commercial building	Alfonso, Cavite  (Luzon)  31 years
5. Gilbert Barrera	36	M	high school graduate	sewer in a factory	skilled worker (sewer)  Brunei  7 years	owner and manager of three sewing plants	Naic, Cavite  (Luzon)  13 years
6. Rodolfo Tubis	64	M	college graduate  BS Civil Engineering	Mechanical engineer	Engineer  Kingdom of Saudi Arabia  6 years	businessman, trucking, farming	Lipa City, Batangas  (Luzon)  22 years
7. Loreto Soriano	61	M	high school graduate	telephone operator/manager of RCPI, radio communications company	Skilled Worker (telephone operator?)  Kingdom of Saudi Arabia  6 years	owns three companies; 1 manpower agency, 2 IT companies	Manila  (Luzon)  33 years
8. Leah Estuye	42	F	college graduate	public school teacher	teacher in an international school	education program specialist	Legazpi City  (Luzon)

Name	Age	Sex	Educational Attainment	Occupation Before Migration	Occupation Abroad/ Country of Work/ Years Abroad	Occupation Upon Return	Town, City/Province/ Major Island of Residence/ Years of Permanent Return
			BS Education		Indonesia 2 years		9 years
9. Oscar Ricaflanca	75	M	college graduate	manager in a radio company	radio officer/steward  22 years	former barangay captain. Officer of senior citizen associations	Oriental Mindoro  (Luzon)  17 years
10. Myrna Padilla	57	F	3rd year high school	domestic helper in different households	household service worker  Singapore, Hong Kong  20 years	CEO of Mynd Services, a BPO company	Davao City  (Mindanao)  12 years
11. Francisco Aguilar	60	M	college graduate  BS Mechanical Engineering	University instructor	Mechanical Engineer  Saudi Arabia  13 years	CEO of 3 companies;  chief of staff of a party-list congressman	Quezon City  (Luzon)  20 years
12. Amy Aranja	53	F	high school graduate	vendor	Domestic helper  Bahrain, Saudi Arabia  9 years	no work; takes care of her grandchildren	San Pablo City, Laguna  (Luzon)  9 years
13. Edwin Itable	60	M	college graduate  Marine Engineering	able bodied seaman/ apprentice	Ship Captain  16 years	owner of a training school for ship officers	Manila  (Luzon)  28 years
14. Rodolfo Aspillaga	62	M	college graduate  Marine Engineering	able bodied seaman/ apprentice	Ship Captain  15 years	manager, training school for ship officers	Manila  (Luzon)  28 years
15. Jose Dasas	59	M	college graduate  Marine Engineering	able bodied seaman/ apprentice	First Engineer  17 years	owner of three buildings, bicycle business, distributor of SMC products	Makati City  (Luzon)  24 years
16. Ermie Garon	51	F	college graduate  BS Engineering	housewife	Engineer  Palau, Micronesia	engineer and contractor	Tarlac  (Luzon)

Name	Age	Sex	Educational Attainment	Occupation Before Migration	Occupation Abroad/ Country of Work/ Years Abroad	Occupation Upon Return	Town, City/Province/ Major Island of Residence/ Years of Permanent Return
					10 years		14 years
17. Divine Beloso	58	F	college graduate  BS Education	teacher	Domestic helper  Singapore, Italy  5 years	teacher, engages in buy and sell	Mabini, Batangas  (Luzon)  6 years
18. Ellen Elecanal	50	F	high school graduate	household help	Domestic helper  England Hong Kong Singapore  25 years	proprietor of a bakery  NGO staff	Iloilo City  (Visayas)  2 years
19. Cristeta Maylas	72	F	college graduate  BS Education	teacher	Domestic helper  Italy  10 years	barangay captain  owns rice farm, sari-sari store, apartment units	Mabini, Batangas  (Luzon)  28 years
20. Nelsie Gasque	36	F	2 <sup>nd</sup> year college	household help	Domestic helper  Kuwait Lebanon  8 years	rents apartment units,  employed staff of a company	Butuan City  (Mindanao)  6 years
21. Pol Espanola	66	M	college graduate  BS Accounting	Accountant	Senior Planning and Programs Analyst  Saudi Arabia  30 years	part of owner of a family-owned hardware and construction company	Iloilo City  (Visayas)  6 years
22. Fe Lao	59	F	college graduate  BS Nursing	Nurse, engaged in small buy and sell business	Nurse  Saudi Arabia  7 years	finance officer of Lao Organic Farms	Bansalan, Davao del Sur  (Mindanao)  12 years
23. Elisa Ledesma	63	F	college graduate  BS Nursing	Nurse	Nurse  Saudi Arabia  30 years	owns farm, engages in rice retail	Potatan, Iloilo  (Visayas)  2 years

Name	Age	Sex	Educational Attainment	Occupation Before Migration	Occupation Abroad/ Country of Work/ Years Abroad	Occupation Upon Return	Town, City/Province/ Major Island of Residence/ Years of Permanent Return
24. Magdalena Rogelio	50	F	3 <sup>rd</sup> year college	QA Manager	QA personnel Vietnam 8 years	housewife; helps husband in T-shirt printing business	Bataan, Bataan  (Luzon) 2 years
25. Nasrine Kate Evangelio	29	F	college graduate  Hotel and Restaurant Management	Staff in a domestic airline	Sofitel hotel front desk staff  Dubai, UAE 5 years	on line English language tutor engages in buy and sell of beauty products,	Mabini, Batangas  (Luzon) 1 year
26. Roberto Guansing	59	M	BS Marine Engineering	able bodied seaman/ apprentice	Boatswain  26 years	owns farms, runs a family owned company that distributes veterinary products	San Ildefonso, Bulacan  (Luzon) 10 years
27. Marites Nograno	37	F	3 <sup>rd</sup> year BS Nursing	Nestle promo girl	caretaker masseuse  Taiwan Saudi Arabia UAE 8 years	rice trader	Naga City, Camarines Sur  (Luzon) 9 years
28. Yco Tan	56	M	college undergraduate but earned degree abroad while working as OFW	Buy and sell of vegetables	Warehouseman, shop employee, to mall manager  Saudi Arabia 14 years	businessman, owner and manager of about six companies related to beauty and wellness	Legazpi City, Albay  (Luzon) 15 years
29. Nelson Marana	60	M	BS Agricultural Engineering	Agricultural engineer in government agencies	Agricultural engineer  Saudi Arabia 11 years	engages in agricultural production, bed and breakfast businesses	Legazpi City, Albay  (Luzon) 16 years
30. Lucita Cerbas	55	F	college undergraduate	Engaged in small buy and sell	Promo girl Oman 17 years	church worker	Potatan, Iloilo  (Visayas) 7 years

An equal number of men and women, 15 migrant returnees for each sex category participated. Nineteen (19) participants earned college degrees, the rest were college undergraduates or high school students. Ten (10) of the participants worked as professionals before working abroad. The rest worked as skilled or unskilled workers or have engaged in small buy and sell businesses before migrating overseas.

The participants worked overseas for a wide range of years, from the shortest period of two years to the longest period of 30 years. Only two of them stayed and worked abroad for less than 5 years. Most of them, 17 out of 30 have worked abroad for 10 years or more. Eleven (11) of the participants worked in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, the others worked in other countries like Italy, Singapore, Bahrain, Palau, Micronesia, Vietnam, United Arab Emirates, Oman, Kuwait and Lebanon. Most of the DH worked in Italy, HK and Singapore (although many of them worked in other countries other than their last host country). Many of the professionals and workers worked in Saudi Arabia and other Middle East countries.

Twenty participants returned to and are currently staying in different provinces of Luzon like Cavite, Batangas, Albay, Camarines Sur, Bataan, Tarlac, and Metro Manila. Seven of them live in the Visayan provinces of Iloilo and Guimaras while three of them are in the provinces of Davao del Sur and Agusan del Sur of Mindanao. Luzon is the largest island in the Philippines where the top three migrant-sending regions are located, National Capital Region (NCR), Region III and Region IV-A.

The migrant-returnee participants have returned and have been staying permanently in the Philippines for different periods of time. The shortest is a year while the longest time is 32 years. Nineteen (19) of them were back in the Philippines for 9 years or more.

Except for eight participants (three unemployed/retired but engaged in civic activities, two employed as teachers, one as English tutor on-line and two who opted to take care of their children and grandchildren), majority of the participants (22) are engaged in micro, small and medium-sized businesses.

## **B. In-depth Interview as the Main Method of Data Collection**

The primary method of data collection for phenomenological researches is in-depth interview (Creswell, 2013). In-depth interviews suited well the purpose of this phenomenological study because it allowed me to elicit the experiences, feelings and opinions of the participants about the phenomenon of return migration. Furthermore, the conduct of in-depth interviews also afforded me, the researcher to delve into sensitive topics that were touched and shared by the participants.

### *1. Interview Questionnaire*

Interviews of the participants delved, among others, on the following topics: 1) individual circumstances and experiences as a migrant prior to return; 2) individual reasons and circumstances that led to the decision to return to the Philippines; 3) views, feelings, and attitudes towards return to the country; 4) actual circumstances and processes of return that the individual has undergone; 5) current situation, feelings, attitudes and views as a returnee to the Philippines; 6) ideas about the notion of successful return and perceived factors that leads to one's and others' successful reintegration to the country.

A semi-structured interview guide was prepared. A semi-structured interview guide allowed the participants to share their return migration experiences in a much more natural way, and allowed me to ask further questions—clarificatory, probing, and follow-up questions. Apart from the interview questions, the questionnaire consisted of information that were solicited from

the participants like their preferred pseudonym to hide their identity (if they so wish), age, sex, religious affiliation, educational attainment and present occupation.

## *2. Setting up the Interviews*

The prospective interviewees were contacted through mobile phone. They were sent SMS text messages. The texts sent were of the following format: "Good morning (Mr. Loreto Soriano)! This is Prof. Augustus Anonuevo of the University of the Philippines Los Banos. I am doing my PhD research on successful Filipino migrant returnees. I got your name from (OWWA's list of MOFYA awardees). I hope you will not mind, can I call you today to set an interview? Please tell me what time you want me to call you. Marami pong salamat (Thanks a lot!!)"

When the prospective interviewee replied to the text that I sent, I called her/him to explain, in general, what the research was all about and asked her/his consent to be interviewed. After a positive response, I asked for an appointment—date, time, and place that the participant wished to be interviewed. Only one set interview did not push through for the prospective participant kept on changing the date of interview. I deemed it was really a reluctance on his part to be interviewed as a successful returnee. Her wife said that he did not consider himself successful.

## *3. Conduct of Interviews*

The interviews of the participants started in March 3, 2017 and ended on June 20, 2017. All the interviews were conducted in places most convenient and most comfortable for the participants. Some participants opted to be interviewed in their homes while others wanted the interviews in their offices.



Other participants preferred to share their experiences in coffee shops and restaurants.

The interviews were conducted in *Tagalog*, the most dominant dialect used in the Philippines. Most of the Filipinos, including the participants of the study, could understand and converse in *Tagalog*, despite having grown up with their own dialects like many of my respondents in the Bicol region, the provinces of Iloilo, in Davao provinces. All Filipinos learn Filipino, the national language, which is dominantly *Tagalog* in schools. It could not be helped that the questions and responses at times were in mixed *Tagalog* and English, commonly referred to as *Taglish*, which noticeably has become a normal mode of conversation among Filipinos.

The interviews lasted at the average of an hour. The shortest interview lasted around 40 minutes while the longest lasted at about two hours. The interviews were recorded. I used three instruments—a tape recorder, iPad's Quick Voice and iPhone's Voice Memos. This was done to ensure that all interviews would really be recorded, i.e. just in case, an instrument failed to function because of various reasons (which was the case in some interviews conducted).

Although I had a list of questions, the interviews were generally conducted in a free-wheeling manner, i.e. respondents were asked to freely relate their experiences and views regarding the following general topics: life and work abroad, plans and circumstances of return, and life and work experiences as a migrant returnee and views of successful return. (Please see Interview Questionnaire in Annex 1 which served simply as a guide in the conduct of interviews.)

I started each interview by introducing myself, the purpose of the study, asking the participants for permission to record the conversations, and guaranteeing the confidentiality of the interview proceedings. I even asked each of them

whether they preferred a pseudonym in the written manuscript; they all said that they rather not and were willing to have their real names printed.

I ended each interview by asking the participant if she/he wished to add more to what she/he had shared. I also expressed my gratitude and asked whether I could call them if I need to be clarified on what they have shared. It turned out that I found no need to ask more from them for the taped interviews were clear and their answers understandable.

#### *4. Transcription of Recorded Interviews*

The taped interviews were transcribed. A Bachelor of Arts (BA) Sociology student, a working student, a Sociology professor of the University of the Philippines-Los Banos (UPLB), an NGO (non-government organization) staff member, and a BA Communications Arts graduate of UPLB were asked to do the transcriptions of the 30 interviews. I asked them to transcribe the interviews verbatim.

Transcribers were asked to delete the recorded interview files that I have sent them after their transcriptions to ensure the verbal confidentiality agreement between me and the participants. The transcribers were remunerated for their efforts.

From May 2, 2017 to October 2017 all interviews of the 30 participants were transcribed and printed, and were ready for phenomenological data analysis. The recorded interviews and their transcriptions were saved in a CD labelled Appendix 2. Recordings and Transcriptions of Interviews.

### **C. Researcher's Epoche**

I, as an individual and Sociology professor has wide engagements with the topic of international migration. I am a member of the Board of Atikha, an NGO in the Philippines that is engaged in migration and development work. As member of the Board, I was part of studies that the NGO conducted which dealt with the social costs of international migration of Filipinos to their families and communities and mobilization of Filipino migrant resources for development. The research findings were incorporated in books and training manuals that I have written and edited with colleagues in Atikha.

As an Associate Professor of Sociology in UPLB, I have taught undergraduate and graduate special topic courses on international migration and development. I was also awarded professorial chairs and consequently delivered lectures on topics related to return and reintegration of Filipino migrants.

My NGO and academic background leave no doubt that I am deeply engaged in the field of international migration and development, and that includes a deep interest and concern for the successful return and reintegration of migrant Filipinos.

How did I exercise epoche? Understanding that epoche was a necessary exercise to remain faithful to what the participants of this study had to say about their lived experiences of successful return migration, I did the following:

I listed all what I know, what I have read and heard, what I taught and have written about return and reintegration of migrants, including those about Filipino migrants' return migration, whether they were successful or not. This was to set aside these preconceived ideas, judgments and ideas that I have formed before conducting this study. I wrote the list before conducting my

interviews. I reviewed the list again when I was doing the data analysis to remind me again that I must remain faithful to what have been said and shared by the participants of the study and for these ideas in the list not to exert undue influence on my own appreciation of the participants lived experiences.

This list summarizes my ideas, judgements and biases prior to the actual conduct of this study:

1. Successful return means being not only stable financially but being affluent.
2. Successful return also means having a whole and intact family which has good relationships among its members.
3. Numbers 1 and 2 define, in the main, what is successful return.
4. Women migrants return earlier when compared with men migrants due to their intense feeling to be with their children.
5. Successful returnees have higher educational attainment when compared with unsuccessful returnees. It is possible that these migrants have not practiced their higher academic training abroad.
6. Professionals more than other migrants are more likely to be successful in their return.
7. It was not an easy decision to return to the country. Migrants had decided to give up what they enjoyed abroad.
8. Those who have stayed for long years abroad are more likely not to return anymore for they have enjoyed and have been accustomed to the way of life abroad.
9. People return to be with their families after amassing what they thought were enough savings and or investments to lead a decent and comfortable life in the country.
10. Many have returned because of dire circumstances and hence have not returned successfully. Only a handful among migrant returnees have been successful upon return.

11. Many returnees have squandered their savings due to misspending, lavish lifestyle, failed businesses, etc.

12. Return as the literature states can be return of failure, success and others. Many belong to returns of failure, few to return of success, and a handful to return of innovation.

13. Unplanned return are numerous when compared with planned return.

14. Planned return almost always end up successful while unplanned return almost always end up unsuccessful.

15. Successful return is a family decision, at least made by the couple. The setting of goals of the couple (migrant and spouse) is necessary for successful return.

16. Those who have saved and planned well their return together with their families would be successful in their return.

17. Successful returnees have all engaged in business upon return.

18. Those who are left behind who receive the remittances, not the migrants, spell the difference whether the return of their migrant relative will be successful. If they managed the money that they received well, then successful return of their relative is most likely.

19. Many migrants were unsuccessful in a large part because the government has not provided them the necessary assistance.

20. The local government units (LGUs) have no reintegration plan for migrants and are unable to tap migrant resources for their communities' development.

During the data analysis stage, I made sure that the themes that I constructed, were very descriptive themes, usually filled with some details. It was a conscious attempt to avoid creating highly abstract themes that could unwittingly be sourced from my readings, earlier ideas and judgements about successful return migration and reintegration.

Further, I also did not read what I have earlier written about an individual participant's experiences and my analysis of his experiences so as not to

influence how I would write other participants' lived experiences. I only read all of them when I was doing the analysis of the experiences of a particular occupational or sex grouping.

I read other definitions, notions of success and read more publications related to successful return aside from those already in the Review of Related Literature that I made, only after completing the phenomenological data analysis and writing about the essences of successful return. I was really of a firm position that, at best, the findings of previous studies were just to be compared with this study's findings. They would not, in anyway, be used to validate or invalidate the research findings nor will they be used to explain them.

I did discuss my findings to my wife, who is currently the Executive Director of Atikha and some of my colleagues in UPLB but only in relation to how I conducted the phenomenological research. The findings were not discussed to seek any form of confirmation or agreement from them. In some instances when I was eager in discussing the findings and when intense exchange of ideas ensued, I remained conscious that I might be influenced by their ideas. The real purpose of the exchange was to help me verbalize, put into words and crystallize the ideas that I felt were expressed and inherent in the transcripts of lived experiences of the participants.

All these that I did in exercising epoche helped me to be faithful to the views and experiences of the Filipino successful migrant returnees. These were done to ensure that my beliefs, ideas, assumptions and biases related to migration and return migration would not get in the way in the process of understanding the essences of the successful return migration experiences of the Filipino migrant returnees of this study.

## **D. Stages, Steps and Procedures Undertaken in Phenomenological Data Analysis**

The methods of data analysis of this study followed the procedures as outlined in Modification of Stevick-Colaizi-Keen Method of Analysis of Phenomenological Data as outlined in Moustakas (1994, pp. 135-137). Adapting, applying, and modifying what were suggested by Moustakas, I outlined the stages, steps, and procedures in conducting phenomenological data analysis of the lived experiences of Filipino migrant returnees.

The phenomenological data analysis towards determining the essences (meanings and structures) of the successful return migration was done in four stages. Steps and procedures for each stage were also undertaken.

The four stages of phenomenological data analysis were as follows:

1. Analysis of lived experiences of successful return of individual migrants
2. Analysis of lived experiences of successful return of different occupational groups of migrants (domestic helpers, seafarers, professionals and workers)
3. Analysis of lived experiences of successful return of men and women migrants
4. Analysis of the over-all lived experiences of successful return of Filipino migrants

### *1. Analysis of Individual Migrant Successful Return Experiences*

All 30 individual interviews underwent the following steps and procedures of data analysis as illustrated in Figure 1 and described in the text below:

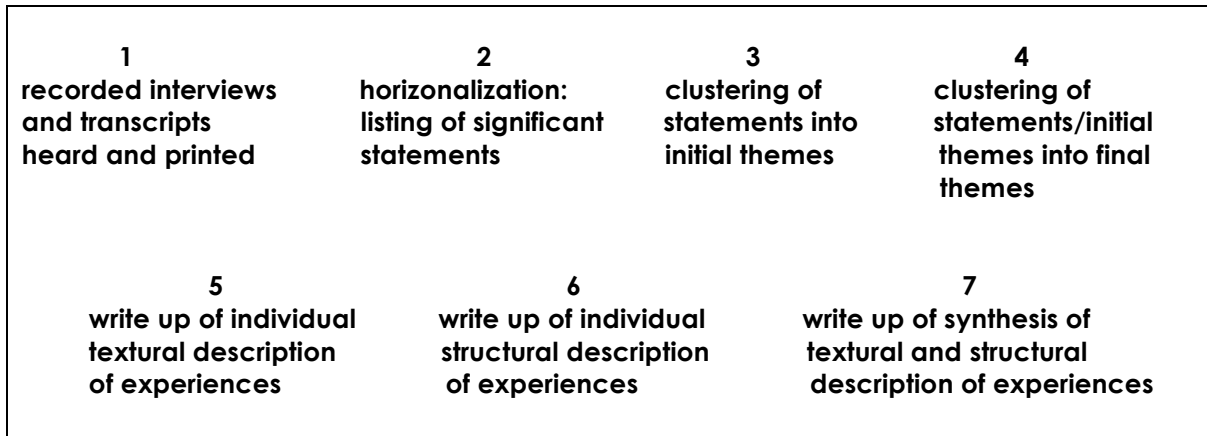


Figure 1 Steps in the Conduct of Analysis of Individual Migrant Successful Return Experiences

1.1. The individual's return migration experiences were gathered. The interview of the individual about his/her return migration experiences was transcribed and analyzed.

I listened to the individual recording of the taped interview for me to recall what were shared by the participant during the interview. Then, I read the transcription of the interview. Listening to the taped recording of the interview and reading the transcript were deliberately done for me to get fully acquainted with the lived experiences of the individual.

1.2. Horizontalization was the next step. Horizontalization refers to the identification of specific statements in the transcripts that provide information of the participants' experiences (Moustakas as cited by Moerer-Urdahl & Creswell, 2004).

Specific statements in the transcript that described the participants' views and experiences related to his/her successful return to the Philippines were identified and numbered. These statements were taken directly from the transcripts of the individual's interview. All the statements were treated of equal value for they contain information about the return migration experience. There was no need to group the statements or order them. At this



stage, the intent was to learn how the individuals view, feel, think, and experience return migration to the Philippines.

Initially, I treated responses to the questions about experiences to questions about experiences before migration and during migration as mere background information to the actual return migration experiences of migrants. However, after several participants kept on referring to these past experiences that happened before their actual return to the Philippines as important and significant, I deemed it proper to treat them as experiences that contributed to their successful return. This meant, that almost all statements were really regarded as horizons to their successful return to the Philippines.

1.3. Then, the identified statements (horizons) were encoded and printed. The statements were read, statements that were not related to migration and return experiences were deleted. Further, overlapping statements were identified and only a statement was retained. At the average, for each participant about 70 statements were gathered as horizons/significant statements about successful return.

Below is a partial list of horizons that I gathered for Myrna Padilla, a former domestic helper in Hong Kong and who returned to Davao City and established her own business process outsourcing (BPO) company, Mynd Consulting, Inc. A total of 81 significant statements were drawn from Myrna's transcript. The statements were clustered into 32 initial themes.

Table 6 Some Horizons and Initial Themes Drawn from Myrna Padilla's Interview Transcript

<b>Horizons</b>	<b>Initial Themes</b>
1. Anim kami na magkakapatid. Tatay ko magsasaka lang, mangingisda then nanay ko walang trabaho. (We are six siblings. My father was a farmer, a fisherman while my mother had no work.)	1. From a very poor family, experienced extreme economic hardship as a child

Horizons	Initial Themes
<p>2. Kung sabi mo mahirap, grabe yung napagdaanan ko na hirap. Kasi parang hindi ako dumaan ng pagkabata. (It was a difficult life. It was if I did not pass childhood.)</p> <p>3. Natandaan ko isang damit ko lang. Tatlong beses lalabhan ni Nanay sa isang linggo. Ganun kami kahirap. Madalas akong makasaksi sa nanay na umiiyak. Dahil wala kami makain. (I had only one dress. My mother had to wash three times a week. Most of the time my mother was crying because we had nothing to eat.)</p>	
<p>16. Yung amo ko noong una, hindi ko gusto kasi nag-aalaga ako tatlong aso. New born baby, may dalawang bata, 7-8 years old. Ang laki ng bahay kasi dun kami nakatira sa Bedok area. May garden pa na i-grass cuter ko iyan...All around, kailangan ko matuto. (I did not like my first employer. I took care of three dogs, a new born baby and two children, 7- and 8-year old.)</p> <p>17. Pero nakaya ko iyon kasi para sa mga anak ko. sabi nila, "<i>superwoman ka. nakaya mo lahat iyan</i>". Pagkagising ko hindi pa ako nakatoothbrush, nakatooth brush na ako ng aso. Kasi laruin ng mga bata, sabihin mabaho, ayoko magcomplain yung amo ko. (I did all the work for my children. They told me: "You are a super woman for doing all tose work!" When I woke up, before brushing own teeth I had to brush the dogs' teeth because the children would play with them. I do not want my employers to complain and get angry with me.)</p>	<p>8. Endured hardship as an all-around domestic helper in Singapore for her children's sake</p>
<p>30. I have this thirst for knowledge dahil sa pangarap ko talaga makapagtapos ng edukasyon na hindi ko nafulfill. (I have this thirst for knowledge because I was not able to fulfill my dream to get educated.)</p> <p>31. So nung nalaman ko na makakapag-aral ako by reading the</p>	<p>15. Thirst for knowledge due to being unable to get a higher education, exposure to the computer has ignited her search for knowledge and passion for learning</p>

Horizons	Initial Themes
<p>book, management, entrepreneurship, leadership, binabasa ko iyan. (When I realized that I could learn by reading books, I read what I could on management, entrepreneurship, leadership.)</p> <p>32. Anything na pinaghirapan mo, hirap mo makalimutan, hirap mawala sayo. (When you put all your efforts on something, that thing would be hard to forget and would remain with you.)</p> <p>35. <i>I am not stupid. If you are stupid, you are stupid forever. You cannot learn. The cure for inosente is knowledge.</i> (The cure for innocence is knowledge).</p> <p>37. <i>“Myrna, your life is so boring”.</i> “Kasi basa ng basa. (You always read.) Sometimes, you enjoy yourself. <i>“Jonathan I need to learn.”</i></p> <p>38. Zero knowledge about technology. I developed my passion for technology. Everyday I read, until finally, I gained knowledge from Jonathan, from myself, (from) reading articles in the internet.</p>	
<p>61. I fulfilled my dream to have a business and become a job creator. I believe that when I hire an employee, isang nanay, hindi na siya aalis at iiwan ang kanilang mga anak. That is another success. That we don't have to rip the families and punta overseas. (I believe that when I hire a mother, that would make her stay and be with children. That is another success, we do not have to break families because of migration).</p> <p>62. Of course in business, you look at it, bottom line, profit. Importante din iyon. (It is important.)</p>	<p>25. Definition of success: creating jobs so that people will not leave their children so that families will not be ripped apart; a profitable business</p>

1.4. After the significant statements were selected, the next step was to examine these statements and to cluster them into themes. The themes emerged from grouping related statements. In grouping statements into

themes, statements that were irrelevant, overlapped with others, or repeated were deleted.

I modified a little bit what was suggested by Moustakas. Because of the long transcripts and statements, I decided that statements were grouped initially into what I called initial themes. It was difficult to make a good clustering of statements into meaningful and concise themes right away because of the length of the transcripts and statements. Then, I grouped the initial themes into what I called the final themes of lived experiences of the individual.

I made sure that the final themes clustered statements that tackled/dealt with/described an aspect of the experiences or a topic that were shared by the participant. To remain descriptive of the lived experiences of the participant, I made sure that the final themes were also descriptive in character. That means, some details were added in the final themes to ensure that the substance and texture of the experiences would not be lost and to avoid undue abstraction. Abstract concepts were not used as themes.

The following were the 32 initial themes and the seven (7) final themes that were drawn from the experiences of Myrna Padilla:

Table 7 Main Themes from the Initial Themes of Myrna Padilla's Interview

<b>Initial Themes</b>	<b>Main Themes</b>
1. From a very poor family, experienced extreme economic hardship as a child 2. Worked at an early age to help provide food for the family 3. With childhood dreams of finishing college and becoming a lawyer for the poor but accepted she could not realize her dreams; readied herself to become a domestic helper	1. Experiencing extreme poverty, lowered her aspirations and settled and worked as DH for years in the Philippines and abroad
4. Exploited (worked without pay) and sexually molested in early attempt to go abroad	2. Endured exploitation and abuse from recruiters and harsh working conditions in Singapore, Taiwan and HK to provide

Initial Themes	Main Themes
<p>6. A failed marriage ('a clash between a strong woman and dominating man')</p> <p>7. Went abroad to fulfill a dream (she never realized herself)---get her children finish their education</p> <p>8. Endured hardship as an all-around domestic helper in Singapore for her children's sake</p> <p>10. Duped by recruiters to work in Taiwan but fought back and forced the recruiters to send her to Hong Kong</p> <p>11. Learned international standards of being a DH and aspired to be the best DH in the world</p> <p>12. Worked only in Taiwan for less than a year due to language barrier between her and employers</p> <p>13. Difficult situation with first employer in HK, afterwards with employers for 12 years who cared and appreciated her work and supportive of her work for fellow OFWs</p>	<p>for children's education; support from last employer provided opportunities for learning</p>
<p>9. Able to buy land for her mother and set up a sari-sari store which closed because she could not refuse her poor customers' plea for help (empathy towards poor people like her)—reason for leaving for Taiwan</p> <p>20. Finished sending children to college; children are working</p> <p>21. Setting a new dream, a dream upon settling to the Philippines</p>	<p>3. Fruits of work abroad: bought land, children finishing college education and setting up own business</p>
<p>15. Thirst for knowledge due to being unable to get a higher education, exposure to the computer has ignited her search for knowledge and passion for learning</p> <p>16. Learning computer technology from her 8- year-old child who she was taking care of</p>	<p>4. Attained know how of computer satisfied thirst for knowledge, and opened job and business ideas and opportunities</p>

Initial Themes	Main Themes
<p>17. Circumstances and extra work as QA personnel of a US-based IT company</p> <p>18. Developing her idea of her business when she returns home</p>	
<p>19. Diagnosed with thyroid problem</p> <p>20. Finished sending children to college; children are working</p> <p>21. Setting a new dream, a IT business upon settling to the Philippines</p>	<p>5. Circumstances/reasons for return: thyroid problem, children finishing college and working, firm plan of setting up own IT company</p>
<p>22. Mother and siblings found her business idea weird and did not fully support her business endeavor</p> <p>23. Setting up her business in Davao</p> <p>24. A profitable IT business employing 30 programmers and providing services with big companies as clients in the US and Germany</p> <p>26. Experiences business slow down but have endured and overcome financial difficulties</p> <p>27. Doing 'good business': knowledge and vision, overcoming difficulties and ability to innovate, making your clients happy and turning challenges into opportunity</p> <p>28. Treating her employees as her responsibility and co-equal and have contributed to the company's success</p>	<p>6. Despite earlier non-support and adverse effect of US crisis, able to operate a profitable IT services provider company for global clients by doing good business and treating her employees and clients well</p>
<p>25. Definition of success: creating jobs so that people will not leave their children so that families will not be ripped apart; a profitable business</p> <p>29. How to become a successful OFW and returnee: have a roadmap to guide you; never stop learning; save money; handle your business well and be resourceful; be passionate and do not copy and paste, innovate</p>	<p>7. Success--passionately fulfilling set dreams and not giving up despite difficulties, continuous learning and doing good business (for oneself and others); able to withstand fear and problems because she had been confronted with them all her life</p>

Initial Themes	Main Themes
<p>30. Key is not to give up despite the challenges</p> <p>31. Being passionate about her job and position</p> <p>32. Cannot be rattled because used to be confronted by problems</p>	

1.5. The next step was the write up of the textural description of the lived successful return experiences of the individual. The themes were synthesized to make a textural description of the return migration experiences. Textural description refers to portraying what was experienced, i.e. feelings, thoughts, perceptions, and acts that were experienced in relation to return migration. Some verbatim statements made by the individual were cited to fully describe the experiences as captured by the final themes.

Below is an example of a textural description that I have written. It is the textural description of lived experiences of Myrna Padilla, a former domestic helper in Hong Kong.

Textural Description of Successful Return of Myrna Padilla

Coming from a very poor family, Myrna had to work when she was young to help her parents feed her siblings. Unable to finish high school, she dismissed her aspiration of becoming a lawyer and accepted working as a domestic helper, probably, for all her life.

Circumstances enabled her to work abroad. She had a failed marriage. She set her mind to send her children to school and college alone by working overseas as a DH, the work that she has been doing since she was a child, albeit this time with foreign employers. She wanted her children to be educated, a dream that she had not fulfilled for herself.

She has endured being duped, exploited and even sexually molested by recruiters. She fought back and resisted (e.g. slapped a Japanese molester, threatened to file complaint against the recruitment agency that

overcharged her and forced them to send her to Hong Kong). Had she had not done that, she could have suffered more. She did hard work and endured difficult conditions as DH in Singapore, Taiwan and Hong Kong. She even aspired to be the best DH in the world to provide for her children's needs and education.

Her work with her last employers was a turning point in her life. Not only were they appreciative of her work but were supportive of her work with fellow OFWs in HK. She founded a federation of Filipina DH from Mindanao and led in its activities in HK and projects for the Philippines. More importantly, she learned about computer and its applications from Jonathan, an 8-year-old child she was taking care of. From zero knowhow, she has learned 'the ropes of ICT', so to speak, from the child and from her own yearning, continuous browsing of and learning from the internet. Her employers gave her own laptop and old computers that she used in the Philippines when she got home. She continued her education (denied of her during her childhood) and attained skills from the computer (which she used in leading the OFW organization and later in setting up her own business). She narrated: "I have this thirst for knowledge dahil sa pangarap ko talaga makapagtapos ng edukasyon na hindi ko nafulfill.... Better education, proper education, building my career, parang iyon ang pangarap ko noon. Iyon ang nabuo kong pangarap na hindi ko natupad." (I have this this thirst for knowledge because I was not able to finish my education. An education to build my career, that was what I wanted but was not able fulfill then.)

She was hired online as a quality assurance (QA) staff by an American company when she complained against the flaws of its application in the net. She was a QA staff and a DH for years at the same time. (The same American company would be one of the earliest clients of Myrna's company in the Philippines.) Her wide exposure to information and communication technology (ICT) led to a business idea which later would come into fruition when she returned to the Philippines. She built her own company--Mynd Consulting.

Circumstances led her to return in 2006. She was diagnosed of thyroid problem. Her children had finished college and were earning their own keep. More importantly, she wanted to fulfil a hatched dream while in Hong Kong, that of owning and operating her own information technology (IT) company. She for the first time got tired working as a DH. She was a DH for more than 15 years abroad and some years in the Philippines.



The business idea was to establish a company that will generate jobs which will deter individuals from working abroad and not leaving their children. She did not want others to suffer what she suffered as a mother who left her children. Nor she wanted children to be left behind by their parents, the plight of most OFW children. She explained: "I fulfilled my dream to have a business and become a job creator. I believe that when I hire an employee, isang nanay, hindi na aalis and nanay at iiwan ang kanilang mga anak. Iyon ang success ko. I feel like we can bring the family intact together. That we don't have to rip the families and punta overseas." (When I hire a mother to be my employee, that means she does not have to leave for abroad and leave her child. That is my success. Families remain intact. We do not destroy families because some must work abroad.)

Establishing her own company was not easy. Her own mother and siblings did not understand and were not supportive of the business idea. She was on her own. The company's early years also was affected by the economic crisis in the United States. But she persevered, firmly believing in good karma--that when you do good for others, you would also reap rewards later. She said: "When you are down, when you want to give up, na talagang wala kang pag-asa, nobody will pick you up but only yourself. Overcome that fear, of trying, of fighting, sa kahit anong negosyo na gusto mo gawin, fear is the only dream killer." (When you are down and you feel that there is no hope, do not give up. No one will pick you up but your own self. Overcome your fear, do not stop trying and fighting in whatever business you are in. Fear is the only dream killer.) Through hard work, offering creative and innovative services and products and treating her programmer-employees well and in equal terms, she has made Mynd Consulting, a profitable company which counts as its clients, big companies in the United States and Germany. Mynd Consulting is essentially a BPO company that provides services like virtual programming, custom development, social media management and Word Press.

1.6. Using the initial and final themes, a structural description of the individual's return migration experiences was written. Structural description discusses the meanings the individual attached to successful return, circumstances, conditions, factors and processes that brought about the individual's successful return migration. Some verbatim statements made by the individual were cited to fully describe the meanings of success, key experiences, actions,

and circumstances that spelled the individual's successful return migration to the Philippines.

Below is an example of a structural description. I wrote the following structural description of Myrna's successful return to the Philippines:

#### Structural Description of Successful Return of Myrna Padilla

To Myrna, success means being able to attain set dreams with passion and determination. Success means not giving up despite difficulties, not to be cowed by fear but taking these as challenges as opportunities. This has been the story of her life--a life full of hardships and challenges which she faced and overcame. Since childhood, she never gave up on what she had set--helped her parents provide food to the table despite being young, endured hardships as a foreign domestic worker in Singapore, Taiwan and HK, learned ICT even with a zero knowledge of computer, operated a company despite finishing only second year high school education and being a domestic helper.

Success means to continue learning, being innovative and resourceful. She said: "...never stop learning, hindi ibig sabihin na may tatlong diploma ka na, you are valuable enough. Maybe nung nag-graduate ka, yes, pero sa panahon ngayon sabi nga we are at the cutting edge of the technology, if you will not learn, you will be left behind. Do not waste your time dahil kung may pagkakataon ka, kung wala ka laptop, wala ka cellphone, go to the internet café, search for knowledge, develop for knowledge." (Never stop learning. Even if you have three diplomas, that does not mean much because we are at the cutting edge of technology. If you will not learn, you will be left behind. Do no waste your time. If you do not have a laptop or a cellphone, go to an internet café and search and develop knowledge.)

It was the difficult life---coming from a very poor family, unable to pursue higher education and hence could only work as a domestic helper a third of her life, suffered exploitation, molestation and hardships as a foreign domestic worker in Singapore, Taiwan and Hong Kong, a failed marriage and sole breadwinner for her two children---ironically, that made her stronger and determined to make things better for her, her children, her family and others. She never gave up despite her difficult life! She fought her exploitative recruiters, amidst hard working conditions, worked to be the best DH to provide the most for her children, learned ICT despite being formally uneducated and with zero

knowhow of the computer, set up her own company on her own and overcame the business challenges. In her own words and deeds, she eventually turned the difficulties, hardships and challenges of her life into opportunities---to earn more, to learn more, and to be of help to others more.

Her work for 12 years with an appreciative and supportive family in Hong Kong was the turning point in her life. They appreciated the work that she has done for them. They were not strict to her, unlike most of her earlier employers and allowed and encouraged her in her work as a leader of an organization of DH in Hong Kong. It was however, the young child who has dramatically changed her life. Jonathan, the young child she was taking care of, taught her all about the computers---its operations and applications. He has introduced her to the world of internet, her own virtual school that has provided her the knowledge about anything that she yearned to learn. That turned her world, from a mere DH she became knowledgeable about the computer and ICT by continuously learning from Jonathan and from the net. From a mere DH she became a QA staff of a US company which appreciated her complaints about the application that it has in the web. From being uneducated, she became a learned woman. From being a DH, she dreamt of and owned her own company when she returned to the Philippines.

She set up a BPO company in Davao City and made it grow as a company providing services to big companies in the US. Overcoming the challenges of operating it on her own with a limited entrepreneurial background (she was once a marketing staff for a limited of time in the Philippines and a sari-sari store owner) and the difficulties of the US economic crisis, the company is currently a profitable company. She attributes her business success to her employees and programmers who delivered creative and innovative products to their clients. She speaks highly of her employees. Of course, she was being modest, a lot must be attributed to the company's success to her being a passionate chief executive officer (CEO) of the company who have fearlessly confronted difficulties and never gave up.

1.7. Finally, a synthesis of the textural and structural description of the lived experiences of the individual was constructed. The meanings and key actions and circumstances that characterize the individual's successful return migration were stated and discussed.

Below is an example of a synthesis of textural and structural descriptions. It was the synthesis of the successful return migration experiences of Myrna Padilla.

### Synthesis of Textural and Structural Descriptions of Successful Return of Myrna Padilla

Born into an extremely poor family, which literally then was in hand to mouth existence, Myrna at early age had to work to help the family put food on the table. She was a domestic a helper when she was a child, a teenager and as an OFW in Singapore, Taiwan and Hong Kong.

Such a hard life did not stop her to dream for herself, for her parents and siblings and for her own children. When she was a child she dreamt of being a lawyer to defend poor people like her. Realizing that she could not even finish high school, she lowered her dream and contented herself in being able to provide food for the family even if that meant being a domestic helper all her life. While abroad she dreamt of becoming the best DH in the world to send her children to college, (a dream that she failed for herself to attain).

But things have changed when she got exposed and made her learn ICT which facilitated her own education about many things. Her thirst of knowledge which had not been diminished by poverty and hardships was then satisfied by the internet world. Hired by circumstances as a QA critic, she eventually developed her own business idea which she pursued when she returned to the country. This has become her next dream--that of becoming a job creator--that she has now realized, not only for herself but for others so that they will no longer have to leave their families behind to work abroad.

Success to her is being able to fulfil her dreams despite the odds--helped provide food to her poor family despite being unable to get higher education, send her children to college despite being a domestic helper, get herself educated in IT despite zero knowledge of the computer and managed and operated an IT company with big companies in the US and Germany as clients despite her just finishing second year high school and a 14-year DH.

Such successes she attributed to not giving up all her life, of fighting back despite challenges and problems. Such strong attitude she further attributed to be being molded by a life full of problems; she was literally born and lived a life of problems.

Looking back from her own experiences, aside from not giving up, one must do the following to attain success as an OFW and migrant returnee: crafting one's road map and be guided and reminded of it while abroad; never stop learning and to be passionate in one's interest and skills; saving money and being resourceful; and being creative and innovative in establishing a business.

The analyses of the 30 individual migrants' successful return experiences (horizontalization, initial and final individual themes, textural and structural descriptions and synthesis of successful return experiences) were saved in a CD that was labelled as Appendix 3. Analysis of Individual Experiences of Successful Return.

## *2. Analysis of Lived Experiences of Successful Return Migration of Occupational Groups*

The next stage of the phenomenological data analysis involved the analyses of the successful return experiences of the four occupational groups of migrants. Composite textural description, structural description, and synthesis of the textural and structural descriptions were done for the following groups: a) former migrant professionals; b) former domestic helpers; c) former factory and service workers; and d) former seafarers. These analyses allowed a comparison of the various groups' successful return migration experiences and would be material to the final stage of data analysis, i.e. the identification of the essences of the successful return migration of Filipinos.

The steps in the analysis of groups are illustrated in Figure 2 and described in the text below.

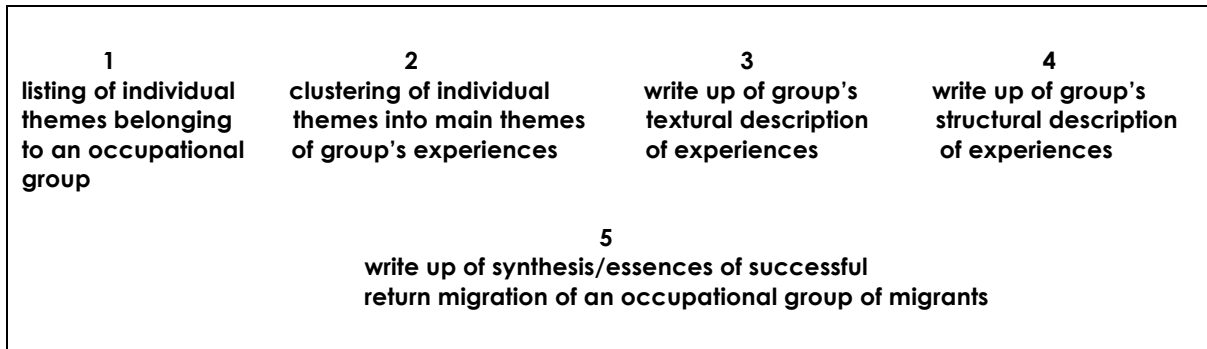


Figure 2 Steps in the Conduct of Analysis of Lived Experiences of Successful Return Migration of Occupational Groups

2.1. All initial and final themes for migrants belonging to an occupational group were read. Each individual textural description, structural description and synthesis of descriptions were also read.

2.2. All final themes of individual migrants belonging to the occupational group were listed. They were examined and clustered into the main themes of the occupational group's experiences.

2.3. Using the group's main themes, the occupational group's composite a) textural description, b) structural description and c) essences (synthesis) of the occupational group's lived experiences of successful return migration were written.

The above steps and the findings of the analyses of various occupational groups' experiences are discussed in Chapter V. Phenomenological Analysis of the Lived Experiences of Successful Return of Filipino Migrants by Occupation and by Sex.

### *3. Comparative Analysis of Lived Experiences of Successful Return of Men and Women Migrants*

The next stage in the analysis was the comparison of the lived experiences of men and women migrants. The following steps were undertaken:

<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>listing of individual themes of men/women migrants</b>	<b>clustering into main themes for men/women migrants</b>	<b>separate write up of textural, structural descriptions and essences of experiences for men and women migrants</b>	<b>write up of similarities and differences of lived experiences of men and women migrants</b>

Figure 3 Steps in the Conduct of Comparative Analysis of Lived Experiences of Successful Return of Men and Women Migrants

3.1. The individual final themes for the 15 men and 15 women migrants were listed.

3.2. From the individual final themes, main themes were identified separately for men and women migrants.

3.3. Individual woman and man migrant's textural, structural and synthesis descriptions were read.

3.4. Textural and structural descriptions and the synthesis/essences of successful return for the groups of men and women were written.

3.5. The written descriptions and analyses of the lived experiences of successful return of men and women migrants were compared, highlighting their similarities and differences.

The above steps and the findings of the analyses of men and women migrants' experiences are discussed in Chapter V.

#### *4. Overall Analysis of Filipino Migrants' Experiences of Successful Return*

The last stage of the phenomenological data analysis was the overall analysis of the Filipino migrants' experiences of successful return. This analysis also resulted to the identification of the essences of the successful return migration phenomenon. The meanings attached to the return migration experiences

and the constituent components of the phenomenon of successful return migration are finally identified.

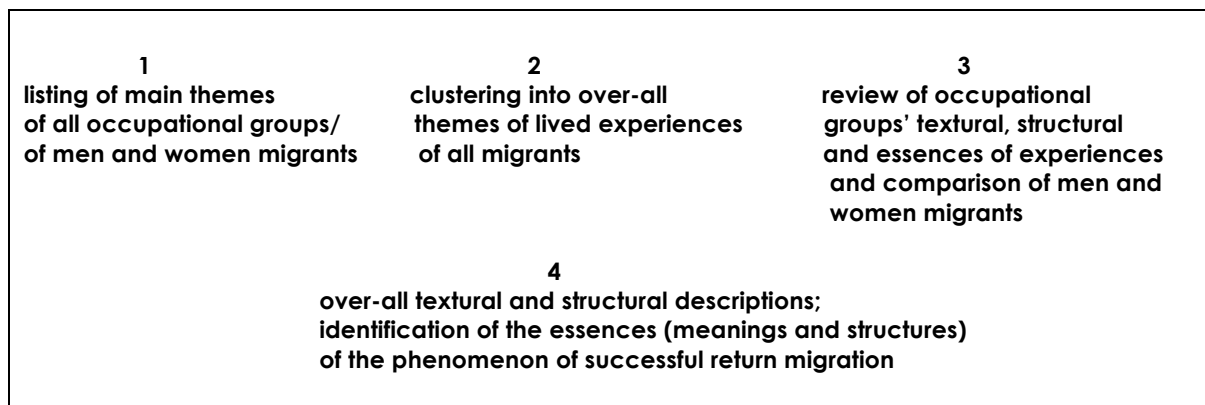


Figure 4 Steps in the Overall Analysis of Filipino Migrants' Experiences of Successful Return

The following steps were undertaken:

4.1. All the identified main themes for all the groups—occupational groupings and groupings by sex—were read. Each group's (composite) textural description, structural description and synthesis of descriptions were read again.

4.2. All the groups' main themes were listed and encoded. They were examined and clustered into over-all themes of the lived experiences for all Filipino migrants.

4.3. Using the main themes, the over-all a) textural description, b) structural description and c) essences (synthesis) of lived experiences of Filipino successful returnees were written.

4.4. The elements of the phenomenon of successful return migration were identified.

The analysis and the main findings with regards the essences of successful return migration of Filipinos and the invariant meanings and elements of the



phenomenon of successful return migration are discussed in Chapter VI.  
Essences of Filipino Migrants' Experiences of Successful Return.

# **Chapter V. Phenomenological Analysis of the Lived Experiences of Successful Return of Filipino Migrants by Occupation and by Sex**

Phenomenological data analysis of the lived experiences of four occupational groupings of migrants (domestic helpers, seafarers, professionals, and workers) and two sets of migrants grouped by sex (men and women migrants) were undertaken.

The analyses started by listing the final themes of individual migrants that belong to the occupational group or sex. Then, composite/main themes were identified. I made sure that these main themes as constructed were descriptive and would incorporate different yet related individual final themes. Descriptive phrases (subthemes) further describe each main theme to avoid abstract and large constructions of the main themes. Too abstract and large constructions of main themes would not faithfully describe what were experienced by the participants and hence, would not help in writing the textural and structural descriptions of the lived experiences of successful return. This descriptive construction of main themes was followed in all the thematization of experiences of all migrant groupings—domestic helpers, seafarers, professionals and workers and the two sex groups.

The derived main themes were used to describe the experiences and eventually determine the essences of the lived successful return experiences of each group/sex, i.e. identifying the meanings attached to successful return, the key actions undertaken by migrants and the social circumstances that spelled their successful return to the Philippines.

This section discusses the findings of the analyses done for each occupational and sex grouping of migrants.

## **A. Analysis of Successful Return Experiences of Domestic Helpers**

### *1. Main Themes of Domestic Helpers' Lived Experiences*

Seven former domestic helpers, namely Ellen Eclenal, Myrna Padilla, Nelsie Gasque, Rebecca Tubongbanua, Amy Aranja, Cristeta Maylas, and Divine Beloso shared their life and work experiences as former domestic helpers and migrant returnees.

The individual (final) themes drawn from the analyses of the experiences of the seven domestic helpers were listed. They were examined and clustered into main themes that characterized the experiences of successful return of the occupational grouping of domestic helpers. To illustrate how the main themes for all occupational groups were drawn, Table 8 for domestic workers is presented below as example. The tables of main themes for seafarers, professionals and workers are in Appendix 4, 5 and 6 respectively.

Table 8 presents the results of the thematization process undertaken for the domestic helpers. In the table, the individual themes for the seven domestic helpers were marked with a capital letter and a number. A, B, C, D, E, F and G refers to Ellen Eclenal, Myrna Padilla, Nelsie Gasque, Rebecca Tubongbanua, Amy Aranja, Cristeta Maylas, and Divine Beloso, respectively. The numerical numbers correspond to the number of final theme as cited in each of the individual domestic helper's list of final themes. For example, A1 means the first theme in Ellen Eleclenal's list of individual final themes.

The derived main themes from the individual final themes of successful return experiences of the seven domestic helpers were cited in bold in the second column. The subthemes were written below the main themes.

Table 8 Main Themes of Successful Return Experiences of Seven Domestic Helpers

Final Themes of Individual Domestic Helper's Successful Return	Main Themes (and Subthemes) of Successful Return of Seven Domestic Helpers
<p>A1. Strong drive to succeed for her siblings and worked as DH abroad for 25 ½ years</p> <p>B1. Experiencing extreme poverty, lowered her aspirations and settled and worked as DH for years in the Philippines and abroad</p> <p>C1. Due to her family's incapacity, worked and sent herself to school and college but unable to earn a degree because of marriage and imprisonment of husband</p> <p>C2. With specific objectives in mind (i.e. pay off debts, send sister to college, pay retirement premiums, capital for business), worked in Kuwait and twice in Lebanon, enduring hard life and work conditions of a DH and despite not so big salaries, able to save money for the set objectives</p> <p>D1. Six years of work as a domestic helper in HK (most of which with British and Australian employers who treated her well), able to fulfill her own imposed obligation as an older sister to help her siblings in the Philippines</p> <p>E1. Set clear goals for working abroad and have attained them enduring hard work as DH and loneliness from being away with children: (Bahrain and Jeddah: to buy a house for parents; Saudi: to provide for HS and college education of children)</p> <p>F1. With meager income as teacher, had to go to Italy even as illegal worker to send daughter to medical school and college</p>	<p><b>A. Circumstances and reasons for working abroad</b></p> <p>poverty or economic hardship and would want a better life for oneself and for the family and hence have set clear goals</p> <p>incapacity of family to send children and siblings to school and college</p> <p>driven by own self-imposed obligation to help family and siblings</p> <p>no need to provide but envious of what other OFWs have acquired (wealth, properties and investments)</p>

Final Themes of Individual Domestic Helper's Successful Return	Main Themes (and Subthemes) of Successful Return of Seven Domestic Helpers
<p>G1. worked as DH for two years in Singapore to provide for her parents, got married and took care of children as requested by seaman-husband; no need to work abroad but envious of other OFWs wealth and properties, worked as DH for three years in Italy and endured abuse of employer, hard work and homesickness</p>	
<p>A2. After sending siblings to college, got comfortable to life abroad and became a befriender for distressed migrants for 15 years</p> <p>A3. Overcoming early fears of return and adjustment, becoming financially literate and engaged in Pinoy WISE, resolved to do something for herself, planned and prepared for return</p> <p>B2. Endured exploitation and abuse from recruiters and harsh working conditions in Singapore, Taiwan and HK to provide for children's education; support from last employer provided opportunities for learning</p> <p>½ of C2. Enduring hard life and work conditions of a DH and despite not so big salaries, able to save money for the set objectives</p> <p>Part of E1... enduring hard work as DH and loneliness from being away with children</p> <p>F2. Worked as DH with part-time jobs, avoiding bad practices of other OFWs and with help from generous employers, paid-off debts and enabled children earn professional degrees</p> <p>Part of G1...worked as DH for three years in Italy and endured abuse of employer, hard work and homesickness</p>	<p><b>B. Circumstances before actual return</b></p> <p>endured hard and demanding work as DH in a foreign land</p> <p>loneliness/homesickness caused by being away with families and children</p> <p>difficulties during early years but things got better with kind and generous employers as their last employer</p> <p>attained in full or largely migration set goals</p>
<p>Part of A3. ...becoming financially literate and engaged in Pinoy Wise, resolved to do something for herself, planned and prepared for return</p>	<p><b>C. Circumstances and reasons for return</b></p> <p>illness/pregnancy hastened return</p>

<b>Final Themes of Individual Domestic Helper's Successful Return</b>	<b>Main Themes (and Subthemes) of Successful Return of Seven Domestic Helpers</b>
<p>B5. Circumstances/reasons for return: thyroid problem, children finishing college and working, firm plan of setting up own IT company</p> <p>C. (initial theme #10)...but eventually returned because she got sick (and do not to die abroad)</p> <p>D2. Circumstances that led to the decision to return to the Philippines for good: had an ovarian cyst and enlarged other ovary; got pregnant; failed relationship; employers went to Australia for good</p> <p>E3. Returned home because goal was attained, expressed need of her children for her and children's pledge to take care this time of the family's finances and own desire to be with her children and grandchildren as their DH</p> <p>F3. Sickness pushed early return; a successful and responsible daughter helping with expenses and secured business investments made return easier</p> <p>G2. reasons for return: got sick, a teaching job to return to, wanted to be with husband and take care of the house, enough savings for a business</p>	<p>attainment of goals</p> <p>firm resolve to do something for one self and implement planned businesses</p> <p>children pleaded them to return and desire to take care of their own children; to be with husband</p> <p>opportunity for a job in the Philippines upon return</p>
<p>A4. Happy as manager of own business, organizing and doing advocacies for migrants and families (successful return, ending dependency, providing opportunities for migrants and families)</p> <p>B6. Despite earlier non-support and adverse effect of US crisis, able to operate a profitable IT services provider company for global clients by doing good business and treating her employees and clients well</p> <p>C3. Upon final return, set up business (rice farming, rental of houses, sari-sari</p>	<p><b>D. Preoccupation/situation upon return</b></p> <p>engaged in business (some small, others big); all are stable sources of income</p> <p>faced challenges but overcame them (e.g. single motherhood, business problems, apprehensions and non-support of families)</p> <p>one contented to be a DH for children and grandchildren; one as barangay captain (as her way of giving back); gives them happiness</p>

<b>Final Themes of Individual Domestic Helper's Successful Return</b>	<b>Main Themes (and Subthemes) of Successful Return of Seven Domestic Helpers</b>
<p>store, networking) and got employed which ensured regular income; found life happier upon return despite bad relationship with husband</p> <p>D3. Taking up the difficult challenge of being a single mother: enduring the social stigma of being an unwed mother; worked hard and got employed to raise her child; started and operated on her own a food processing business by sheer hard work, learning about processing and doing business; the push to work hard and be successful is to provide for her son; husband was as shoulder to lean on and boosted her confidence in starting and operating the business</p> <p>D5. Manages and operates a thriving profitable food (mango and kalamansi-based) processing business which is recognized through numerous awards, recognitions and financial grants from government agencies; cites importance of evaluating one's interests, right attitudes, enhancing skills, praying and having a positive outlook when engaging in business</p> <p>F (initial theme #11): life upon return: at home with her children and grandchildren, DH for them</p> <p>Part of F4....being a well-respected barangay captain</p>	<p>engagement in community work, projects for migrants and their families</p>
<p>A5. Successful return means attaining aims, freedom to do what she wants, contentment in giving back to others</p> <p>B7. Success--passionately fulfilling set dreams and not giving up despite difficulties, continuous learning and doing good business (for oneself and others); able to withstand fear and problems because she had been confronted with them all her life</p>	<p><b>E. Definition and indicators of successful return</b></p> <p>attaining set goals as DH</p> <p>freedom to do what they want (without anyone, i.e. employer dictating to them)</p> <p>developed oneself by continuous learning</p>

<b>Final Themes of Individual Domestic Helper's Successful Return</b>	<b>Main Themes (and Subthemes) of Successful Return of Seven Domestic Helpers</b>
<p>B3. Fruits of work abroad: bought land, children finishing college education and setting up own business</p> <p>C4. Successful return for what she has achieved as an OFW and returnee: having a regular income from work and business which was a far cry from her life before; sent her sister to college which now helps the family; improved herself and learned new skills and being free to do what she wants</p> <p>D6. Own successful return: success not much in terms of monetary gain but in helping others; success in terms of being able to bounce back from a difficult life upon return as a single and unwed mother and being an inspiration to others; happiness and fulfillment as a social entrepreneur (earning at the same time helping others) and seeing oneself as an example of a responsible OFW wife and successful businesswoman; leading a comfortable life, a life without much pressure with her husband and two sons.</p> <p>E4. Successful return: attained set goal for children, maintained an intact family even without a lot of money Achieving success by focusing on goal of migration, being strong against temptations and managing money well and by being employed or engaging in business upon return</p> <p>Part of F2... paid-off debts and enabled children earn professional degrees</p> <p>F4. Happiness and satisfaction out of being a successful migrant returnee recognized for her accomplishments and from being a well-respected barangay captain</p> <p>G3. returned successfully with a job in the Philippines, with money for the</p>	<p>bouncing back from a difficult life before migration and leading a lot better life</p> <p>leading a comfortable and 'less-pressure' life</p> <p>helping others as 'paying forward or giving back'</p> <p>happiness and satisfaction from what they have accomplished and from respect they have garnered from others</p> <p>compared with other migrants who returned with nothing, had a job and with money for the business</p> <p>living a fulfilled, no-worries and happy life with family</p>



<b>Final Themes of Individual Domestic Helper's Successful Return</b>	<b>Main Themes (and Subthemes) of Successful Return of Seven Domestic Helpers</b>
<p>business, operates extra income generating businesses—compared with other migrants who returned with nothing; living a fulfilled, no-worries and happy life with her family</p>	
<p>A6. Able to do because set timeline of work overseas, pursued goals despite others' apprehensions, not giving up and finding solutions to problems, sticking to the idea that returning abroad should not be an alternative again</p> <p>Part of B7...not giving up despite difficulties, continuous learning and doing good business (for oneself and others); able to withstand fear and problems because she had been confronted with them all her life</p> <p>B4. Attained know how of computer satisfied thirst for knowledge, and opened job and business ideas and opportunities</p> <p>Part of B7: ...not giving up despite difficulties, continuous learning and doing good business (for oneself and others); able to withstand fear and problems because she had been confronted with them all her life</p> <p>C5. cognizant of other OFW experiences and her own, set the following to have a successful return: aspiration to have a better life upon return, set concrete plans, manage finances well for any eventuality, rear children well, and save upon working abroad and save with intent of putting up a business</p> <p>Part of E4. Achieving success by focusing on goal of migration, being strong against temptations and managing money well and by being employed or engaging in business upon return</p>	<p><b>F. Keys to successful return</b></p> <p>strong aspiration to change one's life and life of their families</p> <p>setting time frame for migration and return</p> <p>laying concrete plans of return (requisites, preparations and what to do upon return)</p> <p>conquering fears, not giving up despite challenges and apprehensions of others</p> <p>firm not to work abroad again as an alternative</p> <p>continuous learning and improving oneself</p> <p>hands on management of business</p> <p>managing finances and saving while abroad, curbing dependency of immediate family</p> <p>learning from the bad and failed experiences of other migrants</p> <p>a government program (K-12 program) afforded her to teach again</p>

<b>Final Themes of Individual Domestic Helper's Successful Return</b>	<b>Main Themes (and Subthemes) of Successful Return of Seven Domestic Helpers</b>
<p>D4. Resolved of not going back abroad to work as an OFW: conditioned her mind that upon return, she must accept that she will not get anymore what she had while abroad; took note of bad experiences of others who left their children to work abroad; believed that her stay in the Philippines has a purpose—to help others change their lives.</p> <p>Part of D6. Failure of return of others due to unable to find work upon return, totally giving in to the demands of their families, thus, no savings and those who engage in business were impatient to think that they will get the returns quickly</p> <p>E2. Able to save and provide successfully for the education of children (without the help of irresponsible husband) due to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>--being frugal and thrifty</li> <li>-help of kind and considerate employer who was similarly situated as she was</li> <li>--responsible children who managed finances and have done well in school and college</li> </ul> <p>F5. Keys to (her) success of return:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>--being honest to children for them to value parents' hard work and money sent</li> <li>--close supervision of children for them to be responsible and successful</li> <li>--pay-off debts, save and find sources of income upon return</li> <li>--live within your means, do not splurge or waste money</li> </ul> <p>G4. K-12 program afforded her to teach again; valued her hard-earned money, avoided debts and overspending, children not needing her remittances for they are working, allowed her to save</p>	

Six main themes were derived from the composite experiences of the domestic helpers, namely, 1) circumstances and reasons for working abroad, 2) circumstances before actual return, 3) circumstances and reasons for return, 4) preoccupation and situation upon return, 5) definition and indicators of successful return, and 6) keys to successful return. These derived main themes and their corresponding descriptive phrases/subthemes were used to write the textural and structural descriptions of the lived experiences of the domestic helpers which led to defining the essences of their successful return migration experiences.

## *2. Textural Description of Lived Experiences of Successful Return of Seven Domestic Helpers*

### *Circumstances and reasons for working as DH abroad*

Myrna, Cristeta, Ellen, Amy, Neslie, Divine and Rebecca worked as domestic helpers and served families of different nationalities. Most of them worked as domestic helpers for about six years while two others spent a lot more years abroad, namely, Ellen for 25 years and Myrna for about 16 years.

With their own families' welfare and well-being in mind, they worked in Hong Kong, Milan in Italy, Bahrain, Lebanon and Singapore for years. It was a common refrain so to speak for the former domestic helpers (except for Divine). Their families faced with extreme poverty (in the case of Myrna) and varying degrees of economic difficulties for the other five women, they sought to provide for a better life for their families or their siblings or their children. All of them felt that sense of obligation as a responsible mother, daughter and sibling to work abroad and provide for the needs of their families, and more importantly, to provide for the education of their siblings and children, from high school to college.

This high sense of self-imposed obligation meant for Myrna, Ellen, Neslie, and Amy (who have not finished high school nor college), foregoing their own

dreams of earning higher education. Providing for the education of family members clearly was on top of the list of goals set by all six women, understandably because of their incapacity as parents, in the cases of Cristeta and Amy and of their parents' in the case of Rebecca, Myrna, Neslie, and Amy to shoulder the costs of their and their siblings' education. Other goals set include providing for their families' or siblings' economic needs, paying off family debts, meeting daily living needs and paying off debts that they had incurred in processing their migration abroad.

Divine was different from the rest for she need not work to provide for the family because her husband was a seafarer and she was also earning as a public-school teacher. She admitted that she decided to work abroad because she was envious of other OFWs who had acquired wealth and properties and had investments. She wanted to be like them.

The women differed in terms of the circumstances of their entry to their countries of destination. Three of them, Nelsie, Amy and Ellen had to forge their ages because they were under-aged when they were recruited. Nelsie, Myrna, and Cristeta experienced maltreatment from recruitment agencies before being able to work abroad. Nelsie and Myrna were exacted exorbitant fees and were made to work in underpaid odd jobs in Manila while waiting for the processing of their papers. Cristeta experienced the worst, having been smuggled to Italy via Amsterdam and Paris. The other three women, Rebecca, Ellen and Divine had no sad experiences with regards to their entry to their country of destination.

#### Work experiences and circumstances abroad

Regardless of length of years of work abroad, all seven women have endured the hard work that was required of a foreign domestic helper in a foreign country. They had to wake up early in the morning and sleep late at night or in

the early morning to do all the numerous chores that were demanded of them by their employers. This situation was true to most of them, particularly, during their early years of employment. Three of them, Nelsie, Rebecca, and Divine had to end contract with inconsiderate and strict employers. Nelsie even had to run to the Philippine Embassy in Bahrain away from an abusive employer who fed her left-overs, overworked her and who got jealous of her for no reason at all. Myrna suffered from exploitation and abuse from her Chinese employers in Hong Kong.

The women had to endure the changing, and specifically the cold weather. But what made their stay colder, lonely, and emotionally difficult was their being away from their families and children. For mothers like Cristeta, Amy and Myrna, it was doubly emotionally difficult, having to suffer from the thought that they were taking good care of other children when they should be with their own children.

The harsh work situation of all the women during their first employment changed dramatically when they all found kind, considerate and generous employers. These were the same employers with whom the women have stayed the longest and were still their employers before their actual return to the Philippines.

Their hard work was compensated by their kind and considerate employers. These employers were considerate in their work load and schedule, paid them regularly and rewarded them with gifts, allowed them vacations in the Philippines, paid for costs of family emergencies and helped in paying off bank loans (in the case of Cristeta's Italian employers) and encouraged their work among fellow migrants (in the case of Myrna's Australian employers and Ellen's British employers). The women domestic helpers endeared themselves to their last employers. Rebecca, Myrna, Ellen, and Amy have become close friends with their former employers and have remained in contact with the children

that they have taken care of. With such considerate and supportive employers, it was easier for them to save and plan for their eventual return to the Philippines.

### Varied reasons for and circumstances of return to the Philippines

They had different reasons why they had to go home. There were also specific personal circumstances that made them return to the country. Rebecca got pregnant with a failed relationship with the father of her unborn child and became unemployed with the departure of her employers from Hong Kong back to Australia. She had no other recourse, especially because of her pregnancy but to return home. Nelsie had problem with her breast. Refusing the thought of earning money abroad just to shoulder the costs of being ill later and disdaining the idea of dying in a foreign land, she hurriedly came home from Lebanon. Cristeta also got sick with an enlarged neck. Her eldest daughter who finished medical school and had a successful practice told her to return home for good and assumed the responsibility of providing for the college education of her youngest brother and shouldering her parents' medical needs. Cristeta could then go home. Amy's eldest daughter pleaded her Saudi Arabian employer to release her mother because she and her siblings needed her. Her eldest son and daughter who earned their college degrees and have been gainfully employed from then on, took care of the family. Amy grabbed the opportunity to return and took care of her own children (and later her grandchildren). Myrna with all her children with college degrees and with a resolve to set up her own information technology (IT) company in the Philippines, returned home. She also got sick and that hastened her plan to return. Divine also got sick with a rare disease. But what prompted her return was the opportunity to work again as a teacher in the Philippines because of the government's K-12 program. She also wanted to be with her family and reckoned that she had enough money for a business. After attending some seminars, Ellen became financially literate and wanted to do

something for herself, not for her siblings and not for her fellow migrants, for whom she had devoted a lot of time and effort. She decided to come home and operate a baking business enterprise.

Ellen and Myrna deliberately planned for their return while Amy, Nelsie, Divine, and Cristeta did not. They would have stayed a little bit longer abroad had the circumstances been different. That did not mean, however, that the four have not prepared for a possible return in the Philippines. Amy, Nelsie, and Cristeta were no different from Ellen and Myrna. They worked hard and earned extra income by doing part-time jobs and buying and selling goods abroad and while on vacation in the Philippines. They were all frugal in their ways while abroad and saved money for their intended business and made investments in houses and farms. By the time that they were 'forced' by circumstances, they were 'ready to return' even without a deliberate plan like those of Ellen and Myrna. In the case of Divine, her desire to be with her family and the opportunity to work again as a teacher coincided. A totally different case was Rebecca. She had ovarian cysts and fearing that she would not bear a child, hurriedly had a relationship with a foreigner hoping that love would eventually develop between them. That did not happen and she got pregnant. She had to return with an unborn child to think of and was not ready to return home.

#### *Preoccupation and situation upon return*

Five women returnees, namely Rebecca, Myrna, Ellen, Nelsie and Divine are currently managing and operating their own profitable/thriving businesses. Divine teaches in a private school. The other two, Cristeta and Amy are preoccupied with being a barangay captain and a 'domestic helper' to her own children and grandchildren, respectively. All the women are satisfied and happy with their different occupations and preoccupations upon return.

Rebecca bounced back from the difficulties and social stigma of being a single mother. Using her Chemistry background and learning on her own, she developed and perfected her own mango- and calamansi-based products and currently manages a profitable company named McNester in Guimaras Province. The company has its own production plant and employs workers in nearby communities. Rebecca and her company have reaped rewards and recognitions from different government agencies and private organizations. She is also engaged in various charitable work among women and children and in projects that help OFWs and their families. Myrna established and currently is the CEO of Mynd Consulting, a BPO company providing services to companies in Europe and the United States. Myrna had no background at all in information technology. It was the child who she took care of in Hong Kong who taught her about the world of computer. She devoured all she can get from the web, educated and trained herself, crystallized a business idea and fulfilled her dream of having her own profitable business. Although lesser in scale, Ellen and Nelsie have their own businesses. Ellen manages a bakeshop, a small grocery store and a *batchoy* (noodle soup) business. Aside from that she is an NGO worker conducting financial literacy and business opportunity seminars for OFWs and their families in the province of Iloilo. Nelsie has four houses for rent and is at the same time employed in a recruitment company.

These businesses that the four women have established have secured them stable sources of income that provided them a comfortable life. But all of them had to face and overcome the challenges that cropped along the way. Despite earlier non-support of siblings and the United States recession's effects on her business, Myrna steered her company to stability. Overcoming seasonal plummeting sales, Rebecca had continuously earned profits for the company. Undaunted by apprehensions and early mismanagement concerns, Ellen's bakeshop is doing well. Nelsie had to stop her other businesses—farming, networking of beauty products and decided to concentrate on the most-



steady source of income, house rental. They were all former domestic helpers turned entrepreneurs and they are doing well in their new occupation.

Divine went back to teaching and on the side, engaged in her businesses--- buy and sell of beauty products and helping facilitate the migration of people in Italy for a fee. Upon return, Cristeta took care of her children and her grandchildren. After her children were gainfully employed and had their own profitable businesses, Cristeta trained her eyes to other people to take care of. Now, she is also the 'mother' of her own community as its barangay captain for years now. She longed to be with and be of service to her barrio mates, many of whom have also migrant relatives working in Italy. She helps solve problems of migrant families and helps migrants return home successfully. Amy went abroad because of her children. She went back permanently also because of them. She takes pride of taking care of them today, which she was not able to do when they were growing up. She is happy to be the 'domestic helper' of her own children and grandchildren.

### *3. Structural Description of Lived Experiences of Successful Return of Seven Domestic Helpers*

#### *Former domestic helpers' definitions and indicators of successful return*

Successful return of the domestic helpers means, first and foremost, returning home permanently ('for good' as they refer to it) after attaining the specific goals that they have set for migrating abroad. It was a return with pride and happiness that they were able to send their children to college, help financially their parents and siblings, and make investments and set up their own businesses, despite being 'mere domestic helpers' who did menial jobs for their employers. They have achieved a lot more than those who worked abroad as professionals.

Successful return also meant leading a comfortable life which is qualitatively different with what they had earlier before migration. Myrna recalled her own family's hand-to mouth-experience during her childhood which was a far cry from what she is today, a CEO of her own company. Neslie could not imagine her life today ('always have money in my wallet', 'making my money work for me') if she were not an industrious and a frugal OFW. Rebecca takes pride in bouncing back from a difficult life of a single mother to a company owner who spends portion of corporate profits in helping others. Ellen who was a domestic helper a large part of her life in the Philippines and abroad, has her own money and serves no one. Amy need not work anymore upon return because her children shoulder the family expenses. All her life, she had to work to meet her family's needs. Similarly, Cristeta is enjoying her retirement years without worrying about finances. Divine takes pride in returning to a teaching job, with some money and side-line business. This was not the case of many OFWs who she said, 'returned with nothing'—no job, business and money.

Successful return is being free of stress and worries of providing for family's needs and children's education. It also means being free from being a DH with an employer for years dictating what she ought to do. They were free from the stress of earning for the daily needs, family emergencies and demanding expectations put on their shoulders as the migrant-family provider. Successful return is also freedom to do what they like to do in their home country. They had not enjoyed such freedom as DH in a foreign land.

Finally, successful return, for Myrna, Ellen, Rebecca and Cristeta, means 'paying it forward' and 'giving back' to fellow OFWs, returnees, their families and other people in need. Paying forward includes sharing their own experiences and success stories to OFWs, returning migrants and their families in various fora and trainings. This also means engaging in various advocacies like addressing social costs of migration, curbing family dependency on remittances, migration and development projects and other concerns of

migrants and their families. 'Giving back', concretely means spending their own money to help women and children in need (Rebecca and Cristeta) and investing in a web application that will be used by OFWs world-wide (Myrna). 'Giving back' and paying it forward' are borne out of a strong empathy to people who are similarly situated like them earlier and stem from their Christian faith.

Such successful return is characterized with feelings of happiness and satisfaction from what they have accomplished as former domestic helpers and the respect that they have garnered from their own communities for their 'giving back and paying it forward' efforts.

#### Identified keys to successful return

The women returnees with varied migration and return migration experiences, identified similar keys to their successful return. It all started with a strong aspiration and determination to change one's life and those of their families' and children's lives for the better. That has meant enduring a hard and difficult life abroad to attain goals that would make their lives dramatically change.

Setting attainable goals means setting a time frame for migration and return, in which period goals are to be met. Before returning home for good, the women have laid concrete plans of what they intend to do upon return. That entailed earning extra income, regularly saving money, being frugal and saying 'No' to lavish wishes and demands of their own families. Their plans were provided with required capital. All of them said that they have learned from wrong attitudes and behaviors, and failed experiences of fellow OFWs who have wasted their hard-earned money.

Engaging in enterprises in securing sources of income upon return demanded from them to continuously learn and develop themselves. This means learning

new skills and knowledge. From being domestic workers, they have consciously learned and molded themselves as workers and hands-on owners and managers of their own business enterprises.

A strong aspiration to have a better life, a mindset of not giving up amidst challenges and a firm resolve not to consider working abroad again as an alternative characterized the successful return of the women DH. The strong aspiration to turn things around for the better continued upon their return. Such aspiration was coupled with the mindset of not giving up despite the challenges and apprehensions of their own families on their undertakings.

Key also to successful return is also a firm resolve not to return abroad and work again as an OFW. To them, migration should never be an alternative again, and that pushed them to work harder to be successful in their endeavors as migrant returnees.

#### *Circumstances that led to successful return*

The seven women differ in terms of length of work abroad. It was less than 10 years for Rebecca, Neslie, Amy, Cristeta and Divine and more than 20 years for Ellen and Myrna. Length of work abroad as DH did not, however, matter in their successful return.

Three circumstances were important in their successful return: 1) economic difficulties faced early in life that fostered a strong drive to aspire for a better life; 2) work with considerate and supportive employers who treated them decently, helped them financially and provided help in their return; and 3) relationship with children and siblings that fostered among them responsibility and hindered dependency. In the case, of Divine the opportunity provided to her by the government's K-12 education program enabled her to return as a teacher.

Except for Divine, they all experienced economic difficulties in varying degrees early in their lives. They all had a hard life in terms of their families being unable to provide food or secure the education of their children. Such a difficult life had fostered among them a strong drive and firm resolve to overcome challenges and to turn things around for a better life for themselves and their families by working as DH in foreign lands.

They all had experienced in varying degrees, difficulties in their work abroad, especially during their early years of stay or with their first employers. But things got a lot better when they finally worked with kind, considerate and supportive employers. These employers reciprocated the women's dedicated services to them with decent treatment, financial help, free time to engage in other activities and assistance in their return to the Philippines. Such considerate employers have helped them achieve what they set to attain.

Finally, it was a relationship that the women fostered with their children and siblings that enabled them to save, plan, invest, and hasten their return to the Philippines. Such a relationship that existed between the migrant women and their children/siblings produced responsible children/siblings who have appreciated their parents' and sister's hard work and sacrifices by not squandering received remittances, finishing their college education and later, shouldering the family expenses so that the migrant women could return. The women did not hide from them that they were DHs and revealed to them the hard work that they had to do while abroad just to earn the money that they send to them. They also did not tolerate undue demands and lavish spending tendency among their children and siblings. Such actuations have made them less dependent unlike other relatives of migrants.

The above three circumstances helped the other migrant women realize their successful return. Rebecca's case was different. She had to endure the difficulties of a single parent. It was a foundation and a home for unwed

mothers that took care of her in her most trying time. It was the situation of being unwed and having a child to rear alone that had driven her to aspire for a better life upon return. Her child served as her continuous inspiration. Another circumstance that finally turned her life around was when she got married and got a family of her own. She had a husband that she leaned on for emotional support and a complete family that inspired her to work harder in the Philippines.

#### *4. Synthesis/Essences of Lived Experiences of Successful Return of Seven Domestic Helpers*

The six women and former domestic helpers, all felt obligated to provide for their families' and children's needs (particularly their education). They worked and endured harsh conditions as foreign workers and attained goals that they have set for working abroad.

Their return was hastened by personal and immediate social circumstances (not by large scale economic-political and social circumstances). Illness, pregnancy, demand from their children to return home and resolve to implement business plans brought them home. In the case of Divine, an opportunity to come back and work as a teacher was present which she grabbed.

Successful return meant leading a comfortable life which is qualitatively different with the hard life they had before migration. All the women took pride that they attained a better life as domestic helpers who earned comparatively less than other OFWs (many of whom returned home with 'nothing').

Successful return for them is being free of stress and worries of providing for family's needs and children's education. It was a successful return for domestic helpers who created stable and reliable sources of income (businesses that

they owned, established and managed, and in the case of Divine, a teaching job) that provided them and their families a comfortable life.

It was a successful return for it was a transformation from being a domestic helper whose life abroad was at the mercy of her employer to a confident, free, and fearless woman. It was a transformation from a lowly regarded DH to a business owner and a respected individual who had given back to her community.

Circumstances and specific people helped in their successful return: 1) economic difficulties faced early in life that fostered a strong drive to aspire for a better life; 2) work with considerate and supportive employers who treated them decently, helped them financially and provided help in their return; and 3) relationship with children and siblings that fostered among them responsibility and hindered dependency.

More importantly, it was the women migrants themselves that made their successful return happen. Their attitudes and actuations before and during migration, and upon her return were the ultimate keys to their success:

--before migration: strong sense of obligation to fulfill their and their loved ones' dreams; strong regard for learning and education

--during migration: enduring hardships and remaining focused on set goals; disavowing negative ways of other OFWs; frugality and discipline in saving money; discouraged dependency of family members; reading and learning new things; planning what to do upon return and preparing for them

--upon return: facing the challenges and overcoming them; passionately pursuing the plans set; strong sense of giving back and paying forward; strong sense of achievement for one's sake after working for years for family and other people

The women are proud, happy and contented in their lives in the Philippines after a stressful, lonely, and hard work life of a DH abroad. These are the feelings of a successful (former domestic helper) returnee.

## **B. Analysis of Successful Return Experiences of Seafarers**

### *1. Main Themes of Seafarers' Lived Experiences*

Seven former seafarers, namely Rodolfo Aspillaga, Herminigildo 'Hermie' Alipat, Edwin Itable, Jose Dasas, Oscar Ricaflanca, Roberto Guansing, and Sofronio Dumael shared their life and work experiences as migrant returnees and as former seafarers.

Five main themes were derived from clustering the individual final themes of the seafarers: 1) Worked at sea to provide for family and carve a professional career; 2) Reasons and circumstances of return and preparations for returning home; 3) Indicators and meanings of success as seafarer and returnee; 4) Keys to success; and 5) Reasons of failures of other seafarers. For details on how the main themes were drawn, please see Appendix 4. Main Themes of Lived Experiences of Successful Return of Seven Seafarers.

The main themes and their subthemes were used to write the textural and structural descriptions of the lived experiences of the seafarers which eventually led to defining the essences of their successful return experiences.

### *2. Textural Description of Lived Experiences of Successful Return of Seven Seafarers*

All the seafarers except for one worked at sea for more than 20 years with Hermie staying the longest at sea, for 42 years. Six of them studied Marine Engineering, Marine Science or Nautical Science and underwent two years of academic training and another two years of apprenticeship at sea. Oscar was



the exception for he was a former manager of a radio communications company when he boarded ship and was hired and worked as radio officer at sea.

*Worked at sea to provide for family and carve a professional career*

They all worked as seafarers to help provide for the needs of their original family and later after they got married, for their own families. They also toiled hard at sea to send their children to college with the hope that college degrees would help secure their children's future.

Five of them, Hermie, Rodolfo, Edwin, Roberto and Jose also dreamt of building a career as a seafarer and wished to land on top positions, either as captain or as engineer. Hermie and Jose became chief engineers while Rodolfo and Edwin became captains. There was a career path that was available to seafarers—from being an apprentice to becoming a chief engineer or captain of the ship. The four succeeded, Roberto did not. Despite his qualifications, training and experiences, he was not promoted not even to a second mate position. Sofronio and Oscar did not pursue a career path at sea. Sofronio worked for a couple years to save enough capital for business while Oscar worked to send his children to college.

Hermie, Jose, Rodolfo, and Edwin successfully rose from the ranks. They underwent the necessary trainings, passed the required examinations and completed the necessary requirements and were eventually promoted to the cherished top positions at sea. They endured the hard work, made use of their experiences and accumulated practical knowledge, worked and blended well with their superiors of different nationalities, and showed dedication and ability in performing assigned responsibilities. These led to their eventual promotion to being an engineer or captain of the ship. As engineers and ship captains they were highly-paid. These professional positions enabled the four

seafarers to provide not only for their families' needs but also secured the financial security of their families and children.

### *Reasons and circumstances of return and preparations for returning home*

They had different reasons for returning home. They also returned in various circumstances. Rodolfo and Edwin were assigned to work in manning companies in the Philippines. Rodolfo alternately worked at sea as captain and a general manager and eventually as Senior Vice president in the company's land-based operations and Chief Operating Officer in its sea-based operations. Edwin was President and Chief Operations Officer in his company's manning agency. Both easily reintegrated in the Philippines with high paying jobs that were very much related to their former work at sea.

Hermie deliberately planned for his return. He saved and invested in farms continuously by buying land until his retirement as chief engineer. Oscar went home after the college graduation of his four children—the very reason why he boarded ship. Jose went home, confident that he had enough savings and that their sale of bicycle business in the Philippines would continue to grow and flourish. Roberto, frustrated and disappointed of not getting promoted, went home to help his wife attend to a flourishing dealership of veterinary products in Bulacan. After just more than four years at sea, Sofronio returned to help his wife operate their growing party needs business.

They might have been different in reasons and circumstances of return yet they all have returned with confidence. They were all confident that they and their families not only can survive without their seafarer's earnings but can live comfortably in the Philippines. They banked on their substantial savings, investments, and businesses that they have set up. They also have returned because they have attained what they have set as seafarers—provided for

the needs of the family and the children's education. They have prepared well for their return.

### Reasons of failures of other seafarers

They have set themselves to be different from many other seafarers. And that made them successful in their return. Many seafarers have lived beyond their means. They have splurged their hard-earned money and have engaged in vices like gambling, drinking and womanizing.

Unlike the wives of the successful seafarer-returnees, other seafarers' wives had not performed their roles well. They mismanaged the allotments they received from their husbands, led a lavish lifestyle and have not reared their children well.

Many wives and families of seafarers have become totally dependent on seafarers' earnings. To make things worse for some, they still face marital and other family problems which made it doubly difficult to prepare for their eventual return to the country.

The seven seafarers were of firm belief that most of their fellow seafarers have not laid out actual plans of return and were ill-prepared to return home. They said that other seafarers harbored and maintained a negative mindset that they could be working and earning as seafarers forever.

### *3. Structural Description of Lived Experiences of Successful Return of Seven Seafarers*

#### Indicators and meanings of success (as seafarer and returnee)

Asked of indicators of their success, the seafarers cited the following: 1) attainment of career goal (e.g. became a captain or chief engineer); 2)

attained high economic status and managing profitable businesses; 3) children with college degrees and good jobs; and 4) intact family with no major problems encountered.

Successful return to them is success in professional, financial and family aspects of life. Many were proud and fulfilled to rise from the ranks and attained the top positions in their sea career. This was the result of their hard work, perseverance and dedication.

Although financial success is important, to them it does not entirely define their success. Financial success to them does not mean much when the family is in disarray, when marriage breaks and when children fail in school. Success is being with their families, leading a happy and comfortable life without problems. Successful return means to be different with many seafarers who have broken families, marital problems, problems with their children, and financial difficulties.

Success means being able to change the life they had before (for some, which was mired with poverty) to a comfortable life borne out of hard work and perseverance. Hermie and Jose came from poor families. They overcame difficulties and turned their lives for the better, the exact opposite of what they had before when they were young.

Successful return means also bouncing back and being steadfast with set dreams and goals as a seafarer and returnee despite hardships, failures and frustrations and overcoming challenges. Roberto overcame his disappointments and frustrations at sea for not being promoted, bounced back and made a name as a successful businessman in Bulacan. Hermie despite disappointments with siblings that did not make full use of his financial help, with his failed first marriage which caused his emotional breakdown and

with his failures in his first business, bounced back with the help of his second wife and ran profitable farm businesses.

Success means also being able to do well as businessmen, trainers and public servants upon return by learning new craft and profession and by working and dealing well with others.

Success to them also means learning from the mistakes and failures of other seafarers. They avoided a lavish lifestyle and excessive spending that other seafarers were engaged in.

For Hermie, Rodolfo, Edwin and Oscar, success also meant being of service and help to fellow seafarers, and other people in their communities. Hermie helps his fellow seafarers earn a living upon return by engaging them in his cacao nursery business. Rodolfo and Edwin guide fellow seafarers, help others financially and send children to school as their scholars without expecting anything in return. Oscar as a barangay captain served his community well and is still engaged in environmental advocacies and concerns of senior citizens.

Success to all the seven seafarers means being fulfilled, satisfied and accomplished with what they have done and attained as a seafarer and a returnee.

#### Keys to successful return

Their successful return is largely attributed to their responsible wives and to their own attitudes and practices.

They all acknowledged the central role that their wives played in their success. Without their responsible wives, they could not have attained success. Their wives managed well the allotments sent to them, and spent them wisely. They also did not stop working and hence, contributed to the family income that

enabled the family to have substantial savings. Unlike other wives of seafarers, they had not become financially dependent. They also acted as 'fathers and mothers' to their growing children in the absence of their husbands. They have reared their children well. Their children finished and attained college degrees and are currently gainfully employed. The seafarers credited their wives of doing all these while they were away. Upon the seafarers return, the wives remained as good wives, mothers and able business partners. They are to be credited for an intact and happy family that the seafarers have returned to. Returning home for the seafarers became easy because of what their responsible wives had done and accomplished.

The seafarers' attitudes and actuations while at sea and when they returned also greatly contributed to their success. They did not deny that they enjoyed their life as seafarers (drinking, lavish lifestyle, drinking and even womanizing) when they were younger and were starting their career. They stopped this kind of life, exercised self-control, managed their finances, saved and worked harder to attain top positions when they got married and had children. They shied away from vices, became frugal and lived not beyond their means.

Upon return, they became committed in securing a good life for their families. Together with their wives, Hermie, Jose, Sofronio and Roberto managed their businesses well. Rodolfo and Edwin jointly run a recognized training center for ship officers.

They all focused on what to them was more important—securing their children's education and future of their families. Their families, their wives and children made them responsible family men. They all returned to an intact family and lead a happy and comfortable life.

#### *4. Synthesis/Essences of Lived Experiences of Successful Return of Seven Seafarers*

They all worked as seafarers to help provide for the needs of their original family and later after they got married, for their own families. They also toiled hard at

sea to send their children to college with the hope that college degrees would help secure their children's future. The majority dreamt of building a career as a seafarer and wished to land on top positions at sea, either as captain or as chief, first or second engineer.

They had different reasons for returning home. They returned also in various circumstances. They might have been different in reasons and circumstances of return yet they all have returned with confidence. They were confident that they and their families not only can survive even without their seafarer's earnings but can live comfortably in the Philippines. They banked on their substantial savings, investments, and businesses that they have set up. They have returned because they have attained what they have set as seafarers—provided for the needs of the family and the children's education. They have prepared well for their return.

Successful return means success in professional, financial and family aspects of life. Many of them were proud and fulfilled to rise from the ranks and attained the top positions in their sea career. This was the result of their hard work, perseverance and dedication. Although financial success is important, it did not entirely define their success. Financial success to them is not much when the family is in disarray, when marriage breaks and when children fails in school. Success is being with their families, leading a happy and comfortable life without problems.

Success is to be different with many seafarers who have broken families, marital problems, problems with their children, and financial difficulties. Success also meant being able to change the life they had before (for some, which was mired with poverty) to a comfortable life with sheer hard work and perseverance.

Success means also bouncing back and being steadfast with set dreams and goals as a seafarer and returnee despite hardships, failures, frustrations and challenges.

Success means also being able to do well as businessmen, trainers and public servants upon return by learning a new craft and profession and working and dealing well with others.

Success to them means learning from the mistakes and failures of other seafarers.

Success also meant being of service and help to fellow seafarers, and other people in their communities.

Their successful return is attributed to their responsible wives and to their own attitudes and practices. Without their responsible wives, they could not have attained success. The wives had managed well the allotments sent to them, and spent them wisely. They also did not stop working and hence, contributed to the family income and enabled the family to have substantial savings. They also acted as fathers and mothers to their growing children during the long absence of their husbands. They have reared their children well.

The seafarers' own attitudes and actions while at sea and when they returned also greatly contributed to their success. They exercised self-control and managed their finances and saved a lot and worked harder to attain top positions when they got married and had children. They shied away from vices, became frugal and lived not beyond their means. Upon return, they became committed in securing a good life for their families. Their families, their wives and children made them responsible family men. They all returned to an intact family and lead a happy and comfortable life.



## **C. Analysis of Successful Return Experiences of Professionals**

### *1. Main Themes of Professionals' Lived Experiences*

Eight former migrants who worked as professionals abroad participated in the study; four were women and another four were men. The former professionals who shared their experiences as migrant returnees and as former migrant professionals were Elisa Ledesma, Rodolfo Tubis, Ermie Garon, Fe Lao, Francisco 'Jun' Aguilar, Pol Espanola, Lea Estuye, and Nelson Marana.

The individual themes of the eight professionals were examined and clustered into the main themes that characterized the experiences of successful return of the occupational grouping of professionals. Five main themes were derived from clustering the individual themes of the experiences of the eight professionals. These main themes were 1) Work abroad to provide for their families and immediate relatives; 2) Different reasons of return but with confidence that they could live a good life in the Philippines; 3) Meanings and feelings of successful return; 4) Individual attributes and acts that explain successful return; and 5) Specific circumstances and people helped them achieve their successful return. Please see details of how the main themes were derived in Appendix 5. Main Themes of Lived Experiences of Successful Return of Eight Professionals.

The five main themes and their subthemes were used to write the textural and structural descriptions of the lived experiences of professionals which eventually led to defining the essences of their successful return experiences.

### *2. Textural Description of Lived Experiences of Successful Return of Eight Professionals*

They were trained as professionals in the Philippines and seven of them were working before they migrated. It was only Ermie who was out of work for she

had to tend to her children. The others were working as professionals in the Philippines yet with salaries that were not enough to provide for their families and siblings.

*Work abroad to provide for their families and immediate relatives*

Except for Lea who went abroad for a short period of time (two years) to gain training in a Singaporean school in Indonesia to enhance her professional advancement in the Philippines, the rest, Ermie, Jun, Rodolfo, Fe, Nelson, Pol, and Elisa worked for more than 10 years as professionals abroad. All of them eventually exercised their professions while abroad. Ermie, Pol and Jun were earlier hired to positions that were not compatible with their professional training but eventually were promoted to positions that were attuned with their professional training as engineers and accountant.

As migrant professionals, they were hired by large companies, hospitals, and a school that provided them with high salaries and benefits. These handsome remunerations, enabled them to provide for their immediate families and other relatives, the greatest reason why they migrated and worked abroad. These handsome monetary benefits made them enjoy life in Saudi Arabia, Palau and Indonesia. Pol, Jun, Rodolfo, and Nelson lived with their families in Saudi Arabia; Ermie for some time with her husband and youngest son in Palau, and Elisa with her husband in Saudi Arabia.

*Different reasons of return but with confidence that they could live a good life in the Philippines*

Two of them, Pol and Elisa returned due to the mandatory retirement age of 60 in Saudi Arabia. They made the most of their allowable stay in Saudi Arabia and reaped the benefits that the host country gave to them as retirees.

The five others---Fe, Rodolfo, Jun, Nelson and Ernie---returned from different circumstances but of almost with the same compelling reasons. They all felt that it was about time to be with their families, to live in the Philippines with their hard-earned money and manage their own businesses in the country. Ernie felt that she had enough to live in the Philippines and started her construction business. She computed and raised the money that she needed for the said purposes. Rodolfo also felt that it was time to be with his family and managed the agriculture-based businesses that he had set up in the Philippines. Jun set his goal of returning to the Philippines before he reached 40 which he eventually fulfilled. He set up a company in the Philippines for him and his colleagues in Saudi Arabia. Fe went home upon the request of her husband to run for election and help in the family business. She warmly acceded to the request for she wanted to be with her husband and two daughters. Nelson decided to return and set up their family businesses in Bicol when her wife finally migrated to Ireland.

Lea of course was different. She returned after two years of teaching in a school and after gaining her desired training in that Singaporean school in Indonesia. It was just what she wanted and after she achieved it, she returned home without any hesitation. She was further encouraged by a promising career in the Department of Education in the Philippines.

All the professionals prepared well for their return and hence, confidently returned. Their confidence stemmed from having substantial amounts of savings, huge retirement money, investments made in the Philippines in financial markets and real estate, and the promise of viable businesses that they would manage upon return and promising professional careers that awaited them in the Philippines.

How were they able to raise the needed resources for their return and became confident that they could live a comfortable life in the Philippines even without working as an OFW? Like any other OFW, they also set their goals for their

migration. The difference was these migrant professionals (except for Lea) quantified these goals in monetary terms and raised these money by working hard, and securing other sources of additional income (other jobs, engagement in small businesses). Future family expenses (before and upon return in the Philippines) were estimated and computed. Sources of income were determined to make sure that these funds were systematically raised. They computed what they needed to raise for their children's education, the cost of living in the Philippines even without a stable job in the Philippines, and the needed capital for their intended businesses. They eventually raised these money through hard work, prudence in spending and managing well their finances. Jun had a deliberate plan together with his professional friends in Saudi Arabia. They pooled their savings to be the seed capital in their intended marketing business. Jun set up and managed the business and other businesses in the Philippines for he was the first among them to return permanently to the Philippines. Up to now, even with the additional recruitment agency and construction businesses, he and his friends remain as the companies' main stockholders.

In the words of Pol, they all have attained financial freedom—the capability to live decently for years without worry about their sources of income because they have secured stable and reliable sources of income. Most of them have profitable businesses that provided for their families.

It was only Elisa, a nurse, that has expressed some fear upon return. Elisa having enjoyed life in Saudi for more than 30 years, and accustomed with the comfortable life there, initially feared of not being able to adjust to a life in the Philippines upon return. She feared of a life without the efficient services that a government provides. She feared for a life in which her needs are not provided for. She also feared that she could not easily integrate socially in a community that became alien to her. She, however, eventually dismissed these fears, comforted that she would be finally be with her husband and daughter and would be living as a family in the Philippines.

### *3. Structural Description of Lived Experiences of Successful Return of Eight Professionals*

#### *Meanings and feelings of successful return*

Successful return meant a return to the Philippines with a life better than before they left for abroad. Success meant essentially a higher economic status than before. Ermie and his husband, both engineers, had difficulty raising their children before they migrated. They relied on loans and financial help from church friends to economically survive. All the others, found their lives now a lot better economically than when they were with their parents and before they migrated. These better lives were outcomes of their work abroad and how they made the most out of it by not squandering what they earned and by preparing well for their eventual return to the Philippines.

Successful return, essentially is financial success. Success in terms of profitable businesses, acquired properties, and substantial financial investments which secured their relative smooth return. It was an attainment of financial freedom—a worry-free financial status that afford them a comfortable life.

Financial success would not have been possible if they were not hired by large companies and institutions which paid them high salaries and provided enormous benefits. Financial success would not have been possible if they did not save, managed their finances and made good investments. The success in managing businesses, in the case of Jun and Fe in part was due to their openness to learn the business and their persistence despite business setbacks. Jun enrolled in a Masters in Business Administration (MBA) course to learn more about doing business and to establish business contacts. Fe and her husband learned how to perfect the production of coconut sugar and other products by experimentation and soliciting professional advice. Both Jun and Fe, did not despair in earlier business losses; they persisted and made their businesses grow and became profitable.

Successful return migration entailed attainment of professional growth (i.e. gained knowledge and professional training, reached top positions in their companies and institutions with high salaries and benefits. They all took pride in attaining top positions in their exercise of professions abroad with corresponding high salaries and benefits. Elisa deemed her success as both financial and professional. Not only had she brought home substantial amounts of savings, she also took pride in attaining a nurse-trainer position in a known American-owned and operated hospital in Saudi Arabia. She returned with the knowledge and skills that she got from years of work in the hospital. For Leah, her return was essentially a professional successful return as a learned and professionally trained teacher. Leah and Elisa learned advanced knowledge and skills from their professions and achieved higher positions in their work institutions while abroad. Leah is still using her professional training abroad in her current professional position in the Philippines.

Successful return meant a happy and intact family life, good marriage, and responsible children. This despite years of separation from their families. A large part of their happiness upon return is being with their families, having a good marriage and having educated and financially-capable children, so much unlike of many OFWs and returnees that they know of. They all expressed happiness and contentment in a comfortable life with their families.

Successful return also meant in addition to being able to provide for their own families and children, extending financial help to other relatives. For three of them who engaged in politics, success and fulfillment meant also providing help to other people. A high financial status enabled them to help others other than their wives and children. Pol was extraordinary; he sent his seven siblings to college and helped them establish their own businesses. The hardware and construction supply business that he set up is a family business but made its workers as stockholders of the company. Ermie, Nelson and Jun are into politics and are leaders of established OFW parties. Jun acts as the chief of staff of the party's representative in Philippine Congress. Nelson serves as a Board Member

of the provincial government of Albay. The three have spent their own money, time and expertise in helping fellow migrants, returnees and constituents of their parties and communities.

The seven professionals attached self-fulfillment, satisfaction and contentment in what they have accomplished and achieved as OFWs and upon return to the Philippines. They are happy and contented with their lives in the Philippines. These feelings form a large part of their successful return.

### Individual attributes and actions that explain successful return

The individual attributes and the actions that the professionals took in preparing for their return largely explain their successful return. Individual attributes and actions include the following:

- 1) hard work, dedication to profession which reaped for them top positions, salaries and benefits (two even had side-line jobs aside from their professional work);
- 2) setting of concrete and attainable goals for their migration and quantifying these goals in monetary terms;
- 3) planning well for their return: a) computed the amount of money they needed upon return (costs of education of their children, living expenses, capital needed for their intended businesses, miscellaneous expenses without having no regular income for years upon return and raised the needed money while abroad; b) set up businesses and acquired properties that can be used for businesses while they were still abroad
- 4) exercised discipline, prudence in managing their finances, and deliberately saved money for intended purposes

5) avoiding the mistakes of other OFWs in managing finances, making investments and setting up businesses and in maintaining an intact family and raising responsible children

They learned from the mistakes and misdeeds of other OFWs (e.g. living lavishly mismanaging their money, engaging in extra marital affairs, etc.). Their vow to be different and be the exact opposite of many OFWs helped them attain a successful migration and return to the Philippines.

Specific circumstances and people helped them achieve their successful return

Although their own attributes and actions largely explain their successful return, specific circumstances and people helped the eight professionals achieve their successful return to the country. Two circumstances helped them achieve success:

1) employment in companies and institutions which provided good work setting, recognized their hard work and dedication, and provided them and their families (for those who brought along their wives and children abroad) handsome salaries and benefits

Pol, Rodolfo, Jun, Nelson, Fe, and Elisa worked in Saudi Arabia. Their companies and hospitals provided them not only professional training but also high salaries and benefits. With these remunerations and provisions that they received, not only were they able to enjoy the life in Saudi Arabia but they made substantial savings and investments that boded well for their permanent return to the Philippines. Their companies and institutions unlike employers of other OFWs, have treated them well as foreign workers. Ermie worked as one of the earliest women engineers in Palau. Her company provided handsome profit-sharing



schemes to its employees. Lea was grateful for the training that she got as a teacher from a Singaporean school in Indonesia. That training helped her bag a high position in the Department of Education in the Philippines.

2) having a responsible wife or husband and responsible children; for Jun, fellow professional OFWs who pooled their money to set up businesses in the Philippines

Nelson, Rodolfo, and Fe credited their spouses for managing well their family finances while they were abroad. They credited their wives and husbands for raising their children to be responsible by imposing discipline to their children, and impressing upon them the need to be prudent in spending money. The children of these eight professionals finished/or are about to finish college and many are gainfully employed. Some have been helpful in managing their family businesses. Fe, Lea, Elisa, Ermie, and Nelson found it immensely helpful that their husbands and wife were earning which contributed to the family finances before, during migration and even upon their return. Dependency on remittances was absent in the spouses of these eight professionals.

#### *4. Synthesis/Essences of Lived Experiences of Successful Return of Eight Professionals*

The former migrant professionals sought to provide for their immediate families and other relatives. It was the greatest reason why they migrated and worked abroad.

All prepared well for their return and hence, confidently returned. Their confidence stemmed from having substantial amounts of savings, huge retirement money, investments made in the Philippines in financial markets and real estate, and the promise of viable business that they would manage upon return and promising professional careers that await them in the Philippines.

Successful return for the eight professionals meant a return to the Philippines which means a life better than before they left for abroad---when they were young and/or when they were starting their own families in the Philippines. Success meant essentially a higher economic status than before.

Successful return essentially is financial success in terms of profitable businesses, acquired properties, and substantial financial investments which secured their smooth and easy return home. It is the attainment of financial freedom—a worry-free financial status that can afford a comfortable life.

Successful return entailed attainment of professional growth (i.e. gained knowledge and professional training, reached top positions in their companies and institutions with high salaries and benefits. They all took pride in attaining top positions in their exercise of professions abroad with corresponding high salaries and benefits.

Successful return meant returning to a happy and intact family life, good marriage, and responsible children. They all expressed happiness and contentment in a comfortable life with their families with stable sources of income.

Successful return also meant in addition to being able to provide for their own families and children, providing financial help to other relatives and even to other people.

They all attached self-fulfillment, satisfaction and contentment in what they have accomplished and achieved as OFWs and upon return to the Philippines. They are happy and contented with their lives in the Philippines. These feelings formed part of their successful return.

Two circumstances helped the eight professionals achieve a successful return:

1) employment in companies and institutions which provided good work setting, recognized their hard work and dedication, and provided them and their families handsome salaries and benefits; and

2) a responsible wife or husband who managed remittances well and became able business partners and/or have raised their children well and responsible children who brought no problem to the family, finished their education and are earning their own living.

## **D. Analysis of Successful Return Experiences of Workers**

### *1. Main Themes of Workers' Lived Experiences*

Eight individuals, four men and four women, who worked as skilled and semi-skilled workers abroad participated in the study. These former migrant workers who shared their experiences were Glen Barrera, Jaime Sequio, Loreto Soriano, Lucita Cerbas, Magdalena Garcia Rogelio, Marites Nagrono, Nasrine Evangelio, and Yco Tan. The individual themes of the eight former workers were examined and clustered into the main themes that characterized the experiences of successful return of the occupational grouping of workers.

The main themes drawn from the experiences of the eight workers were as follows: 1) Worked as skilled or semi-skilled workers to provide for family and education of children and siblings, save for business or prove one's worth to the family; 2) A life with their families and other reasons and circumstances for return; 3) Life and engagements upon return to the Philippines; 4) Meanings and feelings attached to successful return; and 5) Individual acts, role of other people and circumstances that led to the attainment of successful return.

Please see Appendix 6. Main Themes of Lived Experiences of Successful Return of Eight Workers for the details on how the main themes were derived.

The five main themes and their subthemes were used to write the textural and structural descriptions of the lived experiences of the workers which eventually led to defining the essences of their successful return experiences.

## *2. Textural Description of Lived Experiences of Successful Return of Eight Workers*

Except for Nasrine, the former workers abroad were all undergraduates, unable to finish a four-year college degree in the Philippines. In Saudi Arabia, Brunei, Oman, Vietnam and Qatar, they took different skilled, semi-skilled or unskilled worker jobs such as a sewer, fire protection foreman, telex operator, promo girl, quality assurance manager, hotel desk service officer, and as warehouse boy. These jobs were the same or related to what they had before in the Philippines or in the case of Nasrine, a job that is much related to Hotel and Restaurant Management, the degree course that she attained.

### *Worked as skilled or semi-skilled workers to provide for family and education of children and siblings, save for business or prove one's worth to the family*

They went abroad for different reasons. For five participants—Jaime, Loreto, Lucita, Marites and Yco—who were married and have children when they went abroad, the intent was to provide for their families and for their children's education (from elementary to college). They had work in the Philippines but what they earned was not enough to lead a comfortable life nor enough to send their children to school and college. The costs of college education in the Philippines were so high so much so that many of them had to do part-time work aside from their regular jobs abroad to earn more. Lucita and Jaime admitted that they had not much with them as savings when they permanently returned to the Philippines because most of their earnings went to the college education of their children.

For Nasrine, Glen and Magdalena, who were single when they migrated, the purpose of working abroad was to save for their intended business (Glen and Magdalena) or to prove one's worth to the family by making the most out of work abroad and making it in the Philippines when she returned (Nasrine). The three were not obligated to provide for their families. They did send money to their parents and siblings in the Philippines but these were not often nor in big amounts. Unlike those who had families, the three had kept much of their earnings for themselves.

They worked for an average of about 11 years abroad. Glen, who stayed the least abroad, worked for about five years in Brunei while Jaime and Yco, worked the longest abroad, both in Saudi Arabia for more than 19 years. Due to their hard work and good job performance, five of them were promoted to higher positions (Nasrine, Magdalena, Yco, Glen, Jaime). Nasrine became an assistant hotel desk supervisor. Glen assumed the lead sewer position in the factory. Jaime became a foreman supervising many technicians. Magdalena was a recognized capable and tough quality assurance (QA) manager. But it was Yco who really rose from the ranks, from being a worker to becoming a mall manager. From being a warehouse boy, he was promoted as store employee. Later, he became a supervisor and an assistant mall manager. It was to be the end of his promotion because he could not be a mall manager for he had no college degree. He continuously egged his bosses to promote him as mall manager. His bosses eventually relented by sending him to a correspondence school in South Africa before he was given the mall manager position.

Half of them (Glen, Loreto, Lucita, Marites) took sideline jobs (i.e. Glen cleaned houses and sold telephone cards in Brunei; Loreto cleaned houses and worked as a barber in Saudi Arabia. Lucita catered food for parties of fellow OFWs in Oman; Marites massaged clients other than her employers in Saudi Arabia.) They all wanted to earn and save more to provide for the needs of their families, most importantly, for their children's college education.

*A life with their families and other reasons and circumstances for return*

They had varied reasons for returning to the Philippines. The foremost reason for many of them was to be with their families/children or to start their own families in the Philippines. They felt that it was time to go home and live with their loved ones who they have left for a long time. Two of them wanted to start a family of their own in the Philippines. Nasrine and her husband wanted their first baby to be born in the Philippines while Magdalena and her husband wanted to be with their baby in the Philippines. Unlike other migrant couples, they did not want to be separated from their husbands and children. Many of them, confident that they have saved enough returned to start their own businesses in the country. Having had to work for others for a long time, they wanted to be their own employers, so to speak, when they returned to the Philippines.

Aside from the above-cited reasons, there were circumstances that led them to return home. For Marites, it was the difficulty of finding a new employer in Dubai who would give her a work visa and her fear that her children in their adolescence would go astray without her guidance that made her go home permanently. Lucita's children pleaded her to go home for they had already finished college; are earning and can shoulder the family expenses. The children also feared of her health for she started suffering from hypertension in Oman. They promised her this time around that they would work for her and her husband. Jaime was disappointed with the last company that he worked for in Saudi Arabia for it was not paying him on time; his salaries were often delayed. He thought of no reason anymore for staying abroad for all his children had finished college, the very reason why he went to work abroad. Loreto was frustrated that he was not promoted despite his hard work and good performance. He planned for his return-- secured his employment in a recruitment agency before returning to the Philippines and eventually owned and operated his own recruitment agency. Yco and his wife, although receiving high salaries as mall manager and nurse in Saudi Arabia realized that

their future was not in Saudi Arabia where they could not be permanent residents nor in the United States which they reckoned is a foreign land for tourists and not for foreigners like them to live. Loreto, Yco, Glen, Nasrine, Magdalena, and Marites thought that they had raised enough to live decently and start their own businesses in the Philippines. They all felt that it was time to finally return and start their life back in the Philippines.

### *Life and engagements upon return to the Philippines*

Upon return, all except two workers engaged in family businesses. Yco has his beauty salons and spa centers, distributes beauty supplies and equipment, and operates his own training school in Bicol. Loreto manages a recruitment agency that sends skilled workers and professionals to the Middle East and two IT companies. Nasrine helps her husband in his eatery and car wash businesses and works on line as a language tutor and agent of beauty products. Marites has her own rice trading businesses for years now. Jaime operates a pension house with many rooms for rent for tourists in Guimaras island.

They all had experienced difficulties in their earlier business engagements. But they all have recovered and are currently managing their growing and profitable businesses. Glen lost his million-worth of savings in his early business endeavors. His restaurant and computer shop businesses closed shop and he went bankrupt. Helped by a mayor-benefactor, he slowly built and established his sewing business. He currently supplies Shoe Mart (SM), the largest retail mall in the Philippines, some of its signature clothes that are sold nationwide. It took some years before Loreto's recruitment business earned. He expanded his businesses by operating two IT companies. Yco lost money in his tailoring and beauty parlor businesses. He recovered and set up a string of salons and spas, a training school and a distributorship of beauty supplies and equipment in his home province. All the businesses of Glen, Yco, Loreto, Nasrine, Marites and Jaime are now earning and have been dependable sources of income for

their families. Yco's and Loreto's businesses, however, are the biggest and most profitable among them.

Lucita and Magdalena are not into business. Lucita devotes her time to church and migrant advocacy work. She need not work because her children upon her return have supported her and her husband. It was their promise to her that she no longer needed to work for them and it was their turn to reciprocate her for her sacrifices. Magdalena, who at 40 had her first child, devotes most of her time as a wife and a mother. This was a far cry from her previous quality assurance (QA) manager's job but she has no complaints because she enjoyed the work at home, especially that of nurturing and raising her child. She helps her husband manage the finances of their T-shirt printing, sari-sari (small grocery) store and party needs' rental businesses.

Yco, Jaime, Loreto, and Glen, who have profitable businesses are "sharing their blessings'. Yco's companies are into CSR (corporate social responsibility), doing free trainings, haircut and other services to communities in the Bicol region. Loreto helped many aspiring OFWs to find jobs abroad and helped them to be successful in their endeavors. Yco, Loreto, and Lucita (who has no business of her own) are active in helping fellow OFWs and returnees and are migrant and development/migrant rights and welfare advocates. Glen provides scholarships to poor students in his community and encourages them that after their graduation to pay it forward to others what he had done for them. Jaime aside from being active in business associations, actively participates in local politics. Egged by many people, he ran, won, and lost in the municipal elections. These former workers abroad, also driven by Christian beliefs and compassion, wanted to help others.



### *3. Structural Description of Lived Experiences of Successful Return of Eight Workers*

#### *Meanings and feelings attached to their successful return*

For the former workers abroad, success meant in general terms, the attainment of goals for migration (e.g. education of children, business of their own, good family life and financial security) after working hard and overcoming difficulties during migration and upon return to the Philippines. They all are happy with the thought that their sacrifices paid off. They returned after accomplishing what they have set for working in another country.

They are also one in saying that successful return is not simply the attainment of material/financial success. More importantly, successful return means attained happiness and contentment in living a good marital and/or family life upon return to the Philippines. Although acknowledging that financial security for the family's welfare and future is important, they all see a happy and intact family life as paramount and the most important in successful return. Yco, Loreto, Lucita and Jaime are back in the Philippines with their families intact unlike many other OFW families. They are happy living with their wives and husbands. Marites is separated from her husband but is still happy because her children are living with her and did not went astray unlike other migrant children. Magdalena and Nasrine went home precisely to build a happy family life. They returned with their husbands who were also OFWs so that they could have a family life in the Philippines.

Except for Glen, Magdalena, and Nasrine who do not have grown-up children, all others take pride and satisfaction in raising responsible children who are college graduates and are earning a living. Lucita, for one, views her success essentially as having children who were successful and accomplished. She returned with not much money even after working for a long time abroad for what she earned went to providing for the family and her children's education. She does not have a big house nor any other real estate property to speak of

nor had established a business upon return. All she had were her children who were accomplished, making a living and who promised to take care of her and her husband. She said that her children's success was her own success.

For Yco and Loreto, who have successfully established big and profitable businesses and have gained more material possessions when compared with the others, success is the attainment of 'a far better life' than before. 'Life before' means the life that they had before when they were young which was characterized with poverty/economic hardships. 'Life before' also means the difficult life when they were starting their own families, with their wives and young children while still working in the Philippines.

Individual acts, role of other people and circumstances that led to the attainment of successful return

The workers' successful return is largely explained by what they did when they were still abroad and when they returned to the Philippines. There were people who played a role in their successful return. There were also circumstances abroad and in the Philippines that they were in that helped them attain their successful return.

Their individual acts differentiated them from other migrants who failed in their return. Unsuccessful migrants include those who earned more than them. The successful former workers treated work abroad as an opportunity to earn and save money. Time abroad for them should not be wasted. Although some of them were not responsible in managing their money during their early years abroad, they eventually realized with the help of other significant people like their wives that they should not waste their time and money abroad. They eventually exercised prudence in managing their finances and disavowed extravagance exhibited by other migrants and returnees.

Most of them laid out concrete plans of their return, i.e. business to undertake, amount of money to be raised, etc. In Yco's words, a plan meant putting numerical values to what you needed, wanted to do and set up in the Philippines upon return. Except for Magdalena and Lucita who opted to become full time wives and mothers, all others engaged in work and business that they were knowledgeable of or had previous experience on or had studied well. They were persistent in overcoming business setbacks and challenges and exercised hands-on-management of business. Glen exemplified such strong attitude and persistence to face hardships in doing business. He went bankrupt and broke several times until finally hitting it big in business.

Putting the interests of the family first among others, they nurtured relations with their wives or husbands. For those who have grown up children, they raised children who were fully aware of their work and difficulties abroad. That awareness of their difficulties abroad made their children responsible and drove them to reciprocate their parents' sacrifices by finishing their studies and making a life of their own.

Other people were also important to the attainment of their success:

1. *A responsible husband or wife who is a good parent and/or a responsible business partner.* Lucita has a husband who reared, imposed discipline on children, and monitored their studies while she was abroad. Yco has a hardworking wife who contributed to family income while abroad and initiated and directed his focus to secure their family's future. Loreto has a wife who took care of their children and managed their starting business while he was abroad. Jaime has a wife who raised her children well and helped her in making business decisions. Nasrine and Magdalena have husbands who are hands-on in managing their family businesses.

2. *Responsible children who were aware of their parents' sacrifices.* Although most of them reared their children well, Lucita and Marites were exemplary. They never hid what their work was abroad to their children. Lucita and Marites, most probably earned less than the others as promo girl and masseuse, respectively. They raised their children to be frugal in spending the money that they sent them. They made them live with tight budget, eating and living not extravagantly. Their children remained diligent and eventually finished their studies.

Two circumstances that the former workers were in also contributed to their successful return: 1) good companies that they worked for and 2) earlier fears and difficult experiences. The companies that Yco, Jaime, Nasrine, Magdalena, Glen, and Lucita worked for, and some employers for Marites, provided them high salaries and/or other benefits like free food, travel, and accommodation which helped them provide for their families and enabled them to save more money. Yco's company went further by shouldering his further education in South Africa which in turn led to him being promoted as a mall manager.

For some of them, earlier fears and difficulties that they experienced served as motivation for them to strive harder while abroad. Loreto was insecure of his job abroad, fearing that he might lose it any time. He feared of a return to the Philippines without securing a stable life for his family, without savings, no business and no employment upon return. He also did not want to experience again a life of poverty just like when he was young. Such strong fears drove him to plan for his return and to secure the sources of income for his family upon return. Marites' separation from her husband, who did not provide for his children, drove her to work abroad and overcome all the challenges to provide for her three children.

#### *4. Synthesis/Essences of Lived Experiences of Successful Return of Eight Workers*

Those married among them went abroad to provide for their families and for their children's education. For those who were single when they migrated, the purpose of working abroad was to save for their intended business or to prove one's worth to the family by making the most out of work abroad and making it in the Philippines upon return.

The foremost reason for many of them why they returned was to be with their families/children or to start their own families in the Philippines, after staying for so long in another country. They felt that it was time to go home and live with their loved ones who they have left for a long time.

For all of them, success meant the attainment of goals for migration (e.g. education of children, business of their own, good family life and financial security) by working hard and overcoming difficulties during migration and upon return.

Successful return is not simply material/financial success. More importantly, successful return means for them attained happiness and contentment in living a good marital and/or family life upon their return to the Philippines.

Except for those who do not have grown-up children yet, all others take pride and satisfaction in having raised responsible children who are college graduates and are earning a living. They view their children and their children's success as their own success.

Success is the attainment of 'a far better life' than before. 'Life before' means the life that they had before when they were young which was characterized with poverty/economic hardships. 'Life before' also means the difficult life when they were starting their own families, with their wives and young children while working in the Philippines.

The workers' successful return is largely explained by what they did when they were still abroad and when they returned to the Philippines. Their individual acts differentiated them from others who failed in their return. They treated work abroad as an opportunity to earn and save money.

Other people were also important to the attainment of their success: a) a responsible husband or wife who was a good parent and/or a responsible business partner; and b) responsible children who were aware of their parents' sacrifices and who reciprocated their sacrifices by finishing their studies and making a living.

Two circumstances also contributed to their successful return: good companies that they worked for and earlier fears and difficult experiences. The companies and some employers provided for their families and enabled them to save more money. For some of them, earlier fears and difficulties that they experienced served as motivation for them to strive harder while abroad.

### **E. Analysis of Successful Return Experiences of Women and Men Migrants**

The 30 participants of the study were grouped into men and women. The two sex groups were equivalent in size with 15 individuals each. The group of women was comprised of seven former domestic helpers, four professionals and four workers while the group of men consisted of seven seafarers, four professionals and four workers.

The individual final themes drawn from the analyses of the experiences of the 15 women and 15 men were listed separately. They were clustered into main themes of successful return for women and for men migrants. The summary of results of these thematization processes are presented in Table 9. The full table with the main themes and complete subthemes is in Appendix 7.

## 1. Main Themes of Successful Return of Migrant Men and Women

The main themes and subthemes were compared and used to write the comparative textural and structural descriptions of the lived experiences of men and women migrants. Afterwards, the essences of their successful return experiences of men and women migrants were compared to find similarities and differences.

Table 9 Main Themes of the Lived Experiences of Successful Return of Migrant Women and Migrant Men

<b>Main Themes of Successful Return of Migrant Women</b>	<b>Main Themes of Successful Return of Migrant Men</b>
A. Worked in varied jobs and countries for 5-25 years to provide for their children's college education among other reasons	A. Worked as seafarers in different types of ships, as skilled workers and as engineers and accountant for companies primarily to provide for their families and secure a better life for them
B. Endured hard work, homesickness and loneliness for being away from home and their children; all DH and two workers experienced exploitation from their first employers (i.e. non-stop work, verbal abuse, other forms of maltreatment)  Most of them aside from their regular jobs had part-time jobs to earn and save more for their families and children	B. Most seafarers rose from the ranks; one worker from being a warehouse boy to becoming a mall manager; most workers and all professionals promoted to responsible positions  Many of them describe their experience abroad as difficult yet fulfilling jobs.
C. Returned for varied reasons, foremost of which was attainment of main goal of migration--children finishing college; coupled with acquired sickness (at least five of them) and pleadings of their children to come home/promising them that they (children) would provide for them	C. Different circumstances and reasons of return, deliberately planned or not, were ready to return because of secured sources of income--- employment, owned and managed businesses, with substantial amounts of savings brought home
D. Upon return, seven manage (micro to medium) family businesses built from their savings, three DH-women and two worker-women opted to be full time-homemakers/mothers while three are employed (as teacher, education expert and on line language tutor)	

Main Themes of Successful Return of Migrant Women	Main Themes of Successful Return of Migrant Men
<p>E. Varied meanings of successful return</p> <p>Dominant meanings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-- fulfilling set dreams for migration, especially children attaining their college degrees; children's success is their own success</li> <li>-- satisfaction out of being a successful returnee recognized for her accomplishments</li> <li>--attaining a decent/comfortable life through work overseas, employment and business, a far cry from life before</li> <li>-- not essentially material nor financial success but an intact family and worry-free, happy not necessarily affluent life</li> <li>--attainment of freedom to do what one wants and not serving anybody</li> </ul>	<p>D. Meanings and feelings attached to successful return</p> <p>Dominant meanings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>--success meant setting goals and achieving them despite difficult challenges</li> <li>--acquired high economic status, financial success/financial freedom that allowed the family to afford its wants and desires</li> <li>---professional success, i.e. rose from the ranks and attained top or responsible positions in companies that employed them</li> <li>--a good family life—good marriage and responsible children who finished college</li> <li>---peace of mind attained by living in the Philippines and no need to work in a stress, anxiety, worry-filled abroad</li> </ul>
<p>F. Keys to success</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-- exercise financial prudence while abroad and upon return</li> <li>--planned and prepared well for return (saved for what the family needs upon return enough until stable sources of income were established; saved enough money and invested them properly)</li> <li>-- raised children to be responsible, frugal, and to value their education</li> <li>--firm resolve not to work again abroad by working and earning in the Philippines</li> </ul>	<p>E. Attitudes, acts done towards success</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>--treated work abroad as an opportunity and blessing not to be wasted—frugal, exercised self-discipline and no vices, avoided the mistakes of other seafarers</li> <li>--devised a concrete plan (with numerical values) of return to the Philippines</li> <li>---engaged in work and business that one has knowledge and skills; overcoming business setbacks by learning the businesses</li> <li>-- put family first, nurtured relations with wife and children</li> </ul>
<p>G. Circumstances (significant people, events, relationships, situation, experiences) in successful return</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>---bad experiences like economically difficult life, separation from husband, etc. motivated them to strive harder</li> <li>--kind and generous employers afforded them to save and return</li> <li>---responsible children who managed finances and have done well in school</li> </ul>	<p>F. Circumstances (significant people, events, relationships, situation, experiences) in successful return</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-- central role played by wife (managed remittances and family finances well, etc.)</li> <li>--good companies enabled them to have substantial savings for their return</li> <li>--negative experiences like economic hardships, frustrations of not getting promotions, initial setback in businesses drove them to strive harder</li> </ul>



Seven main themes were gathered from women migrants' experiences while six themes were identified with men migrants. They were similar but were different in content. These themes were used to compare the descriptions and essences of their lived experiences of successful return to the Philippines.

## *2. Comparative Textural Description of Successful Return of Men and Women Migrants*

### Reasons and circumstances of migration of men and women

Migrants worked abroad for varied reasons, foremost of which was to provide for the needs of their families and their future. This was expressed by the majority, for both men and women who were married and have children. For women (mothers), it was more explicit—they went abroad to provide for their children's education till they earn their college degrees. For men (fathers), the desire to provide a better future for their families as traditionally expected main breadwinners in Filipino families was expressed. Both men and women before migration, together with their spouses, had difficulty meeting the needs of the family and/or could barely afford the costs of education of their children. Hence, the need to work outside the country to earn more and provide for what their families and children need. Both men and women felt a familial obligation to provide for their families' needs.

A strong secondary reason among men migrants was the wish to attain professional training and advancement, as expressed by men migrants who worked as seafarers and as an agricultural engineer.

Other reasons were also expressed. Those who were single, both men and women, when they migrated were not obligated to help their families financially but were moved by reasons like a desire to earn and save for an intended business and to prove one's worth for the family by accomplishing something while abroad. Two women who were married to seafarers and thus,

needed not to work abroad had different reasons—one was simply envious of what other OFWs in their community had acquired and wanted the same financial and material possessions while the other one desired to be trained under the Singaporean system of teaching and learning.

### *Work and life abroad of men and women*

*Hard work, homesickness, loneliness abroad.* Both men and women spoke of hard work, regardless of work and occupation. They all felt homesickness, and loneliness of their work life abroad being away from their families for years. (Only two men and two women had the opportunity to be with their spouses and/or children while working abroad.)

*Experience of abuse and exploitation among women.* Glaring was the reported abuse and exploitation of women who worked as DH (7 of them plus 2 workers who earlier worked as DH) in their early years of working abroad.

*Hard but fulfilling work for men.* Men had no experience of maltreatment other than non-promotion experienced by a seafarer and a telex operator. Except for these two, all other men migrants—regardless of occupation-- described their work abroad as being hard yet fulfilling. They were trained, acquired knowledge and skills, got promoted, and exercised professional, managerial, and other responsibilities.

*Men, rose from the ranks.* Men especially the seafarers and a worker expressed pride in rising from the ranks—literally started at the bottom of their occupation, i.e. from a lowly seaman to becoming a chief engineer or a ship captain; from a warehouse man to being a mall manager. Not a single woman rose from the ranks. All professionals and some workers, both men and women, though, were promoted and occupied higher positions.

*Work with good and generous employers and companies for men and women.* It can be said that all the men and women migrants worked for most

of their years abroad with kind and generous employers and good companies, which treated them well and provided for them.

### Reasons for return for men and women

*Common desire to be with families and operate business in the Philippines.* A common reason for returning to the Philippines was the desire to be with their families and to start and operating their own businesses. But paramount among women was the longing to be with their children, who they wanted to take care of upon return. They were asked, at least five of them, by their own children to return. These children graduated in college and were working. They promised their mothers that they needed not work anymore for they would take care of them. Among men, what was expressed was the strong desire to be with their families and secure a decent living for them in the Philippines by starting or operating their already existing businesses.

*Differences in reason for return among men and women.* Sickness and failing health also moved women, most of them domestic helpers, to return. No men returned because of sickness. However, frustration of not getting the promotions that they deserved, pushed two men--a seafarer and telex operator--to return home and make it on their own in the Philippines.

Men returned with more substantial amount of savings. Many of them also had investments and businesses in the Philippines even before they returned. All things considered, this is probably because majority of them earned more as chief engineers, ship captains, engineers, and accountants than the women, many of whom were domestic workers and skilled/semi-skilled workers.

### Work and life upon return of men and women

*Engagement in business.* All men and some women are engaged in different businesses. All men own and operate small to medium enterprises. Among the women entrepreneurs, three are managing small to medium sized enterprises while the rest operate microbusinesses. Microenterprises have assets below

PHP 3 million while small enterprises have assets ranging from PHP 3 million to PHP 15 million. Medium enterprises have assets ranging from PHP15 million to 100 million.

Three women are currently employed while three other women do not work and contented themselves as full time wives or as mothers and grandmothers to their children and grandchildren.

*Happy life in the Philippines.* All of them, men and women, have expressed happiness and satisfaction in living with their families or children. All have secured sources of income that provide for their families' needs and wants. They said that compared to their lives abroad, life in the Philippines is less stressful and worry-free. They are all fulfilled and contented because they achieved what they wanted in their return.

*Engagement in socio-civic activities and in politics.* Half of all the migrants are active in various social engagements. Four women are actively engaged in church, socio-civic activities and migrant advocacies. Two are into politics. Most men, ten of them are into civic activities and politics and felt satisfaction and deemed their active engagements as part and parcel of their success.

### *3. Comparative Structural Description of Successful Return of Men and Women Migrants*

#### *Meanings of successful return*

Men and women shared three common meanings and were relatively different in terms of putting importance to some attached meanings to successful return.

Men and women shared the following common meanings of successful return:

- *Successful return is fulfilling set dreams for migration by not giving up*

*despite difficulties while abroad and upon return to the Philippines.* They all have fulfilled what they have set when they migrated. This entailed hard work, sacrifice, and overcoming difficulties. For women, that meant experiences with illegal recruitment and loan sharks, fighting abusive employers, being a solo parent because of separation with their husbands or having irresponsible husbands. Hard work, for both men and women, meant not only being good at what was expected of them but doing odd jobs assigned to them while abroad. Many of them regardless of occupation took in other paid jobs and engaged in small businesses while abroad.

- *Successful return is happiness and satisfaction derived from one's accomplishments as a migrant and returnee, in comparison with those who were failures in their return.* Both men and women distinguished themselves from those who failed in their return. Those who failed in their return were those who have broken families, wayward children and have 'returned with nothing'. The migrant men and women of the study were successful because unlike others, they have achieved financial security and a happy family life upon return to the Philippines.

- *Successful return is attainment of decent/comfortable life through work overseas, employment and business in the Philippines which is a far cry from the life before.* Many of the them had a difficult life when they were young (at least two, literally lived in poverty). Many migrants who were married and had children could barely provide for their families while still in the Philippines. All of them accomplished what they have dreamt, a better life than they had before (i.e. when they were young and what they were and their families before migration). It was because they did well abroad and lived wisely in the Philippines.

Women and men migrants differed in terms of relative importance that they gave to different conceptions of successful return.

Women migrants put more importance on the following:

- Successful return essentially means having children who graduated with college degrees and are working as handsomely-paid professionals. They took pride in the thought that they raised accomplished children despite them being high school or college undergraduates, domestic workers, skilled workers, and migrants.

- Women migrants deemed themselves successful for having raised responsible children. Despite their long absence, their children unlike other OFW children were not in disarray. One worker aptly said, she may have returned with not much but she was more successful than others because what mattered most was her children's success. Her children's success was her own definition of her successful return.

- For many women, successful return is not necessarily material nor financial success. It is essentially having a good, intact, worry-free, happy, and comfortable life (not necessarily affluent) with their children or family.

- For women domestic workers and workers, successful return is also, the attainment of freedom to do what one wants and not serving anybody, exactly opposite of what when they were as OFWs serving their employers and companies.

Men migrants put more importance on the following notions of successful return:

- Successful return means an acquired high economic status, attained financial success that allowed the family to afford its wants and desires. It is the attainment of financial security/financial freedom in terms of profitable business, acquired properties and wealth and investments that guaranteed comfortable life for their families. Pride, accomplishment, and satisfaction accompanied such success.

- Successful return for many men meant professional success, i.e. they rose

from the ranks and attained top and responsible positions in the ships and companies that employed them.

- Successful return for many men migrants is also the attainment of peace of mind by living in the Philippines. They no longer had to work in a stress, anxiety, and worry-filled foreign country.

- Successful return means to many men migrants also fulfillment in helping other people in need and fellow OFWs by engaging in socio-civic and even political activities. With their attained financial success, they gladly shared their blessings to others. They find contentment and fulfillment from public recognition of their engagements.

#### Personal actions while abroad and upon return that spelled success

Personal actions while abroad and upon return were exactly the opposite of what other OFWs who failed did. There was not much difference in the actions taken by men and women. They both have done the following:

- exercised prudence while abroad and upon return: managed money
- were frugal and systematically saved their earnings, shied away from extravagant and luxurious ways and practices; managed well household and business finances in the Philippines

- planned and prepared well for return; Professionals (men and women) tended to be more 'calculative' in their return—estimating costs, putting numbers to goals, setting targets and sources of funds. For them, a return plan was a concrete and realizable when estimates of needed money and how it would be raised are spelled out.

- with a firm resolve not to work again abroad by working hard for, studying well and personally managing their businesses

- engaged in work and business that they have passion for, knowledge, and skills and overcame business setbacks and challenges

- put family first, nurtured relations with spouses and children

- raised children to be responsible, frugal, and to value their education

### Circumstances and significant people for successful return among men and women

*For men, regardless of occupation, their wives played a central role in their success. These are their wives who directed their attention to secure the family's future and set their reintegration plan; wives who worked and contributed to the family's income; wives who managed businesses while they were abroad; wives who managed prudently the family's finances; wives who remained as competent business partners and wives who raised their children well.*

*Women spoke of their responsible children who were different from wayward OFW children who ensured their successful return. Their children were not only the reason or their sense of success, they were also one of the keys to their success. If their children did not do their part (i.e. studying well and were not swayed by extravagant ways and by juvenile acts), their work and sacrifices would have been in vain.*

*Both men and women cited their good employers which played an important role in their return. Individual employers and companies treated them well and provided them with good salaries and numerous benefits that allowed them to save when they were abroad. These employers allowed them to grow in their work by promoting them and/or providing professional advancement or giving them time to learn and develop themselves. Some employers lent a direct hand in their return—provided them a job offer or financial help or handsome separation and retirement pay and benefits.*

#### *4. Synthesis/Essences of Successful Return of Men and Women Migrants*

Men and women shared three common meanings to successful return: a) Successful return is fulfilling set dreams for migration by not giving up despite



difficulties while abroad and upon return to the Philippines; b) Successful return is happiness and satisfaction derived from one's accomplishments as a migrant and returnee, in comparison with those who were failures in their return; and c) Successful return is attainment of decent/comfortable life through work overseas, employment and business in the Philippines which is a far cry from the life before migration.

For most of the women, their children were the *raison d'être* of them working abroad. Hence, successful return essentially means having children who graduated with college degrees and are working as handsomely-paid professionals. For many women, successful return is not material nor financial success but a good, intact, worry-free, happy, and comfortable life (not necessarily affluent) with their children or family. For women domestic workers and workers, successful return is also the attainment of freedom to do what one wants and not serving anybody, exactly opposite of what when they were while abroad.

For men, successful return means an acquired high economic status, attained financial success (i.e. huge savings from work abroad, accumulated properties, profitable businesses) that allowed the family to attain financial freedom (capacity to afford its wants and desires). Successful return for many meant professional success and rising from the ranks. Successful return for them is also the attainment of peace of mind by living in the Philippines. They no longer had to work in a stress, anxiety, worry-filled foreign country. Successful return means also fulfilment in helping other people in need and fellow OFWs by engaging in socio-civic and even political activities.

The personal actions taken by both men and women while abroad and upon return that contributed to their success were exactly the opposite of what OFWs who failed in their return have taken. They were as follows: 1) exercised of prudence in managing finances while abroad and upon return; 2) planned, prepared well, saved and invested for return; 3) with a firm resolve not to work

again abroad by working and earning in the Philippines, learned, worked hard for, studied well and personally managed their businesses; 4) engaged in work and business that one has knowledge and skills and was passionate about; 5) put family first, nurtured relations with spouse; and 6) raised children to be responsible, frugal, and to value their education.

The following circumstances and significant people contributed to the successful return of men and women:

For men, their responsible wives played a pivotal role in their success. Among others, their wives worked and contributed to the family's income and were not dependent on remittances, managed family businesses while they were abroad and raised their children well.

For women, their children were one of the keys to their success. Their children were responsible not only in their studies but also have not provided them serious problems.

Both men and women cited their good employers which played an important role in their return. They treated them well and provided them well financially. These employers allowed them to grow in their occupation and profession and provided them time and space to develop themselves. Some had also lent a direct hand in their return by offering them financial help and handsome separation and retirement pay and benefits, among others.

# **Chapter VI. Essences of Filipino Migrants' Experiences of Successful Return Migration**

The study sought to describe the lived experiences of successful migrant returnees and extract the meanings that they attached to and pinpoint the circumstances that brought about their successful return to the Philippines. Further, the study sought to characterize the phenomenon of return migration by determining its invariant meanings and constituent elements.

Towards these above-cited objectives of the study, four stages of phenomenological data analysis were undertaken. This chapter discusses briefly the steps that were undertaken in this last stage of phenomenological data analysis and then proceeded with the discussion of the main findings of such an analysis.

The following steps (initially described in Chapter III but expounded here) were done in this last and penultimate stage of phenomenological data analysis:

1. The main themes derived from the experiences of all occupational groups (domestic helpers, seafarers, professionals and workers) and from the experiences of men and women migrants were listed and examined. These lists of main themes are cited in Chapter V and in Appendices 4, 5, 6 and 7.

2. The main themes were clustered into overall themes that captured the successful return experiences of all migrants, regardless of occupation and sex. Seven overall themes were generated and they are as follows:

- Circumstances and reasons for working abroad
- Circumstances before actual return
- Circumstances and reasons for return
- Preoccupation/situation upon return

- Meanings, indicators, and feelings of successful return
- Individual mindsets, attitudes, and actions that explain successful return
- Specific circumstances and significant people that helped migrants achieve their successful return

3. The occupational groups' textural and structural descriptions of successful return migration experiences, the essences of these experiences, and the comparative analysis of the experiences of men and women migrants were reviewed.

4. The overall textural and structural descriptions and essences of the successful return migration experiences of Filipino migrants were written. I used the seven general themes, and the written textural and structural descriptions, and essences of successful return experiences of occupational and sex groups in writing the overall textural and structural descriptions and essences of the experiences of Filipino migrant returnees.

The overall textural description cited the commonly shared experiences by the 30 migrant returnees before and during migration and upon return to the Philippines. Differences of experiences between occupational groups and sexes and exceptional experiences were also cited to faithfully and texturally describe the migrants' return migration experiences.

In the overall structural description of the successful return migration experiences of Filipino migrants, the following were identified and discussed: 1) meanings, indicators and feelings that migrants attached to their successful return to the Philippines; 2) individual attributes and actions (before and during migration, and upon return to the Philippines) that explain their successful return and 3) specific circumstances and significant people that helped them achieve their successful return.

5. The overall synthesis of the textural and structural descriptions/essences of the successful return of Filipino migrants and the essences of the phenomenon of successful return migration were written.

This study further differentiated 1) the synthesis of the textural and structural descriptions/essences of the successful return experiences of Filipino migrants from 2) the essences of the phenomenon of successful return migration (i.e. its meanings and structural components/constituents). They are the two outputs of this last stage of phenomenological data analysis. Both were borne out of employing imaginative variation/eidetic reduction. The latter (essences of the phenomenon of successful return migration) was derived from the former (essences of successful return migration experiences of Filipino migrants).

The synthesis/essences of successful return migration experiences of Filipino migrants not only summarized the lived experiences of the migrants but more importantly determined the essences of their successful return. By essences here are meant the commonly shared or invariant meanings of successful return and the significant (invariant) social circumstances that brought about Filipino migrants' successful return to the Philippines.

The following questions, among others, were asked in exercising imaginative variation/eidetic reduction towards identifying the essences of successful return migration of Filipino migrants: What were the invariant meanings attached by the Filipino migrant returnees to their successful return? How do these differ from common notions of successful return and those found in the literature? How do the Filipino successful migrant returnees differentiate themselves with other migrants who returned successfully and with those who miserably failed in their return? How do they differ with other OFWs in terms of attitudes, mindsets, actions taken, etc. during their migration and return migration? How could one characterize a successful Filipino migrant returnee? What is common among the actions that they made that spelled their

successful return? What social circumstances contributed to their successful return to the Philippines? Are these large-scale/societal conditions or individual circumstances? How did these social circumstances contribute to their successful return? Are individual actions more important to the structural factors and circumstances in bringing about their successful return?

In identifying the essences of the phenomenon of successful return migration, the following questions, among others, were raised: From the essences of successful return of migrant Filipinos to the Philippines how can we characterize the phenomenon of successful return migration? What is the phenomenon of successful return migration? What are its invariant features? What are its constituent parts or components? How do these constituent elements contribute to successful return migration?

The main findings of this last stage of phenomenological data analysis are cited and discussed in the following sections of this chapter: A) Textural Description of the Successful Return of Filipino Migrants; B) Structural Description of Successful Return Migration of Filipino Migrants; C) Synthesis/Essences of the Lived Experiences of Successful Return of Filipino Migrants; and D) Component Elements of the Phenomenon of Successful Return Migration.

## **A. Textural Description of the Successful Return Migration of Filipino Migrants**

The overall textural description of the lived successful return migration experiences of the 30 Filipino migrant returnees are summarized using the following main themes: 1) circumstances and reasons for working abroad; 2) circumstances before actual return; 3) circumstances and reasons for return; and 4) preoccupation/situation upon return.

This textural description discusses the commonly shared, and invariant experiences that the Filipino successful migrants had during and before

migration, and upon return to the Philippines. Their successful return migration to the Philippines encompasses not only their experiences upon return to the Philippines but includes their salient experiences even before they migrated abroad and their life and work experiences as migrants in foreign countries. All these experiences before and during migration and upon return describe and contribute to their journey towards their successful return to the Philippines.

### *1. Circumstances and Reasons for Working Abroad*

1.1. Faced with economic difficulties and inability to satisfy their families' needs with meager earnings from their jobs and professions in the Philippines, the successful migrant returnees worked for years as OFWs abroad to 1) provide for the needs of the family, 2) provide for their children's and/or siblings' education, and 3) secure a better life for themselves and their own families. These motivations and at the same time, goals they set for their migration to foreign lands were especially strong for married migrants with children, regardless of sex and regardless of occupation abroad. They all felt an obligation to provide for their families and children.

1.2. Another reason which was strong among many seafarers and some professionals but always in tandem with the above-cited major reason of providing for the family, children and siblings was the desire to acquire advanced training and carve a professional career.

1.3. Those migrants who felt no obligation to provide for their families' needs (i.e. those who were single when they migrated and those women migrants who were married to seafarers) worked abroad to either a) earn and save for an intended business, b) gain wealth and material possessions out of envy of other OFWs, c) prove one's worth to the family by making it abroad, or d) acquire a desired professional training.

## *2. Circumstances Before Actual Return*

2.1. All successful migrant returnees regardless of occupation and sex, worked hard and endured homesickness and loneliness from being away from their husbands, children, parents and siblings for years.

2.2. Many women migrants (seven domestic helpers and two women workers who initially worked as DH) experienced maltreatment, abuse and exploitation from recruitment agencies and their employers during their early years of migration. Those migrants who worked as professionals, skilled and semi-skilled workers and seafarers, fortunately, have not suffered from such experiences of the former domestic workers.

2.3. Seafarers suffered further from anxiety and fear for their safety while at sea. These migrants worked in foreign plying vessels at an average of 10 years.

2.4. Professionals (both men and women) and seafarers found their jobs, difficult yet fulfilling, demanding yet enjoyable for they received high compensation and numerous benefits and acquired desired trainings, advanced knowledge and skills, and were promoted to higher positions with additional remunerations. Many professionals were permitted to bring their spouses and/or children abroad and enjoyed the comfort of life with them abroad courtesy of their companies. Seafarers enjoyed their brief stays in various places when their ships docked in different countries.

2.5. Due to good work performance, many among the former OFWs regardless of occupation and sex were promoted to higher positions or got their desired jobs. Despite their hard work, however, two seafarers and two workers were not that fortunate and were never promoted and have become a source of disappointment among them, particularly to the seafarers.



2.6. All the domestic workers, some workers and some professionals, in addition to their regular jobs, worked in part-time jobs and/or engaged in income-generating activities like food catering, selling of phone cards and others to increase further their earnings and savings while abroad.

2.7. All former migrants—DH, workers, professionals, and seafarers-- eventually worked and were employed by considerate, kind, and generous employers and companies. Such employment provided them freedom, time and space for self-improvement and enabled them to save more money to provide for their families and for their eventual return to the Philippines.

### *3. Circumstances and Reasons for Return*

3.1. Regardless of sex and occupation, two reasons for returning to the Philippines were foremost in the minds of the migrants then: 1) to be with their families/children after long years of separation from them and 2) attainment of one of the main goals for their migration—their children finishing college and/or earning incomes and working as professionals.

Most of the domestic helpers got sick while abroad. These illnesses coupled with the desire to be with their families pushed their return. Many mothers acceded to the demands of children and/or husbands to come home to be with them.

3.2. Another strong reason that was expressed by the migrant returnees was the intent to start their own business/or manage existing businesses in the Philippines. It was an expression of a strong desire to be their own employers and make it through their own efforts after working for years serving a company or an employer.

3.3. Whether their return was deliberately planned or not, all migrant returnees (except one who was pregnant) were confident to return home. They confidently returned because they felt that what they had was enough to lead a comfortable life in the Philippines. Their confidence laid on their amassed savings, properties, and businesses or their children whose earnings could provide them a decent or comfortable life in the Philippines. The confidence of having enough financially was particularly strong among professionals and seafarers.

3.4. Professionals and seafarers were more deliberate in their plans. They have set the year for their return, calculated the costs of living in the Philippines without them having stable sources of income, raised the needed amounts of money for these living expenses and for businesses that they intend to establish, and eventually secured stable sources of income—employment, businesses, or stocks or other investments.

3.5. All the Filipino migrants, except one, had no qualms in returning permanently in their home country. The only returnee who expressed initial fear of not being able to adjust to the way of life in the Philippines was a former nurse in Saudi Arabia who was used to the ease and comfort of life in Saudi Arabia for more than 20 years.

#### *4. Preoccupation/Situation Upon Return*

4.1. Many migrant returnees (22 of them), regardless of sex and occupation, are currently engaged in their own and family businesses. Most former seafarers' and professionals' businesses are estimated to be small to medium sized enterprises. Businesses of former DH are micro in size except for one which is of medium size. Three of former workers' enterprises are small to medium in size. These businesses that they manage and operate together with their wives and or children are stable sources of income for their families.

4.2. All migrant returnees who engaged in business upon return, experienced difficulties of varying types and degrees (i.e. mismanagement, stiff competition, bankruptcy, etc.). They overcame these difficulties through perseverance, hard work, continuous learning of 'the ropes of their businesses' and hands-on management of their enterprises. They have made their businesses grow and become profitable.

4.3. Four women (two workers and two DH) did not work upon return. They opted to take care of their families. These migrant returnees were asked by their children to stop working abroad and upon their return to the Philippines. Their children vowed to take care of them, this time around. The women welcomed the opportunity to be with their children and grandchildren. This time, they are not taking good care of other people's children; they are taking care of their own children and grandchildren which they yearned when they were still abroad.

4.4. Half of the migrant returnees (16 of them), regardless of occupation and sex, are actively engaged in socio-civic, church and political activities. Three former DH, four former male workers and a female worker, two former female professionals and two male professionals, and four former seafarers are engaged in various community, church, political party, migrant advocacy, corporate social responsibility activities and programs.

## **B. Structural Description of Successful Return Migration of Filipino Migrants**

The structural description of the successful return migration of Filipino migrants discusses the commonly shared meanings that the migrants attached to their successful return. It also discusses the individual actions taken by the migrants and the circumstances that significantly contributed to their successful return to the Philippines.

This structural description of the lived experiences of successful return migration is organized using the following derived main themes from the experiences of the 30 Filipino migrant returnees, namely 1) meanings, indicators and feeling of successful return; 2) individual mindsets, attitudes and actions that explain successful return; and 3) specific circumstances and significant people helped them achieve their successful return.

### *1. Meanings, Indicators and Feelings of Successful Return*

The successful Filipino migrant returnees attached the following meanings to their successful return to the Philippines. Included in these expressed meanings are their indicators of success and feelings that they have attached to them.

*1.1. Successful return is fulfilling set dreams for migration—providing for the needs of the family and education of their children and securing a better life for their families. The Filipino migrants have endured hard work and other difficulties abroad in the attainment of these goals.*

To provide for the needs of their families and education of their children and siblings, and to secure a better life for their families were foremost among the migrants' migration goals. The attainment of these goals, hence, were deemed by the migrants as their success.

A higher sense of accomplishment was noted among women migrants especially those who worked as domestic helpers and workers. They felt that despite their lowly work and lower pay when compared with other OFWs, they have successfully sent their children to school and college, who eventually earned their degrees and are currently working as professionals. For these women migrants, their children's educational and professional success essentially defines their own success as migrants and returnees. This is because many of them have not finished high school nor college and never have worked as professionals.

All the migrants regarded themselves as successful migrant returnees for they have attained a happier and more comfortable life than before, i.e. economic hard life when they were young and difficulties in raising their families before they migrated and worked abroad. This sense of accomplishment among them is so strong because these set goals were attained because of hard work, personal sacrifices and despite homesickness, loneliness, abuse and exploitation (experienced by some) that they endured for many years of working and living abroad.

*1.2. Successful return is self-fulfillment and satisfaction derived from accomplishments upon return to the Philippines, in comparison with other migrants who were failures in their return. Accomplishments referred to which many other migrants have not attained upon return are 1) intact family and responsible children (i.e. good marriage and/or unproblematic children) even after long years of separation with them and 2) secured sources of income that provide at the minimum, a decent life for the family.*

For women migrants, what was dominant was the conception that successful return is not essentially material nor financial success. (Some of the women migrants (DH and workers) went home to the Philippines without much savings and investments because all their earnings went to providing for their children's college education.) Successful return to them meant having a good, happy, worry-free and comfortable life (not necessarily affluent) with their children or family. Success is also pride in having raised responsible, and accomplished children despite years of physical separation with them. They spoke of 'success ng mga anak ko ang aking success' (the success of my children is what constitute my own success).

Men migrants also valued their intact and happy families. But they also put premium to their attained financial freedom by securing stable sources of income which not only provide for their families' needs but afford them to

enjoy the comforts of life like leisure and travel and enable them to extend financial help to relatives and even other people.

Men and women alike who are currently operating small and medium-sized businesses are proud and found satisfaction and fulfilment in managing profitable business endeavors and for having transformed themselves as astute and capable businessmen/women.

*1.3. Successful return is overcoming and bouncing back from hardships, frustrations, and setbacks and attaining a better life, a far cry from their difficult lives before.*

For many of them, life when they were young was hard to say the least. When they had their own families, they also experienced difficulties in raising their needs. This was true for most of them, even those who worked as professionals in the Philippines before working abroad. All of them endured hard work, loneliness and homesickness while abroad. Some even had experienced exploitation and abuse as foreign migrant workers. Few of them were extremely disappointed of not being promoted despite their dedication and hard work.

Upon return to the Philippines, those migrant returnees who engaged in business have experienced business failures and setbacks. Some returnees had marital problems and two endured single parenthood for years.

These previous difficulties and negative experiences before and during migration, and upon return to the Philippines have not deterred them from their goal of attaining a better life. These negative experiences might have frustrated others but the successful migrant returnees have turned these difficulties into challenges and/or motivations that drove them to aspire and strive harder. They bounced back and curved a better life for themselves and their families. The successful Filipino migrant returnees had that strong resolve

not to experience the same hard life that they had before. With the dictum, '*Hindi uuwi ng wala*' ('Will not return with nothing'), they vowed to return to the Philippines with 'something' to be proud of.

*1.4. Successful return means 'professional success'. It is the attainment of professional training or advanced work experience and occupying top positions of responsibility while abroad and upon return to the Philippines.*

For most of the former seafarers and for a former worker, this meant literally rising from the ranks. Majority of the seafarers worked and trained their way from being lowly able-bodied seamen to becoming the ship's captain or engineer. A worker sent to further education by his company moved his way up from a lowly warehouse man to becoming a mall manager.

For many former professionals and some former workers, 'professional success' meant receiving well-deserved promotions to a higher and responsible positions in the factories and offices. This also meant acquiring advanced knowledge and training in their field of work and profession while abroad.

They were all proud that when they returned to the Philippines, they were accomplished in their own work and profession. Two former sea captains built their own training school for ship officers. Two women, (a former DH and former teacher in a Singaporean school) are back to teaching work. These former migrants continued to exercise their professional training upon return to the Philippines.

*1.5. Successful return is the attainment of peace of mind by permanently returning to one's own home country. It is the absence of the necessity to work in a stress-/ anxiety-laden, and worry-filled foreign country.*

The former migrants spoke of their lives abroad as stress-filled lives. Worries and anxieties were brought about by work conditions, temporariness of stay in a

foreign country, being away with the families and a deep concern about the well-being of their families that they left behind. They have earned a lot while abroad but certainly it was not the stressful life that they wanted.

Upon return, they found that cherished peace of mind that came from being at home with the family, and living a simple/decent/comfortable life in their own home country. They spoke of '*kapanatagan ng loob*', (peace of mind) '*simple pero masayang buhay*' (simple but a happy life), '*komportableng buhay*' (comfortable life) to describe their lives as successful migrant returnees living in the Philippines.

*1.6. Successful return means fulfilment in helping fellow migrants and other people in need, and in gaining recognition and respect because of their socio-civic, religious and political engagements.*

Regardless of sex and occupation, many of the migrant returnees have involved themselves in socio-civic, religious and political activities. The former domestic workers, professionals, seafarers and workers invested time, expertise, and money in helping fellow migrants and returnees to find good jobs abroad or to return successfully to the Philippines. Many of them are into migration and development work. Some of them are active in politics and in fact, are leaders of migrant party-list political parties or are former local government officials. Others are into helping mothers, women and other people in need in the communities through engagements in various socio-civic and church activities and programs.

To them, these engagements were their way of 'paying it forward' or 'giving back', having once in their lifetime been helped by other people. These engagements to many of them also meant 'sharing their blessings' from God, having much to share from what they have acquired in life as successful migrant returnees.



1.7. *Successful return means transforming themselves from being migrant workers (DH, workers, professionals and seafarers) to becoming accomplished entrepreneurs and professionals, and respected socio-civic leaders through hard work, perseverance and continuous learning.*

Not only have they accomplished a lot, in terms of achieving their set migration goals and achieving a lot more upon return, they also have transformed their individual selves into new selves that they were truly proud of. They have developed themselves into becoming accomplished entrepreneurs and professionals. They have become their '*sariling boss*' (own boss) upon return which they were not while abroad because they were serving their employers and companies.

*'Malaya kaming gawin ang gusto naming gawin'* (We are free to do what we desire). The former migrants pursued what they wanted, enjoyed life with what they earned, and helped others when they liked to.

These self-transformations were brought about by hard work, perseverance, and continuous learning. Hard work was always part of their lives—as a migrant and a returnee. As entrepreneurs, they learned the craft and persevered despite the setbacks that came along the way. As socio-civic leaders, their desire to pay it forward and share their blessings was paid by social recognition and respect. Many of them were grateful that they were recognized by government and private agencies alike as outstanding OFWs, businessmen or socio-civic leaders.

## *2. Individual Mindsets, Attitudes, and Actions that Explain Successful Return*

Individual mindsets, attitudes, and actions before and during migration, and upon return to the Philippines, explain for a large part, their successful return. These were consciously engendered, developed and expressed as the exact

opposites of what other OFWs who failed in their return did. These were as follows:

2.1. *They treated work overseas as temporary and an opportunity to earn and save. And because it was regarded as temporary, they made the most out of their stay abroad. Other OFWs according to them acted as if their work stint abroad would last forever ('parang habang buhay OFW kung umasta')* and thus, were not into saving and investing their money and relied heavily on their earnings as migrant workers.

2.2. *They worked hard and exhibited dedication to their profession and occupation which reaped for them top positions, salaries and benefits. They learned to do jobs beyond their work description and thus, have endeared themselves to their employers and superiors.*

2.3. *They bounced back from frustrations and major problems and accomplished what they wanted in life. Glen, a former sewer, went bankrupt and lost all his money that he saved abroad in his earlier business ventures. But he persevered, got a needed support from a benefactor, put all his energies and dedication to a business that he knew well (sewing business; he was a sewer before and during migration) and currently operates three sewing houses that supply ready-to-wear (RTW) clothes to the biggest retail supermarket chain in the Philippines. Rebecca, a former DH in Hong Kong, was ostracized when she went back home pregnant. After delivering her baby and taken care of by a home for unwed mothers, she went home, got employed, discovered a concoction for mango syrup and eventually set up a mango processing company in the province of Guimaras.*

2.4. *They exercised self-discipline in shying away from vices, were frugal and did not live beyond their means, during migration and upon return to the Philippines. This was more pronounced from the experiences of seafarers. They*

all admitted that during their early years in ships, they like all other seafarers were into extravagance. They changed their lucrative ways after getting married. They were persuaded by their wives to stay focused to work for their families' future. Many of the DHs, workers and professionals were spend-thrift unlike may OFWs who according to them were '*galit sa pera*' (literally translated as 'angry at money' but means 'spends excessively').

2.5. *They managed their finances well and saved while abroad.* They deliberately curbed the dependency of their immediate families to the remittances that they sent by sending them what they needed and not bending to all their caprices and demands. Ellen, a former DH in Singapore, stopped sending money to her siblings after they graduated from college and had work. Marites sent just enough amounts of money to her children and taught them how to make do with what she sent them.

2.6. *Many of the migrant returnees set a time frame for their work abroad and when they would return home.* They laid concrete plans of return (i.e. requisites of and preparations for return and what they would do upon return) and quantified their goals in monetary terms. Jun when he went to Saudi Arabia as engineer vowed to return to the Philippines after seven years. He reckoned that he would have enough to start a good life in the Philippines after that time. He returned after seven years with a pooled money from his savings and those from his OFW friends in Saudi Arabia and set up a marketing company in the Philippines. He and his friends have long planned that they would put up a corporation from their own money and Jun was tasked to set it up and manage it because he was the first among them that returned to the Philippines.

2.8. *They set up their sources of income in the Philippines while abroad.* Many engaged in businesses. Roberto, frustrated that he was not promoted as chief engineer or captain of a ship saved his money for the veterinary medicines

and supplies business that his wife set up in Bulacan. Loreto, a former telecommunications operator, frustrated that he was not promoted in the telecommunications company in Saudi Arabia because he did not finish college, worked secretly for a recruitment agency in the Philippines that operated in Saudi Arabia and eventually set up his own recruitment agency in the Philippines when he returned.

*2.9. Most of the seafarers, many of the professionals, some workers and domestic helpers set up family businesses that they were familiar with in terms of knowledge or skills or endeavors that they painstakingly learned on their own. Rodolfo and Edwin, former ship captains built a training school for ship's officers. Rebecca managed a mango processing company where she utilized her knowledge as a former Chemistry teacher. Glen was a sewer and currently operates a flourishing sewing business.*

*2.10. The former migrants continuously learned new skills and improved themselves. Myrna was not even a high school graduate. She learned about the computer from her ward in Hong Kong. She was hired as a QA personnel by a company testing its applications on line. When she went back to the Philippines she set up her own BPO company, Mynd Consulting. Yco was a former warehouse man. He was sent to South Africa by his company and eventually became a mall manager in Saudi Arabia. He returned home and made it big in his beauty parlors and as supplier of beauty products and chemicals. He learned the skills needed in the services that his parlors offer like dyeing of hair, polishing of nails, hair cutting, and others.*

*2.11. They are currently living a simple yet decent life in the Philippines. They have not lived beyond their means. Pol, even with his huge investment in stocks and his share in the earnings of the family's construction and hardware business, still lives in a modest apartment unit and commutes around Iloilo City*

because he has no car of his own. He is contented with this modest lifestyle that he and his wife lead.

*2.12. They nurtured relations with their spouses and raised children who were fully aware of their work and difficulties as migrants abroad.* Their children turned out to be responsible children, acquired college degrees and/or earning good incomes as professionals. Amy single-handedly sent her children to school and college. She taught them to value their education. When she returned, her children were already working as engineers. Cristeta sent her eldest daughter to medical school and two other children to college. Her eldest is an accomplished doctor and businesswoman, her other children are working as professionals. She never lied to them about her work as a DH which her children appreciated and eventually 'compensated' her sacrifices. Amy and Cristeta needed not work upon return to the Philippines because their and their husbands' needs were handsomely provided for by their children.

### *3. Specific Circumstances and Significant People Helped Them Achieve Their Successful Return*

Some social circumstances and relationships with specific people helped the Filipino migrant returnees achieve a successful return to the Philippines.

*3.1. Circumstances that were marked by difficulties and setbacks served as challenges and motivations.* Hardships experienced before, during, and after return—all drove the migrants to persevere towards the attainment of their goals. They have turned these hardships (work-related, emotional and other difficulties) as sources of motivation. These difficulties cum challenges strengthened their resolve to change their lives and the lives of their loved ones for the better. They were never overwhelmed by setbacks, disappointments and frustrations. They vowed not to return home in almost the same miserable situation that they were in before they migrated.

3.2. *Kind and considerate employers and employment in good companies and institutions.* The former domestic helpers found kind and considerate employers that treated them humanely and considered them as members of their own family. These employers gave them time and space for them to engage in activities that helped them develop themselves. Companies and institutions of the former workers, professionals, and seafarers provided them good work setting, recognized their hard work and dedication, and provided them and their families handsome salaries and benefits. Considerate employers and good companies enabled the migrants to save more money, develop themselves and helped them prepare for their eventual return to the Philippines.

3.3. *Responsible wife's central role in male migrant's success.* For all the male migrants, regardless of occupation, having a responsible wife spelled their success. Married seafarers, professionals and workers stated that they would not have been successful in their return to the Philippines had it not for their wives. They had a wife who managed remittances well; a wife who worked and contributed to the family's income while they were abroad; a wife who was an astute business partner before and after their return; a wife who raised their children to be responsible; a wife who have remained faithful despite years of separation; a wife who inspired and helped them recover from setbacks or redirected their attention to secure the future of their families.

3.4. *Responsible children.* For female migrants, regardless of occupation, their children who brought them no serious problems when they were growing, who finished their education, and are currently earning their own living are key to their own success. These responsible children facilitated their 'early' and successful return.

Some of the female migrants also credited their responsible husbands and/or siblings for helping in their successful return.

### **C. Synthesis/Essences of Successful Return Migration Experiences of Filipino Migrants**

The successful return of Filipino migrants is comprised of essential elements that describe what successful return meant for them, how they returned home successfully and the key actions, people and circumstances that contributed to their successful return to the Philippines. These elements that constitute the successful return migration of Filipinos are the following: 1) lived experiences and circumstances as Filipino migrants and returnees; 2) meanings of successful return to the Philippines; 3) key actions and proximate circumstances; and 4) migrants with strong sense of purpose and resolve in effecting changes in their lives.

The essences of the successful return migration of Filipinos, i.e. invariant meanings and structural/constituent elements, are discussed below and are illustrated in Figure 5.

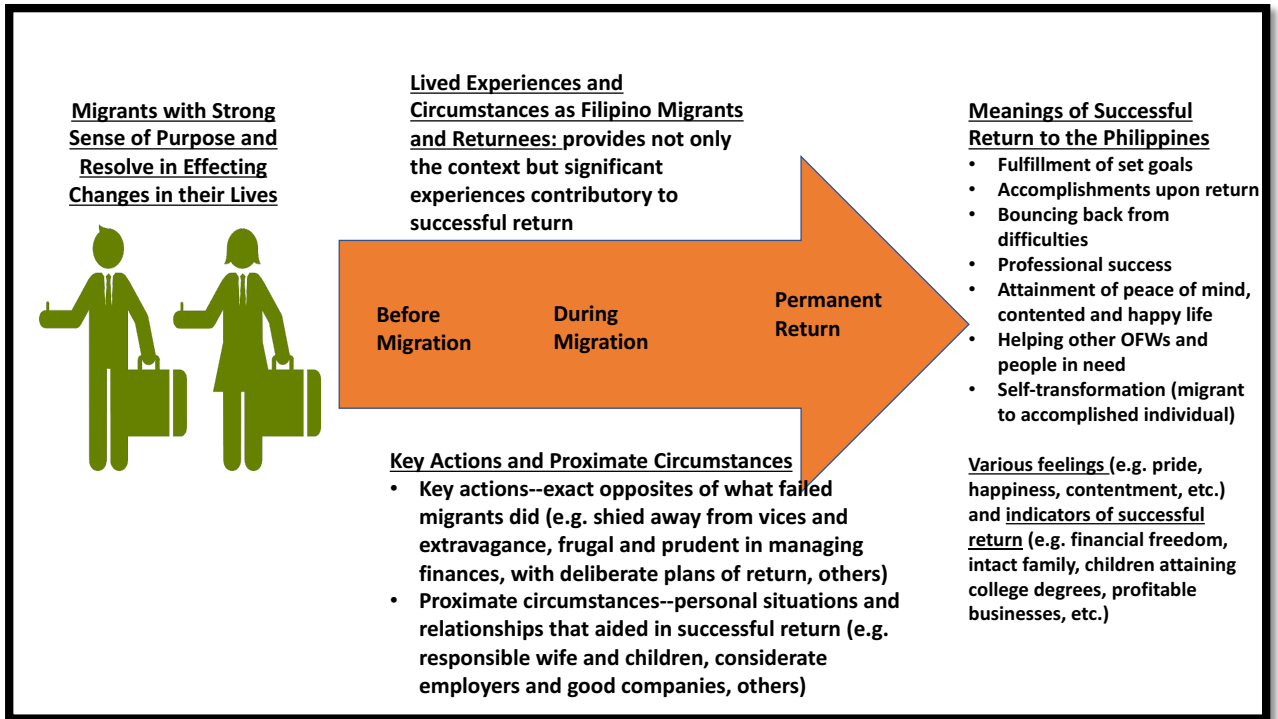


Figure 5 Essences of Successful Return of Migrant Filipinos

*1. Lived Experiences and Circumstances as Filipino Migrants and Returnees*

Successful return migration encompasses the lived experiences of successful Filipino permanent returnees. These includes all experiences, circumstances and actions that they took prior to their migration in foreign countries, their life and work situation while abroad and their preoccupation as they stay and live permanently in the Philippines.

These lived experiences provided not only the context of their successful return but contain specific circumstances that the migrants were in, processes that they underwent, and key actions that they took that were important in the attainment and achievement of dramatic changes in their lives as migrants and returnees.

Hence, successful return migration of these Filipinos was a process that included experiences and actions made by them not only upon return, but also before and during migration, which had bearing in their successful return. These lived experiences are summarily described as follows:



*1.1. Circumstances and individual reasons explain why Filipino migrants worked abroad. Despite the challenging life and work situation abroad, they remained motivated and focused on the migration goals that they have set for themselves and their families.*

With the goals in mind, they worked hard, overcame difficulties and hardships (physical, emotional and psychological) as OFWs, exercised prudence in managing their finances and led a frugal life abroad, and nurtured their marriages and relationships with their children despite long years of physical separation from them. All these actions form part of their desire to go home for good after attaining what they have set to achieve while abroad.

*1.2. Different reasons and circumstances led them to the decision to return home. The foremost reasons of which were they have attained largely their migration goals and they wanted to live a life together with their families in the Philippines.*

It was not a deliberate or planned return for all these successful returnees. Some migrants' return to the Philippines was hastened by circumstances like sickness, plea of their children for them to come home and work-related disappointments and frustrations that they had abroad. But these did not mean that they were not at all ready to come home. Whether their return was planned or not, they were all confident that they could live decently if not comfortably with their families in the Philippines. Many of them have saved substantial amounts of money and put these savings into operational businesses in the Philippines while still abroad. Some invested in properties and stocks. Others welcomed the return for there were professional employment offers and opportunities. Some despite without much money when they returned (because they spent a large part of their earnings in the college education of their children) banked on the assurance of their children (who by then have graduated and earning as professionals) to take care of them and their family.

*1.3. It was and still a happy and worry-free life in the Philippines upon return. They welcomed and embraced the life in their home country with their families which was a far cry from the hard work, homesickness, stress and worries that characterized life and work abroad.*

They also have achieved financial freedom upon return, that means freedom from worrying that they could not lead a decent life for they all have secured stable sources of income. Most of them have engaged in businesses upon return. They have been managing their family businesses—from micro to medium sized—that ably provided for their financial needs. Some of the migrant returnees are still gainfully employed. A few of them rely on their children who have financially supported them.

*1.4. For the migrants, not only what they did upon return explain their successes. To them, what they had experienced and faced, and did before and during migration contributed significantly to their successful return.*

Hard and difficult life led them to aspire for a better life. Driven by a strong sense of familial obligation to provide for the needs of the family (which they were unable to fulfill before migration), they worked abroad for years with earnest hope of securing a lot better life for themselves and their families.

As migrants, they endured hard work, loneliness and homesickness, saved money, and secured sources of income upon return. They made sure that they were ready to lead a comfortable life with their families upon return.

Upon return, they overcame difficulties and setbacks, turned their endeavors into profitable ones, attained financial freedom and capability enough for their families to lead a good life.

## *2. Meanings of Successful Return to the Philippines*

Successful return for Filipino migrant returnees is more than the attainment of their migration goals. They have achieved more than what they have set as migrants when they finally returned to the Philippines.

The former OFWs defined their success, expressed their meanings of success and laid down their indicators and attached emotions to their achievements as migrants and returnees. These are captured in the following attached meanings of successful return migration:

2.1. Successful return is fulfilling set dreams for migration, foremost of which were providing for the needs of the family and education of their children and securing a better life for their families. Filipino migrants have endured hard work and other difficulties abroad towards the attainment of these goals.

2.2. Successful return is self-fulfillment and pride derived from accomplishments upon return, in comparison with other migrants who were failures in their return. Accomplishments referred to were 1) raised an intact family (i.e. good marriage and/or responsible children) even after long years of separation and 2) secured sources of income that provide at the minimum, a decent life for the family.

2.3. Successful return is overcoming and bouncing back from hardships, frustrations, and setbacks and attaining a better life upon return to the Philippines which was a far cry from the difficult lives that they had before migration.

2.4. Successful return means 'professional success'—attainment of professional training or advanced work experience and occupying top positions of responsibility while abroad and upon return to the Philippines.

2.5. Successful return is the attainment of peace of mind by permanently returning to one's home country. Filipino migrant returnees are contented and happy with their lives in the Philippines. They no longer had to work in a stressful, anxiety-laden, and worry-filled foreign country.

2.6. Successful return means fulfilment in helping fellow migrants and other people in need, and gaining recognition and respect because of their socio-civic, religious and religious engagements.

2.7. Successful return means transforming themselves from being migrant workers (DH, workers, professionals and seafarers) to becoming accomplished entrepreneurs and professionals, and respected socio-civic leaders through hard work, perseverance and continuous learning.

### *3. Key Actions and Proximate Circumstances*

Key actions were undertaken by the successful Filipino migrant returnees. These actions together with specific social circumstances spelled the successful return migration to the Philippines of the Filipino migrants.

3.1. *Individual actions, during migration and upon return to the Philippines, explain how they attained their successful return.* These actions were consciously engendered, developed and expressed as the exact opposites of what other OFWs who failed in their return did. These actions can be grouped into four sets that involve 1) hard work and dedication to work and profession and exercise of perseverance; 2) prudent management and use of finances; and 3) nurturing relationships within their families; and 4) planning well for eventual return.

3.2. *Circumstances that migrants were in helped them achieve their successful return.* These circumstances are proximate not large-scale social

circumstances (e.g. economic and political conditions in the country of origin, government reintegration program, etc.). Proximate circumstances refer to personal situations and relationships that migrants were involved in.

The following proximate circumstances helped the former migrants achieve a successful return to the Philippines:

3.2.1. difficulties and setbacks experienced during when they were young, before they migrated, during their migration and upon return to the Philippines motivated them to strive, persevere, and work harder

3.2.2. employment in households, companies and institutions which provided them opportunities to develop themselves, and earn and save for their eventual return

3.2.3. having a responsible wife who was an able finance manager, business partner, and good 'mother and father' to children

3.2.4. having responsible children who brought no problem to the family, finished their education and are earning their own living

#### *4. Migrants with Strong Sense of Purpose and Resolve in Effecting Changes in Their Lives*

Not all former Filipino migrants who returned permanently to the Philippines were successful. The successful permanent migrant returnees in this study possessed exceptional qualities that separated them from those who failed in their return to the Philippines.

The foremost difference with those migrants who failed in their return is that these successful individuals were of firm resolve to effect changes in their lives and that of their families despite the obstacles, challenges and difficulties that came in their way as a migrant and as a returnee.

They were individuals who were eager to learn and face the challenges in their lives. They overcame these difficulties by persevering and learning, and by developing their capacities.

These individuals learned from the mistakes of people who failed in their migration and return to the Philippines. They have taken these mistakes to heart and developed themselves as the exact opposite of those migrants who failed.

These individuals have transformed themselves from being migrants to becoming confident and capable persons that have taken responsibly their positions in the family, community and in their businesses and professions.

## **D. Component Elements of the Phenomenon of Successful Return**

### **Migration**

From the experiences and essences of the successful return of Filipino migrants, one can intuitively abstract the component elements that define the phenomenon of successful return migration. The phenomenon of successful return migration is comprised of four essential elements:

- Migrants with strong sense of purpose and resolve
- Migration and return migration experiences
- Meanings of successful return
- Key processes, actions and circumstances

The four component elements that define the essences of the phenomenon of successful return migration are illustrated in Figure 6.

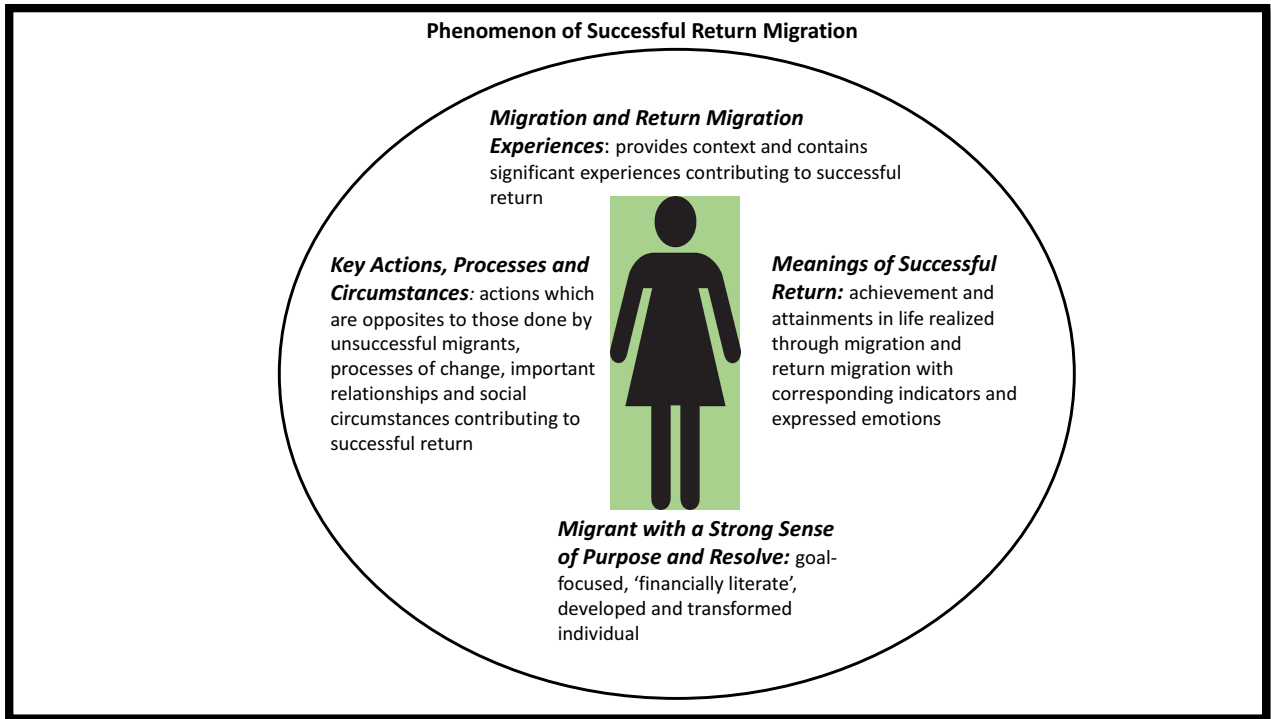


Figure 6 Component Elements of the Phenomenon of Successful Return Migration

*1. Migrants with Strong Sense of Purpose and Resolve*

Central to the phenomenon of successful return migration is a migrant of a high sense of purpose and resolve. Successful return migration as a phenomenon is not experienced by all migrants. It entailed specific individual mindsets, drives, attitudes, and acts that resulted to positive changes accruing from migration and return migration.

Who is this individual who successfully returned to her home country? She is an individual who:

- 1) is goal-focused; determined in pursuit of these goals and overcame challenges and difficulties (prior to and during migration and upon return) to attain her desired life goals;
- 2) is a self-taught financially literate individual who exercised self-discipline and prudence in managing and investing her hard-earned money; and

3) developed herself by gaining new knowledge and skills and by learning from own experiences and from the mistakes and failures of other migrants and returnees

Upon return to her home country, she is proud of her accomplishments. She is a happy, satisfied and fulfilled individual who enjoys the fruits of her labor as a migrant. She is an individual who relies primarily on herself, and not intimidated or threatened by social structures and circumstances in achieving her goals. Her proximate relationships and social circumstances help her become a successful migrant and returnee. But the bottom line of her success remains, it is still her that matters the most in her successes and successful return.

## *2. Migration and Return Migration Experiences*

The phenomenon of successful return migration encompasses experiences, acts and circumstances in all phases of a migrant's life: 1) before migration (which could include the circumstances when they were young and not only their situation before leaving for migration); 2) during migration (life and work abroad, i.e. events, relationships and circumstances); and 3) upon return to their country of origin (reasons and circumstances of return, life and work as a permanent returnee in their home country).

All these lived experiences describe the texture of the successful return experience, i.e. the ups and downs, 'pleasures' and difficulties, etc. Successful return could not be explained by simply describing acts and circumstances upon migrants' actual return to and permanent stay in their country of origin. Previous experiences, good or bad, before and during migration also contribute in explaining the attainment of successful return.



### *3. Meanings of Successful Return Migration*

Successful return migration is a phenomenon that resulted to positive and/ or favorable changes for the migrants and/or their families. That means, the phenomenon is a process of positive change---from a worse state to a better state for migrants and their families, e.g. from inability to provide for the needs of the family to financial capability to afford not only the needs but also the wants and desires of the family.

These positive changes or indicators of success were not always explicitly desired by migrants at the onset of migration but include other positive outcomes that resulted from migration and return migration. An example of a desired and achieved change was a decent and comfortable life for them and their families after years of working in foreign countries. An example of an unexpected change was becoming a respected leader in the community engaged in numerous socio-civic activities upon return to the Philippines.

Successful return as a phenomenon lived and conceived by migrants is personal and relative. The concept of success varies from one migrant to another for the desired changes and unexpected positive changes resulting from migration also differ from one migrant to another. The concept of successful return is also relative. Yet, one can find commonly shared and invariant meanings that migrants attached to their successful return migration.

Meanings of successful return, therefore, are statements of positive changes attained as an individual for oneself and for the family which include a) indicators of success (e.g. profitable businesses, children with college degrees) and b) feelings/emotions attached to the achievements.

Meanings, feelings attached to and indicators of successful return migration come together when expressed by successful migrants. There are many examples: a former domestic helper is proud of raising children who became

professionals despite her lowly-regarded and low-paid job abroad; a former telephone operator felt self-fulfilled after attaining a higher economic and social status as an owner of a recruitment agency and two IT companies; a seafarer after a disappointing sea career felt a strong sense of achievement in setting up a profitable supply of veterinary medicines and supplies enterprise; a nurse felt happiness returning to an intact family; former migrants live comfortable and stress-free lives in their home country away from tension-filled and worry-filled life as migrants in other countries.

#### *4. Key Processes, Actions and Circumstances*

Three factors bring about successful return migration: a) processes of change; b) actions committed by individuals; and c) significant circumstances (relationships with other people and institutions, proximate circumstances, and societal conditions). These are pertinent towards the individual achievement of the positive changes during migration and return migration.

*Key processes.* Successful migrant returnees undergo three processes: a) process of deciding to return to their home country permanently after working for years abroad; b) process of transforming themselves from being migrants in different occupations to becoming accomplished individuals and members of the community; c) process of attaining positive changes for themselves and their families.

In the case of the successful Filipino migrant returnees, the first process that they underwent involved the decision to either prolong their work overseas or to return home permanently. To return home and leave a stable source of income abroad is not an easy decision to make. In the case of the Filipino migrant returnees a combination of reasons and circumstances had led them to the decision to come home for good. The desire to be with their families, the confidence that they had enough to start a decent or comfortable life in the Philippines with the savings and investments that they have made, and/or the

attainment of some migration goals—foremost of which, was having their children finished their college education overcame whatever ambivalence that they had in permanently returning to the Philippines. Getting sick and the intense pleadings of their children for them to come home hastened the decision of migrant mothers to return home permanently. For some, the decision to return was deliberate, i.e. time was set for return like upon retirement, or after some years of work abroad.

The second process of transforming themselves from being migrants (workers, professionals, seafarers and DHs) to becoming good and astute businessmen and women, recognized socio-civic and political leaders and respected individuals in their other fields of engagements like migrant rights and welfare advocacy work and church-related activities, was not a deliberate and conscious process that they chose to make. The self-transformation process was an offshoot of hard work, continuous learning, strong desire to succeed in their endeavors and a genuine empathic desire to help other OFWs and other people in need who are just like them before.

The last process of attaining positive changes for themselves and their families explain why they worked abroad in the first place. They not only attained what they had set for their migration (e.g. providing for the college education of their children, putting up businesses, etc.), they also achieved a lot more considering the difficulties that they faced before migration. It was a process of 'having nothing' before migration to 'having something and a lot more' after migration and upon return to the Philippines. They have secured a decent and comfortable life for their families by securing stable sources of income during migration and upon return to the Philippines. They also returned to an intact family which leads a happy and contented life, much unlike other migrants who got estranged with their spouses, children and families. Unlike other OFWs who have returned to the Philippines with nothing (i.e. no work, no business, no savings and no intact family), the successful migrants have

returned to a happy and contented family and good, comfortable and worry-free life in the Philippines. These positive outcomes were due to their hard work, perseverance, nurturing of marital and family relationships and overcoming difficulties while they were abroad and upon return to the Philippines.

*Key actions.* Successful migrant returnees almost always compare themselves to those who failed to return successfully. Their achievements and what they did are compared to what unsuccessful migrants and returnees have failed to achieve and do. For example, while other migrants splurged on their earnings and pampered their families by acceding to all their wants and desires, successful migrant returnees continuously saved and invested their money and put a stop to the financial dependency of their families on their remittances. Put in another way, these migrant returnees, cognizant of the mindsets, attitudes, acts and circumstances of those who failed in their migration and return migration, strived to be their exact opposites, and hence, were successful in their return to their home country.

*Significant circumstances.* Social circumstances are either proximate or larger scale. Proximate circumstances refer to situations and relationships with significant people before, during and upon return. Large-scale and structural circumstances like political, social and economic changes in both host countries and countries of origin, although their contributions are not marked in this study, could also affect the successful return migration of other migrants.

Proximate and personal circumstances where migrants found themselves in, could either be good or bad. For instance, a bad circumstance like being not promoted in the job abroad could push a migrant to prepare well for his return and establish a business where he is his own boss. A good circumstance like having a good employer could provide a migrant time and space for self-improvement, having been allowed by her employer to engage in various

activities and engagements. Good or bad, circumstances were faced squarely as challenges and motivated migrants to work and strive harder to attain success in their return.

## **Chapter VII. Significance and Implications of the Study**

From the lived experiences of Filipino successful migrant returnees, the study has drawn the essences of successful return migration. The study identified the four elements that comprise the phenomenon of successful return migration, namely, 1) migrants with strong sense of purpose and resolve; 2) migration and return migration experiences; 3) meanings of successful return; and 4) key processes, actions and circumstances that bring about successful return migration.

This chapter sought to compare and examine the gained knowledge on successful return migration of Filipinos and the phenomenon of successful return migration with the insights from theories and findings of previous studies on return migration and with the sociological concept of human agency. Further, this chapter discusses the implications of some of the study's findings on programs on reintegration of overseas Filipinos.

### **A. Comparing the Main Findings of the Study with Those of Previous Studies and the Concept of Human Agency**

This study employed transcendental phenomenology in understanding the successful return of migrants to their home country, in this case, the return of Filipino migrants to the Philippines. To understand the phenomenon of successful return migration, the study did not use a *priori* theoretical or conceptual framework or a set of standards of what constitute successful return by which the migrant returnees' experiences were to be interpreted and judged. The study derived its understanding of the phenomenon of successful return migration (i.e. its essences) from the description and analysis of the lived experiences of the Filipino successful migrant returnees, themselves. As far as I

know, there is no other study that has employed transcendental phenomenology in understanding and examining the phenomenon of successful return migration.

Two derived elements of successful return migration, namely meanings of successful return and key processes, actions and circumstances as factors of successful return are discussed in comparison with the findings of previous studies on return migration. The central element of the phenomenon of successful return migration, i.e. migrants with strong sense of purpose and resolve to effect changes in their lives, is compared with the sociological concept of human agency.

### *1. Meanings of Successful Return Migration*

Previous studies spoke of economic success and successful social reintegration as constitutive of the concept of successful return migration. Successful return migration is seen both as economic and social reintegration.

For Anarfi & Jagare (2005), sustainable return migration means the absence of re-migration which entails the migrant's attainment of socioeconomic success and the guarantee of returnee's rights to public and social services and freedom of movement. Other researchers pointed out that successful return migration also means successful social reintegration into one's own home country. Said (1999), Haour-Knipe and Davies (2008) stated that migrant returnees had to adjust upon their return because communities of origin have changed and so have the returnees' attitudes and actions. Yu (2015) found significant changes in the personal identities and social behavior of migrant returnees upon return except for their high regard to family ties and religion which have remained the same if not stronger. Some returnees were found to have faced discrimination and/or misjudgment, dealt with unemployment

and were challenged by the stark difference between the socio-economic development of their former host countries and the Philippines.

Did the successful Filipino migrant returnees of this study speak of the same experiences and meanings of success? Is successful return to them, success in both economic and social reintegration?

Indeed, successful Filipino migrant returnees spoke of financial success as one of the measures of their successful return. One of them even proposed that concept of financial freedom better described what they have accomplished as successful migrant returnees than the concept of financial success. But to the successful migrant returnees of this study, successful return is a lot more than financial success or financial freedom.

The Filipino migrant returnees define their successful return in seven various ways. These meanings that the successful migrant returnees attached to their successful return express what they have attained or achieved, their indicators of success, and the feelings that they have attached to their successes. These meanings, indicators and attached feelings are summarized as follows: 1) fulfilling set dreams for migration, foremost of which were providing for the needs of the family and education of their children and securing a better life for their families; 2) self-fulfillment and pride derived from accomplishments (i.e. intact family and stable sources of income) upon return in the Philippines, in comparison with other migrants who were failures in their return; 3) overcoming and bouncing back from hardships, frustrations, and setbacks and attaining a better life upon return to the Philippines different from the difficult lives that they had before migration; 4) 'professional success'— attainment of professional training or advanced work experience and occupying top positions of responsibility while abroad and upon return to the Philippines; 5) attainment of peace of mind, happy and contented life by permanently returning to one's home country; 6) fulfilment in helping fellow migrants and other people in



need, and gaining recognition and respect because of their socio-civic, religious and political engagements; and 7) transforming themselves from being migrant workers to becoming accomplished entrepreneurs and professionals, and respected socio-civic leaders.

Social reintegration in the Philippines was not expressed as a problem by the Filipino migrant returnees of the study. In fact, the numbers 5, 6, and 7 meanings of successful return cited above express that the migrant returnees have reintegrated socially well upon their return. They have transformed themselves as respected members of their communities through their engagements, found self-fulfillment in helping other people, and are currently leading a happy life in the Philippines.

Indeed, from this phenomenological study, meanings attached to successful return migration other than financial or economic success and social reintegration were derived and gained by faithfully describing and analyzing the lived experiences of the successful migrant returnees themselves.

## *2. Factors that Bring About Successful Return Migration*

In Chapter II, many studies that I cited in the review of literature were one in saying that the decision to return to migrant's country of origin and the outcomes of return migration are determined by both individual and structural factors. Individual and structural factors spell whether return migration would be successful or not.

Structuralism, one of the theoretical approaches to migration, views return not only as a personal concern but also a social and contextual one that is affected by situational and structural factors. The studies of Senyurekli and Menjivar, among other studies, pointed to micro and macro level factors in both home and host countries that influence migrants' decision to return or not to return. Rosario and Guo (as cited in Haour-Knipe & Davies, 2008) echoed

this by saying that decision to return is based on careful weighing up of personal factors, career prospects and economic, political and environmental situation in the country of origin.

Cassarino (2004, 2014) posits that migrants' decision to return also depend on their return preparedness which in turn is determined by migrants' willingness and readiness to return. Koser and Kuschminder (2015 as cited in Debnath, 2016) and Haase and Honerath (2016) classified factors determining return migration as structural factors, individual factors and policy interventions by destination and origin countries that determine migrants' willingness to return and readiness to return.

Do these findings hold true among the successful Filipino migrant returnees? Did individual and structural factors determine their decision to return to their home country? What individual factors and structural factors contributed to their successful return to the Philippines?

Individual reasons and circumstances made the successful Filipino migrants decide to return to the Philippines. Their reasons and circumstances of deciding to return were varied. But these reasons and circumstances that influenced their decision to permanently return to the Philippines were largely individual and personal ones more than structural circumstances in both their host countries and in the Philippines.

Two main reasons for returning to the Philippines were expressed by the successful migrant returnees: 1) to be with their families/children after long years of separation from them and 2) attainment of one of the main goals for their migration—their children finishing college and/or earning incomes as professionals. Other individual reasons like the desire to operate their own businesses, getting sick, bowing to the pleadings of their children for them to return home, among others were also cited.

Two former OFW professionals shared their horrible experiences during the Gulf War when they were in Saudi Arabia but these did not deter them from continuing to work in Saudi Arabia and played no role in their eventual return to the Philippines. The successful migrant returnees in this study did not cite any large-scale event or situation in both host countries and in the Philippines, that pushed them to return home.

This study found out that individual actions and proximate circumstances that the migrants experienced were the keys to their successful return. Individual actions, during migration and upon return to the Philippines, explain how migrants attained their successful return. These actions (e.g. saving and investing their money, shying away from extravagant lifestyle and vices, securing stable sources of income in the Philippines) were consciously engendered, developed and expressed as the exact opposites of what other OFWs who failed in their return did.

Social circumstances that the former Filipino migrants were in, helped them achieve their successful return migration to the Philippines. These circumstances, however, were proximate and were not large scale social circumstances (e.g. economic and political conditions in the Philippines, government reintegration program, etc.). Proximate social circumstances referred to by the successful migrant returnees were personal situations and relationships that they were involved in. These were the economic difficulties before migration that they regarded as challenges and motivations to strive harder, good employment abroad that provided them time and space for self-development and enabled them make substantial savings and investments, and having responsible wives and children that hastened their return to the Philippines and secured for them an intact family.

From the experiences of the Filipino successful migrant returnees, what is highlighted is the predominance of individual factors, actions and

circumstances, not large-scale structural situations or factors that determined their decision to return and their attainment of success in their permanent return to the Philippines. At best, the social circumstances that played significant roles in their successful return are proximate and are far from being considered in the literature as large-scale, societal and structural factors or interventions.

This study's findings, however, should not lead us to a definitive conclusion that large scale structures and social circumstances will not play a role in the successful return migration of migrant Filipinos in the future. It is probable that in the future when a favorable climate for return exists (e.g. that includes a government reintegration program that ably supports and assists returning migrants), then one can expect more migrants to come home successfully aided by large scale interventions.

### *3. Migrants with Strong Sense of Purpose and Resolve and the Concept of Human Agency*

In the previous chapter, I have written the following: "Successful return migration as a phenomenon is not experienced by all migrants. It entails specific individual mindsets, drives, attitudes, and acts that would result to positive changes accruing from migration and return migration."

Central to the phenomenon of successful return migration of Filipinos is a migrant of a high sense of purpose and resolve. She was conscious and resolved of what she wanted. She persevered and overcame difficulties, learned from the mistakes of other migrants, and transformed herself to be better for her own sake and her family.

Upon return to her home country, she is proud of her accomplishments. She is a happy, satisfied and fulfilled individual who enjoys the fruits of her labor as a migrant. She is an individual who relied primarily on herself, not intimidated or threatened nor positively moved or assisted by large social structures and

circumstances in achieving her goals. Her proximate relationships with some significant people and specific circumstances helped her become a successful migrant and returnee. But it was and is still her that mattered the most in her successes and successful return to the Philippines.

Without seeking any theoretical or conceptual validation that migrants with the cited characteristics above is central to the phenomenon of successful return migration, let me compare these migrants with strong sense of purpose and resolve with the sociological concept of human agency.

In the literature, the concept of human agency is defined in varied ways. Parsel, Eggins and Marston (2017) in defining human agency combined the features of human agency cited by Emirbayer and Mische and Hitlin and Johnson, i.e. capacity to evaluate one's situation and aspiration in achieving set goals. Emirbayer and Mische (1998) "recognizes that people do not only act out of habit and routine, rather agency is oriented towards future possibilities and an individual's capacity to reflect upon and evaluate their present situation" while Hitlin and Johnson (2015) viewed "aspirations and optimism in achieving life goals as meaningful components of human agency" (Parse, Eggins & Marston, 2017).

Crockett (2012) reiterated that pursuit of goals is a reflection and expression of agency: "Goal pursuit implies a belief in one's ability to take effective action to reach a desired outcome. Thus, having goals indicates recognition of oneself as an agent" (p. 10). Not all goals, however, shape a person's life, only important goals provide individuals purpose and meaning (King, 1998 as cited by Crockett, 2012). Crockett claims that "such goals serve as reference points and guideposts that orient behavior directions, with potential consequences for a person's biography" (p.10). Goals and standards set by individuals for themselves motivate them and "may bring psychological rewards that increase the likelihood of continued investment in goals" (p. 11). Crockett added that efforts to achieve life goals "...entail setting goals, planning a

course of action, and persisting despite distractions and obstacles. Processes such as goal identification, self-regulation, coping, and self-efficacy are central to these efforts" (p. 10).

Although people exhibit goal identification, self-regulation, coping and self-efficacy, Bandura (1998 as cited in Crockett, 2012) reminds us that human agency is expressed within a social setting that either provides opportunities and resources or obstacles and constraints to people's actions. Social circumstances either supports or prevents individuals in their exercise of human agency. Bandura, however, differentiates individuals with strong self-efficacy with those with low self-efficacy in facing difficult circumstances. Crockett (2012) states Bandura's ideas: "People with high perceived coping efficacy view difficult tasks as challenges rather than as threats to be avoided; they focus on the opportunities worth pursuing rather than the risks and thus maintain their commitment despite setbacks... In contrast, people with low self-efficacy view stressors as threats. When faced with difficult tasks, they tend to focus on obstacles, personal shortcomings, and the negative consequences of failure. These self-defeating thoughts increase their distress and impair problem solving" (p. 17).

From the lived successful return migration experiences of the participants of the study, what was clearly highlighted was the migrants' human agency at work that spelled their successful return. Although there were proximate circumstances that aided in their successful return, their mindsets, attitudes and actions before and during migration, and upon their return to the Philippines determined what they have attained and achieved as migrant returnees.

Following Parsel, Eggins and Marston's and Crockett's ideas about human agency, the successful Filipino migrants are to be considered as individuals of strong sense of human agency. They were human agents that have set their life goals for themselves and their families, relentlessly pursued them despite

difficulties and constraints imposed upon them by social circumstances. Their successful return was primarily caused by them. They overcame difficulties imposed on them by an underdeveloped society like the Philippines. Prior to migration, they worked hard as workers and professionals but their low income and lack of opportunities in the Philippines deterred them from securing a good life for their children and families. They had to go abroad. They faced abuse, exploitation, loneliness and disappointments in their work and stay in foreign lands but they remained focused on their set goals. Bad experiences were faced. Abusive employers were fought. Obstacles were hurdled by these human agents who were determined to achieve through their migration what they have set for their families' and children's future in the Philippines.

Return migration was also not that easy. All returnees who have engaged in business encountered setbacks and difficulties yet they all remained steadfast and worked harder to make their businesses grow. They continuously learned new things, gained new knowledge and skills and strived to develop themselves as they reintegrate in their home country. They are human agents who were of high sense of purpose and resolve in making their own lives and that of their families better. Using Bandura's terms, they are also agents with a high coping efficacy. No structural constraints/social circumstances whether, big or small, had deterred them from accomplishing what they have set and dreamt.

Did any social circumstance or social structure play a role in their successful return migration? Social circumstances are either proximate or large scale circumstances. Proximate circumstances as used in this study refer to situations and relationships with significant people before, during and upon return to the country of origin. Large-scale and structural circumstances refer to political and economic changes in both host countries and countries of origin, government or other institutional support for migrants and returnees and the like. The successful returnees cited no societal conditions nor institutional government support that played a major role in their success. Three of them

mentioned that they availed of some grants and loans from government agencies to expand their businesses. At best, that was the government's contribution to their success.

What was marked in the successful migrants' return experiences were the proximate social circumstances that they were in that facilitated their attainment of their success. These proximate circumstances where migrants found themselves in were either bad or good. For instance, a bad circumstance like being not promoted in the job abroad pushed a migrant to prepare well for his return and establish a business where he is his own boss. A good circumstance like having a good employer that provided a migrant time and space for self-improvement enhances her capacity to live and work in her own country upon return. Good or bad, migrants have transformed these circumstances as motivations for them to strive harder and to succeed. Difficulties, frustrations, disappointments and setbacks have developed among these successful migrants a mindset to make the most of their stay abroad and to ensure a better life for them and their families upon their return to their home country.

Proximate circumstances were transformed by migrants to their advantage. Good working environments were maximized to save more money and for learning new things and designing plans of return. Despite the physical distance and years of separation, women migrants never wavered in nurturing their relationships with their husbands and raising their children well for they knew that those would mean maintaining their families intact. Dependency of family members was also not tolerated by these migrants. That allowed them to save and at the same time, push their relatives to work and contribute to the family income.

In sum, it can be said that successful return migration involves Filipino migrants with a strong sense of purpose and resolve. Borrowing the terms used by the social scientists cited in this section, these successful migrant returnees are individuals with a high sense of human agency and high coping efficacy.



There are proximate social circumstances that helped them become successful returnees in the Philippines.

## **B. Implications of Key Actions and Circumstances of Successful Return to Programs for Migrants and Returnees in the Philippines**

Key actions taken by Filipino migrants and some proximate circumstances aided in their successful return to the Philippines.

The key actions differentiated the successful migrants from those other migrants who failed in their return to the Philippines. In the main, these key actions pertain to four sets of actions: 1) hard work, dedication to work and profession and exercise of perseverance; 2) prudent management and use of finances; and 3) nurturing relationships within their families; and 4) planning well for their eventual return.

Actions belonging to hard work and perseverance include doing multiple-paying jobs abroad, bouncing back from business setbacks, among others. Actions belonging to prudent management of finances include shying away from vices, being frugal and not living beyond one's means, among others. Actions belonging to the set of nurturing relationships include nurturing relations with wife and husband and raising children fully aware of one's work and difficulties abroad. Actions pertaining to preparing well for eventual return include securing estimated money needed in living a life in the country and securing sources of income for the family upon return to the Philippines—businesses, investments, employment, among others.

The proximate circumstances that helped former Filipino migrants achieve a successful return were 1) difficulties and setbacks which motivated them to strive, persevere, and work harder; 2) employment by considerate individual employers, companies and institutions which afforded to earn and save more for their eventual return; 3) having a responsible wife and partner in business

and in raising the family; and 4) having responsible children who brought no problem to the family and facilitated the migrants' earlier return.

In this section, essential component activities of a return migration and reintegration program in the Philippines are recommended, based on the actions that were undertaken by the successful migrant returnees which spelled their successful return to the Philippines. Through this program, the actions made by the successful migrants can be popularized and return of other migrants would be given institutional support and assistance. That could eventually lead to a significant number of migrant Filipinos to return successfully to the Philippines.

It can be said that the migrant returnees of this study were literally on their own in making it back successfully in the Philippines. Their actuations made them attain and achieve what they are currently enjoying with their lives as migrant returnees. Given a reintegration program that integrates, popularizes and institutionalizes these key actions and specific circumstances that spelled success, we can expect more migrants to return successfully. Difficulties that returning migrants would face would be eased with good programs that would assist them.

Drawing from the key actions and circumstances of successful Filipino return migration, programs for migrants and their families in the Philippines should include, among others, the following component features:

#### *1. Capacitating Migrants and their Families Through Financial Education*

The successful Filipino migrant returnees were financially literate individuals, in thoughts and in deeds. They literally taught and developed themselves to be financially literate. Except for one, all the other migrant returnees in this study never attended a formal training on financial literacy. They, however, read about how to save, invest, do business, etc. and learned from the mistakes and

failures of other OFWs. They devised ways of systematically saving and raising money for their set goals and intended businesses, among others.

Financial literacy and education should be promoted and taught among migrants and their families, before and during migration and even upon their return to the Philippines. This will heighten their resolve and capacitate them to save, make good investments or manage businesses.

The financial education program should reach both migrants and their families. Not only should this program teach financial literacy, savings and investments, and setting up and managing businesses, it should also address the financial dependency of families on migrants' remittances. Curbing dependency on remittances not only entails educating the migrants but most importantly, their families.

One of the keys to the successes of migrant men were responsible wives who managed the family finances well and invested the family's savings to profitable businesses. These wives also did not depend on the migrant remittances; they worked and earned their own money. Wives and husbands left in the Philippines must continuously work and earn, and be taught how to manage the family finances and the remittances that they receive.

Migrants and their families should be taught to wisely invest their savings. Various options for investments like putting money in stocks and investments in cooperatives other than the traditional ones of saving money in banks should be popularized among them. Migrants and their families should be trained in setting up and managing businesses that could be stable sources of income for their families when they return.

Several non-government organizations, government agencies and private institutions are offering various programs of financial education. These

programs should reach both migrants in destination countries and the migrants' families in the Philippines.

## *2. Nurturing Relationships and Instilling Responsibility Among Family Members and Curbing Dependency of Migrant Families in the Philippines*

Programs should pay attention to the families of migrants in the Philippines. The actuations of these families could make or break the successful return of migrants. Financial dependency of families to migrant remittances, for one as cited earlier, weakens the ability of migrants to prepare well financially for their return. Broken or weakened marriages and children in disarray were regarded as indicators of a failed return which successful migrants of this study strived to prevent.

The study found out that having responsible wives was central to the successful return of the Filipino male migrants. All the male migrants acknowledged the important role that their wives have played in their return—as reliable manager of family finances, business partner, nurturing spouse and mother who raised their children well.

Having responsible children was considered by women migrants as the reason why they returned a lot earlier and why they deemed themselves as successful returnees. To them, their children was the reason why they persevered and at the same time, the reason why they deem themselves as successful (regardless whether they brought substantial savings when they returned or not).

Programs should not only instill and develop responsibility among wives and children left behind, they should also help develop husbands left behind in the Philippines to be reliable managers of family finances, business partners, nurturing spouses, and 'fathers and mothers' who can raise their children well.

Gender education and sensitivity activities should engage the participation not only of women and mothers but also men and fathers.

There are programs that cater to migrant children, husbands and migrant families in the Philippines. But these are few and their scope is limited in reach. They should be supported and expanded. For instance, Atikha's school-based and community-based program that teaches financial literacy, responsibility in the family, gender sensitivity, and the realities of migration that their parents are in to children of migrants should generate more support. More difficult is reaching out to the husbands left behind by their migrant wives. Gender sensitivity programs have not reached them substantially. Assistance for their employment and engagement in business to counter their idleness and financial dependency should also be actively offered to them.

Curbing dependency, instilling responsibility and gender sensitivity among all members of the migrant family will lead to an intact family that all migrants wanted to return to.

### *3. Forging Bilateral Agreements Between the Philippine Government and Governments of Host Countries to Ensure Good Employment and Working Conditions for Filipino Migrants*

One of the proximate circumstances that contributed to the successful return of migrant Filipinos, regardless of occupation or sex, was them having good employers, whether they be individuals, institutions or companies. These good employment conditions that they had, accorded them time, space, knowledge and skills, and money that were critical in their eventual return to the Philippines. Not all migrants have been that fortunate like them.

The Philippine government has always been among the first governments to ratify migration-related agreements and instruments. The Country Migration Report: The Philippines (2013) reported: "Most notably, the Philippines has ratified the UN Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers

and Members of their Families; ILO Conventions 97 (Migrant Workers), 143 (Migration for Employment), 189 (Domestic Workers), and the Maritime Labour Convention; and the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination and Violence Against Women.” But the same Report also observed: “In general, however, these international instruments do not have a direct and immediate reverberation for the welfare of Filipino migrants, who are mostly deployed in countries which are not parties to regional or international agreements” (p. 9).

It is in this light that the Philippine government must forge bilateral agreements with different host governments of OFWs and other migrants that would ensure appropriate remunerations and humane working conditions for all migrant Filipinos, most especially for domestic helpers, skilled, semi-skilled and unskilled workers. It is also important that migrants be provided free time, resources and facilities that would contribute to their self-development.

More good employers and companies will be engendered by bilateral agreements between the Philippine government and governments of destination countries. These agreements must be painstakingly and relentlessly pursued for these would eventually translate into better lives for migrants. These would also in the long term, ensure a better return if not a successful return to the Philippines for most of them.

#### *4. Various Forms of Assistance and Support to Returning Migrants*

Successful migrants in this study reiterated the need for other migrants to be supported and assisted in their return to the Philippines. They would like their fellow migrants not to suffer from being on their own when they return. Returning migrants need to be assisted by either securing their employment or establishing their own businesses or in investing their hard-earned money.

Successful migrant returnees of this study experienced setbacks in businesses—difficulties in setting up and operating their businesses. They, through their own hard work, resilience and ingenuity, overcame these difficulties and made their business grow and become profitable. But not all migrants and returnees are of the same mold.

Viable assistance and support like trainings, capital access, and securing market linkages for products should be provided to migrants who would engage in business. Various investment packages should be made available to returning migrants. Some agricultural cooperatives in the Philippines, for instance, have developed tailor-fit investment packages for migrants. Employment opportunities should be known to returning professionals and skilled workers. They should be accorded the opportunity to exercise their profession and skills that they have acquired abroad. These various forms and support could be offered in various levels of the government—from the national agencies to the local government units in places where the migrants returned.

It is noteworthy that a new program called GEAR UP (Go, Earn, Achieve Return-Uplift the Philippines) Reintegration Program for Domestic Workers was recently launched. GEAR UP was a collaboration among Atikha (an NGO), OWWA and NRCO (government agencies), some local government units, and Pinoy WISE (an organization of financially-literate OFWs and their families). The program is a reintegration preparedness program that seeks to bring home Filipina DHs and provide them sustainable jobs and businesses so that they can be with their families the soonest possible time. The program offers a step-ladder social and economic services to DHs and their families. It is hoped that eventually the program will be expanded to cater to other OFWs of different occupations. Such 'structural and institutional support' is most welcome for it would complement the 'agency' of the returning migrants.

### *5. Popularization of the Success Stories of Successful Migrant Returnees*

The successful migrant returnees of the study learned from the experiences of other OFWs who succeeded or failed in their migration to foreign countries and return migration to the Philippines. Their stories of success should be part and parcel of any program for migrants and their families. Their stories of success should be narrated and popularized in gatherings and trainings intended for migrants and their families.

Learning from the failures and success of others could be more effective than learning financial concepts, investment or business skills. People are inspired by success stories. These stories boost their confidence that they could also attain success like the successful migrant returnees who were situated in similar situations and faced similar problems and obstacles. They would learn from those who succeeded, the attitudes that they should foster in themselves, the actions that they should take or refrain from, know significant people and institutions that could aid in attaining their migration goals and in successfully returning to the Philippines. Practical advice from the successful migrant returnees in handling money, making investments, managing businesses, and nurturing relationships with spouses and children could be popularized.

The successful migrant returnees should be made resource persons in various gatherings and trainings of migrants and their families. Their success stories should be disseminated in various forms of media—print, broadcast and social media. Government and non-government agencies involved in return and reintegration concerns of migrant Filipinos and organizations of migrants and families should take the lead in popularizing successful return migration stories.

The OFWs and their families could learn a lot from the stories of the successful migrant returnees in this study. It is hoped that many would benefit from their lived experiences of successful return to the Philippines.



# **Chapter VIII. Summary of the Study and Recommendations for Further Studies**

The study sought to understand the phenomenon of successful return migration from the lived return experiences of Filipino migrants. It aimed to determine the essences---meanings, structures and processes of successful and permanent Filipino return migration.

The study employed a transcendental phenomenological research design. It described and analyzed the lived experiences of 30 former OFWs (seven domestic helpers, seven seafarers, eight professionals, and eight workers) who have successfully returned to the Philippines. Textural and structural descriptions and essences of the successful return migration experiences for each individual migrant, for the four occupational groups (domestic helpers, professionals, seafarers, and workers), for the two groups of men and women migrants, and for all the 30 former OFWs were done to understand the phenomenon of successful return migration.

## **A. Study's Main Findings**

Towards understanding the phenomenon of successful return migration, the study raised four research questions:

1. What individual reasons and social circumstances while abroad have led to the Filipino migrants' decision to return to the Philippines?
2. What did Filipino migrant returnees experience in the process of return and reintegration to the Philippines?
3. What is meant by successful return migration from the views and lived experiences of migrant returnees?

4. What individual reasons and social circumstances explain their actual successful return and current stay in the Philippines?

The main findings of the study following the research questions cited above are as follows:

### *1. Reasons and Circumstances of Return Migration*

Individual reasons and social circumstances abroad led the Filipino migrants to return to the Philippines. Regardless of sex and occupation, two reasons for returning to the Philippines were foremost in the minds of the migrants: 1) to be with their families/children after long years of separation from them and 2) attainment of one of the main goals for their migration—their children finishing college and/or earning incomes as professionals.

Most of the domestic helpers got sick while abroad. These illnesses coupled with the desire to be with their families pushed their return to the Philippines. Many mothers acceded to the demands of children and/or husbands to come home to be with them.

Another strong reason that was expressed by the migrant returnees was the intent to start their own business/or manage existing businesses in the Philippines. It was an expression of a strong desire to be their own employers and make it through their own efforts after working for years serving a company or an employer.

### *2. Experiences in Return Migration*

Most of the migrants' return was planned. Others who have not deliberately planned for their return were nonetheless ready to return to the Philippines. They all have prepared well for their eventual return---saved substantial

amounts of money, secured stable sources of income (business or employment), made good financial and property investments, and returned when their children have finished college and were working and contributing to the family's expenses.

Many of them regardless of sex or previous occupation while abroad engaged in businesses, overcame setbacks and difficulties but eventually made these endeavors profitable which secured a worry-free and comfortable lives for their families. Few women opted to take care of their families and children upon return which they have desired to do for years. These mothers were prevailed upon by their children to stop working for the family. Their children now provide for the upkeep of the family and promised to work for their mothers. Some of the successful migrants were professionally and gainfully employed upon return to the Philippines.

Many of them also engaged in socio-civic, church-related activities and in politics. To them, their social engagements were their ways of 'sharing their blessings' or 'paying it forward'.

All of them are leading a happy and comfortable life in the Philippines with their children and families. They have attained financial freedom, i.e. having no financial worries in terms of their sources of income, and have attained peace of mind and a stress-free life, the exact opposite of what they had while they were working and living abroad.

### *3. Meanings of Successful Return Migration*

The successful Filipino migrant returnees define their success in seven distinct yet interrelated ways:

3.1. Successful return is fulfilling set dreams for migration, foremost of which were providing for the needs of the family and education of their children and

securing a better life for their families. The Filipino migrants have endured hard work and other difficulties abroad towards the attainment of these goals.

3.2. Successful return is self-fulfillment and pride derived from accomplishments upon return, in comparison with other migrants who were failures in their return. Accomplishments referred to were 1) an intact family (i.e. good marriage and/or responsible children) even after long years of separation and 2) secured sources of income that provide at the minimum, a decent life for the family.

3.3. Successful return is overcoming and bouncing back from hardships, frustrations, and setbacks and attaining a better life upon return to the Philippines which was a far cry from the difficult lives that they had before migration.

3.4. Successful return means 'professional success'— attainment of professional training or advanced work experience and occupying top positions of responsibility while abroad and upon return to the Philippines.

3.5. Successful return is the attainment of peace of mind by permanently returning to one's home country. The Filipino migrant returnees are contented and happy with their lives in the Philippines. They no longer had to work in a stressful, anxiety-laden, and worry-filled foreign country.

3.6. Successful return means fulfilment in helping fellow migrants and other people in need, and gaining recognition and respect because of their socio-civic, religious and political engagements.

3.7. Successful return means transforming themselves from being migrant workers (DHs, workers, professionals and seafarers) to becoming accomplished

entrepreneurs and professionals, and respected socio-civic leaders through hard work, perseverance and continuous learning.

Migrants based on sex and occupation were different in terms of weights of importance that they ascribe to the above-cited meanings of successful return migration.

#### *4. Individual Actions and Circumstances for Successful Return Migration*

Individual actions and specific social circumstances explain the Filipino migrants' successful return to the Philippines. These individual actions performed while abroad and upon return were many and varied but all were essentially actions that were the exact opposites of what migrants who failed in their return did.

These exemplary actions done by the successful migrant returnees can be grouped into four sets that involved the following: 1) hard work and dedication to work and profession and exercise of perseverance; 2) prudent management and use of finances; and 3) nurturing relationships within their families; and 4) planning well for their eventual return.

The social circumstances that spelled success for the returning migrants were proximate circumstances and not large-scale, societal, and institutional circumstances. By proximate circumstances are meant significant personal relationships, favorable work/employment conditions, and difficult and negative life and work experiences. Specifically, these circumstances were:

a. difficulties and setbacks experienced during when they were young, before they migrated, during their migration and upon return that motivated them to strive, persevere, and work harder

b. considerate employers and good companies and institutions which provided them good work setting, time and space for self-development, recognized their hard work and dedication, and provided them and their families handsome salaries and benefits which afforded to earn and save more for their eventual return

c. having responsible wives who played major roles in the male migrants' return, i.e. a good family finance manager, astute business partner, a good wife and nurturing mother who raised the children well

d. having responsible children and siblings who brought no problem to the family, finished their education and are currently earning their own living, facilitated the earlier return of migrants

##### *5. Component Elements of the Phenomenon of Successful Return Migration*

The phenomenon of successful return migration is comprised of four elements: a) migrants with strong sense of purpose and resolve; b) migration and return migration experiences; c) meanings of successful return; and d) key processes, actions and circumstances that bring about successful return migration.

At the heart of the phenomenon of successful return migration are a select few migrants. Successful return migration was lived and experienced by migrants who have a strong sense of purpose and resolve to change their and their families' lives for the better through migration.

Successful return migration is a process and comprised of the lived experiences of migrants before migration, while abroad and upon permanent return to their country of origin. Their attitudes, motivations, positive or negative experiences, actions and life and work circumstances, all describe their journey to a successful return.

Migrants define their successful return in various ways. They attach meanings, set indicators and expresses feelings to their attained goals and other achievements.

Specific life and work circumstances, individual acts, and processes in the lived experiences of migrants contribute to the migrants' successful return. The migrants underwent three distinct and yet interrelated processes toward their successful return: a) process of deciding to return and stay in their home country permanently after working for years abroad; b) process of transforming themselves from being migrants in different occupations to becoming accomplished individuals and members of the community; c) process of attaining positive changes for themselves and their families. The key actions by the successful migrant returnees while abroad and upon return are the exact opposites of what other migrants who failed in their return have done. Social circumstances, proximate in the main contribute to their successful return migration.

## **B. Recommendations for Further Studies on Return Migration**

It is recommended that the following studies be pursued on return migration:

### *1. Studies on Failed Return Migration*

To complement this study, a transcendental phenomenological study on failed return migration of Filipinos should be pursued. Although the experiences of those who failed in their return migration were touched in this study, they were not dealt with substantially.

The failed experiences were tackled by the successful migrant returnees to describe what to them was not a successful return to the Philippines and when

they explained why other OFWs failed and they succeeded. It is not enough to just assume that the experiences of the unsuccessful migrant returnees are simply the exact opposite of those migrants who succeeded in their return to the Philippines. Following the logic of transcendental phenomenology, the lived experiences of failed return migration are to be described and defined by the migrant returnees themselves who unsuccessfully returned to Philippines.

## *2. Comparative Studies on Successful and Unsuccessful Return Migration*

A comparative study on successful and unsuccessful return migration can also be pursued. A multiple case study research design can be employed in conducting such a comparative study.

Typologies of successful and unsuccessful migrant returnees can be constructed and compared in terms of demographic characteristics, occupations and status in host countries, migration experiences, factors and circumstances of return, and experiences upon return to the home country.

## *3. Studies on Significant Structural Factors of Successful Return Migration*

Studies dealing with structural, large-scale social circumstances and government interventions and support as significant factors of successful return migration can also be done. This study can encompass various experiences of different countries of origin, for instance, those in Southeast Asia. Examination of the reintegration programs of Southeast Asian migrant sending countries can be one of the research objectives of the research.



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# Appendices

## Appendix 1. Semi-structured Interview Questionnaire

(Note: The guide questions were originally in Filipino. This is an English translation of the guide questionnaire.)

### A. Personal Information

1. Name
2. Age
3. Sex
4. Status
5. Address
6. Present Occupation
7. Former Occupation Abroad

### B. Interview Questions

Research Question 1: What individual reasons and social circumstances while abroad have led to the Filipino migrants' decision to return to the Philippines?

1. Why did you leave the Philippines to work abroad?
2. How long did you stay abroad? What was your occupation in the host country?
3. Please describe your life and work abroad.
4. Have you ever thought of staying all your life in a foreign country? If Yes, why? Why did it not happen?
5. When and what circumstances (personal, family, situation in the Philippines and host country) did the thought of returning to the Philippines occur to you?
6. When and what reasons and circumstances made you decide to permanently return to the Philippines? Have you had second thoughts of permanently returning to the Philippines? If none, why? If you had, why?
7. What you're your thoughts and feelings about your life abroad? What were your thoughts and feelings about your permanent return to the Philippines? How would you explain these thoughts and feelings?

Research Question 2: What did Filipino migrant returnees experience in the process of return and reintegration to the Philippines?

1. Was your permanent return to the Philippines planned or unplanned? Please narrate the events and situation why it was a planned or unplanned permanent return.

2. During the time that you were almost decided to return to the Philippines, what were you thinking and feeling about your return and a life in the Philippines? Why did you think and feel that way?
3. What preparations did you make for your permanent return to the Philippines? Did you set a timetable concrete plans and steps in relation to your return?
4. Did someone help you in planning and your actual return to the Philippines? What kind of help was extended to you?
5. What were you thinking and feeling when you were about to return home? Why do you think you thought and felt that way? Have you had second thoughts?
6. Months after your return, what did you do, what preoccupied you in the Philippines? Why? What were your thoughts and feelings during these early months in the Philippines?
7. How long have you returned to the Philippines? How would you describe your permanent return to the Philippines?
8. Have you experienced difficulties in your return? What were these? How did you face and find solutions to these problems? Did you anticipate that you would be facing these difficulties even before you returned?
9. Did you notice changes in yourself, your family and community when you returned? Did you make personal adjustments?
10. Did it ever occur to you that your decision to return to the Philippines was wrong and you wanted to work again in another country? If No, why? If Yes, why? Why did it not happen, your plan to work again abroad?
11. When did you feel that you were alright working and living in the Philippines? That you do not want to work again abroad? What were your indicators that you are settled in the thought of permanently staying and living in the Philippines? What were the conditions that helped you feel that way?

Research Question 3: What is meant by successful return migration from the views and lived experiences of migrant returnees?

Research Question 4: What individual and social circumstances explain their actual successful return and current stay in the Philippines?

1. What preoccupies you now? Was this what you imagined that you would be doing upon your return? If this was not what you imagined doing, what happened?
2. How would you describe and evaluate your life in the Philippines How would you compare your life now in the Philippines with your life abroad? What do you choose as better? Why?
3. How would you describe your thoughts and feelings regarding your life now in the Philippines?
4. How would you compare your life as a migrant returnee to those who have not worked and lived abroad?
5. Do you think and feel that you have successfully returned to the Philippines? If Yes, why? If No, why?



6. When did it occur to you that you have successfully returned to the Philippines? Why did you not think and feel successful at an earlier time?
7. How would you define a successful return to the Philippines like what you have attained? What were the thoughts and feelings that accompany a successful return?
8. How would you define an unsuccessful return to the Philippines? What are the thoughts and feelings that are attached to unsuccessful return? Do you know of people and experiences of unsuccessful return?
9. What have you achieved which you think indicated your successful return to the Philippines?
10. Who and what helped you attain a successful return to the Philippines?
11. How were you similar in terms of thought, attitude, actions and circumstances with those that you know were also successful in their return to the Philippines?
12. How were you different in terms of thought, attitude, actions and circumstances with those that you know were unsuccessful in their return to the Philippines?
13. What do you think are the individual and social factors that determine a successful return to the Philippines? What conditions, support and assistance are needed for a successful return to the Philippines?
14. Will you recommend to others still working abroad to permanently return to the Philippines? Why? What will you advise those who are planning to return permanently to the Philippines?

## **Appendix 2. Recordings and Transcription of Interviews**

### I. Analysis of the Lived Experiences of Successful Return of Individual Domestic Helpers

- A. Amy Aranja
- B. Cristeta Matyas
- C. Divine Beloso
- D. Ellen Eleclenal
- E. Myrna Padilla
- F. Nelsie Gasque
- G. Rebecca Tubongbanua

### II. Analysis of the Lived Experiences of Successful Return of Individual Seafarers

- A. Rodolfo Aspillaga
- B. Herminigildo Alipat
- C. Edwin Itable
- D. Jose Dasas
- E. Oscar Ricaflanca
- F. Roberto Guansing
- G. Sofronio Dumael

### III. Analysis of the Lived Experiences of Successful Return of Individual Professionals

- A. Elisa Ledesma
- B. Rodolfo Tubis
- C. Ermie Garon
- D. Fe Lao
- E. Francisco 'Jun' Aguilar
- F. Lea Estuye
- G. Nelson Marana
- H. Pol Espanola

### IV. Analysis of the Lived Experiences of Successful Return of Individual Workers

- A. Glen Barrera
- B. Jaime Sequio
- C. Loreto Soriano
- D. Lucita Tomas Cerbas
- E. Magdalena Garcia Rogelio
- F. Marites Nogrono
- G. Nasrine Evangelio
- H. Yco Tan

**Note: Appendix 2 is in CD 1.**

### **Appendix 3. Analysis of Individual Experiences of Successful Return**

#### I. Analysis of the Lived Experiences of Successful Return of Individual Domestic Helpers

- A. Amy Aranja
- B. Cristeta Matyas
- C. Divine Beloso
- D. Ellen Eleclenal
- E. Myrna Padilla
- F. Nelsie Gasque
- G. Rebecca Tubongbanua

#### II. Analysis of the Lived Experiences of Successful Return of Individual Seafarers

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- A. Glen Barrera
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- F. Marites Nogrono
- G. Nasrine Evangelio
- H. Yco Tan

**Note: Appendix 3 is in CD 2.**

## Appendix 4. Main Themes of Lived Experiences of Successful Return of Seven Seafarers

Seven former seafarers, namely Rodolfo Aspillaga, Herminigildo Alipat, Edwin Itable, Jose Dasas, Oscar Ricaflanca, Roberto Guansing, and Sofronio Dumael shared their life and work experiences as migrant returnees and as former seafarers. They are listed in the first column of the table below as A, B, C, D, E, F, and G, respectively.

The final themes drawn from the analyses of the experiences of the seven individual seafarers were listed and cited with corresponding letter and number. For example, in the first column of the table below, B1 means the first final theme in the experiences of Herminigildo Alipat. These individual themes of the seven seafarers were examined and clustered into the main themes that characterized the experiences of successful return of the occupational grouping of seafarers.

Final Themes of Individual Seafarer's Successful Return	Main Themes of Successful Return of Seven Seafarers
<p>A1. Without demand to provide for the family, changed career direction and worked his way to be ship captain</p> <p>B1. determined to change his life and later to carve a good future for his family, endured a difficult life and work at sea for 42 years</p> <p>C1. underwent training and worked as seafarer to help provide for the needs of his big and poor family</p> <p>D1. set professional career path—studied, worked and trained to become a chief engineer of a ship</p> <p>E1. worked as seafarer for 22 years to provide for the family especially for children's education</p> <p>F1. worked in different types of ships, endured hard work, danger and loneliness to earn higher pay as seafarer</p> <p>G1. first stint as seaman prodded by individual wants; last stint to provide for own growing family needs</p>	<p><b>A. worked at sea to provide for family and carve a professional career</b></p> <p>--except for one, all the others have worked for more than 20 years</p> <p>--two main reasons: to provide for the family and children's education and carve a professional career at sea</p>

<b>Final Themes of Individual Seafarer's Successful Return</b>	<b>Main Themes of Successful Return of Seven Seafarers</b>
<p>A2. After a difficult yet fulfilling job as ship captain, permanently settled in the Philippines with a land-based job</p> <p>B2. deliberately planned for return: saved and invested till retirement as chief engineer</p> <p>C3. returned to country to become head of manning agency and never boarded ship again to be with his children and establish his training center for ship officers</p> <p>D3. left his high paying job at sea and returned to the country to help wife take care of children, and confidently banking on attained economic status and business</p> <p>Part of E2. successfully returned --fulfilling goal set as seafarer--children finishing their college education and landing good jobs</p> <p>F2. despite misgivings of others, returned home due to frustration of not getting promoted and getting tired of hard work at sea and encouraged by eldest daughter finishing college and will be able to help financially and an acquired promising productive farm and a flourishing business</p>	<p><b>B. Reasons and circumstances of return and preparations for returning home</b></p> <p>reasons:  --attained set goals and desire to be with family  --assigned to a land-based job in the country  --frustrations in sea career</p> <p>except one, others did not have planned return, although confident of returning because of savings, investments and businesses</p>
<p>A3. Successful permanent return: objective to be a captain attained; self-fulfillment in helping and guiding fellow seamen, provided for the education of his children, managerial jobs and consultancies that secured a decent life and retirement</p> <p>B4. success and accomplishments as seafarer and returnee; ownership of large productive farm, provided college education of children, investments and businesses that provide needs, respect from friends and other</p>	<p><b>C. Indicators and meanings of success as seafarer and returnee</b></p> <p>indicators: attainment of career goal (e.g. become a captain); high economic status and profitable businesses; children with college degrees and good jobs, intact family with no major problems</p> <p>meanings: bouncing back and attaining goals and success despite hardships of work at sea, frustrations (not being promoted), and major</p>

<b>Final Themes of Individual Seafarer's Successful Return</b>	<b>Main Themes of Successful Return of Seven Seafarers</b>
<p>people (a life totally different and a lot better than his earlier life that provides happiness and satisfaction)</p> <p>C4. successful in terms of:  --despite lack of academic training, had risen from the ranks and became a ship captain and thus was able to accumulate resources from legitimate means  --operating a recognized training school for ship's officers  --provided for children's education and built their own houses  --sent other fellow seafarer's children to school and college  --leading a simple, major sickness-free, and happy family life</p> <p>D5. own success means  --attainment of goals and high status in life  --good life and capability to travel even if not a seafarer anymore  --children have finished higher education and thus can earn a living  --managing a profitable bike business and acquiring more properties and operating other businesses</p> <p>E2. successfully returned  --fulfilling goal set as seafarer--children finishing their college education and landing good jobs  --leading a simple yet happy family  --contentment and fulfillment out of his active social engagements  --became an environmentally aware, tolerant, not corrupt and a sharing person</p> <p>F3. Successful return means an acquired high economic status (due to profitable businesses) and an intact family, unlike many seafarers and returnees' situation; though successful return means greater responsibility and social engagements, it is a happier and contented life</p>	<p>problems (e.g. infidelity of wife and consequent marriage break-up); a happy and comfortable family life; fulfilment and contentment of accomplishments and social engagements</p>

Final Themes of Individual Seafarer's Successful Return	Main Themes of Successful Return of Seven Seafarers
<p>G5. own definition of successful migrant return—essentially financial but includes a good marriage, happy family life, being able to travel, and recognition from people he has learned to deal with</p>	
<p>A4. Responsible wife as key and things to do to ensure seafarer's successful return Part of B2. deliberately planned for return: saved and invested till retirement as chief engineer</p> <p>B3. experienced business failure and suffered from failed first marriage</p> <p>B5. central role played by wife in his and other seafarer's success—manages and controls remittances and family finances, partner in investments and businesses</p> <p>B6. attitudes and practices that spelled successful and unsuccessful return successful return-- faith in God, discipline, control, engage and manage well-thought out business, save, avoid debts, seafarer and family to spend money wisely unsuccessful return---splurging money, engaging in gambling, getting indebted to flaunt supposed wealth</p> <p>C2. worked in foreign vessels for more than 18 years, rose from the ranks and gained recognition to become a ship captain</p> <p>C5. attained success because of --one's own firm resolve to achieve, plans but acts on one plan at a time and a strong self-control --a wife who was not a big spender and good children who gave him no problems</p>	<p><b>D. Keys to success</b></p> <p>--all of them: wife played central/key and important role (managed finances well, worked and contributed to family income, operated family business well, raised responsible children)</p> <p>--individual characteristics and attitudes (treated work and career as challenges to overcome and attain; bouncing back from frustrations and major problems; strong self-discipline shying away from vices, frugality and not living beyond one's means; good management of businesses)</p>

<b>Final Themes of Individual Seafarer's Successful Return</b>	<b>Main Themes of Successful Return of Seven Seafarers</b>
<p>D2. to be a chief engineer was a drive, a challenge and a source of accomplishment and happiness</p> <p>D4. keys to his successful return  --a wife who contributed financially and hence, boost up their savings  --hands-on management of a profitable bike business  --a mindset to reach his goal to be a chief engineer and prepare for his return and avoid the mistakes of his fellow seafarers  --a firm belief in God</p> <p>E3. successfully returned because of his attitudes and behaviors and because of responsible wife and children</p> <p>F4. factors explaining successful return:  --a responsible wife who managed finances wisely, an able business partner and who raised their children well  --saved for business, frugal as a seafarer, exercised self-discipline and had no vices  --studied and managed well the businesses he set up</p> <p>G2. worked, saved, shied away from vices and returned and together with wife managed a promising business  G3. manages with her wife and children profitable businesses</p> <p>G4. reasons why he successfully returned to the Philippines: previous business experience, wife earned and managed finances allotments and finances well, concentrated on their business and not on other engagements, learned about and managed their business, hands-on</p>	
<p>Part of B6. attitudes and practices that spelled successful and unsuccessful return</p>	<p><b>E. Reasons of failures of other seafarers</b>  --living beyond one's means</p>



<b>Final Themes of Individual Seafarer's Successful Return</b>	<b>Main Themes of Successful Return of Seven Seafarers</b>
<p>unsuccessful return---splurging money, engaging in gambling, getting indebted to flaunt supposed wealth</p> <p>C6. problems why other seafarers have not successfully returned and necessary government interventions  --problems: living beyond their means and strong family ties (and dependency) that drain their resources  --interventions needed: mandatory savings allotments, easier terms for bank loans, higher SSS benefits, and other government assistance</p> <p>G6. explaining failure of return and advise to fellow migrants  reasons for failure:  --financially dependent wife  --family and marital problems  --engaged in vices like gambling  --no plans, contented in what they earn as seamen  advise to others:  --invest savings to profitable endeavor  --manage finances while an OFW  --those in the Philippines, to manage allotments well  --avoid the mindset that you will be an OFW forever</p>	<p>--dependency of wife families on one's earnings as seafarer  --vices  --family and marriage problems  --no concrete plans of return and contented to being a seafarer (forever a seafarer-mindset)</p>

## Appendix 5. Main Themes of Lived Experiences of Successful Return of Eight Professionals

Eight former migrants who worked as professionals abroad participated in the study; four were women and another four were men. The former professionals who shared their experiences as migrant returnees and as former migrant professionals were Elisa Ledesma, Rodolfo Tubis, Ermie Garon, Fe Lao, Francisco 'Jun' Aguilar, Pol Espanola, Lea Estuye, and Nelson Marana. They are listed in the first column of the table below as A, B, C, D, E, F, G, and H respectively.

The final themes drawn from the analyses of the experiences of the eight individuals were listed and cited with corresponding letter and number. For example, in the first column of the table below, C1 means the first final theme in the experiences of Ermie Garon. The individual themes of the eight professionals were examined and clustered into the main themes that characterized the experiences of successful return of the occupational grouping of professionals.

<b>Themes from Individual Professionals' Successful Return</b>	<b>Main Themes of Successful Return of Professionals</b>
<p>Part of B1...to earn more for his growing family</p> <p>C1. worked for 13 years in Palau (first as saleslady and later as engineer) despite being emotionally difficult being away with her 6 children and husband who was working in the US; had no recourse because they had difficult time raising their children in the Philippines (lived of from debts from church mates) and to secure their children's future</p> <p>Part of D1... to augment income</p> <p>E1. due to his mother's concern for his safety because of his political involvement, left for Saudi Arabia to work</p> <p>Part of F1... to provide not only for his own family but also for his parents and seven siblings</p> <p>Part of G1.. ; overseas work not to provide for the family but for professional growth, hence enjoyed the experience</p>	<p><b>A. Work abroad to provide for their families and immediate relatives</b></p> <p>Except for one who went abroad for a short period of time to gain training and professional advancement, the rest worked for more than 10 years as professionals (and enjoyed high salaries and benefits) to provide for their immediate families and other relatives</p>

<b>Themes from Individual Professionals' Successful Return</b>	<b>Main Themes of Successful Return of Professionals</b>
<p>Part of H1... worked as agricultural engineer in Saudi Arabia for a higher salary and work experience</p> <p>A1. worked, attained professional growth and promoted to become a clinical resource nurse for the same American hospital in Saudi Arabia for 30 years and enjoyed the work, its high salary and service benefits</p> <p>B1. For almost 20 years, to earn more for his growing family, worked his way through to becoming a young and highly-paid project engineer in ARAMCO, Saudi Arabia</p> <p>Part of C1. worked for 13 years in Palau (first as saleslady and later as engineer)</p> <p>C2. earned substantially as engineer from her salary, profit sharing from the company and consultancies; saved money for children's college education, house and for business in separate accounts; decided to separate with husband who is in the US and children who are in the Philippines because it was the most-cost effective</p> <p>D1. worked as a nurse in Saudi Arabia in different hospitals, received high salaries but engaged in small businesses (selling processed meat, etc.) to augment income, and missed her family but with the mindset of earning more so that she could return to the Philippines at earliest possible time</p> <p>E2. experienced the difficulties and homesickness during earlier years, the Gulf War but worked his way from being a technician to a mechanical engineer</p> <p>Part of E3.... numerous benefits from company resulting to a comfortable life in Saudi Arabia with his family</p>	

<b>Themes from Individual Professionals' Successful Return</b>	<b>Main Themes of Successful Return of Professionals</b>
<p>Part of F1... worked in Saudi Arabia for almost 30 years (a full time and a part-time job)</p> <p>G1. impressed by Singaporean way of teaching and learning, underwent training and taught in an international school in Jakarta for two years; overseas work not to provide for the family but for professional growth, hence enjoyed the experience</p> <p>Part of H1. 1. worked as agricultural engineer in Saudi Arabia for a higher salary and work experience; with wife working as nurse also in Saudi Arabia, saved a lot and invested in lands</p>	
<p>A2. at mandatory retirement age of 60, returned with initial fears (no income, adjustments) but overcame them with her savings and benefits and the thought with being with family</p> <p>B2. The experience of Gulf War, the ouster of Marcos dictatorship, the longing to be with his adolescent children and manage his own businesses (and to be his own man) led him to return to the Philippines</p> <p>Part of C4... own business to manage upon return and deliberately worked and saved for these goals</p> <p>D3. temporary returned to Philippines several times, acquiesced to her husband's requests to take care of sick daughter, because he ran for elections and for her to run in the elections, for her family, marriage and children have always been her priority</p> <p>D4. returned home to run for elections and start their family business</p> <p>Part of F2...raised the money (retirement pay and savings) and confidently returned to the Philippines</p> <p>G2. gained the training and encouraged to work the DECS Central</p>	<p><b>B. Different reasons of return but with confidence that they could live a good life in the Philippines</b></p> <p>Two of them returned due to mandatory retirement age, others returned because they wanted to be with their families and manage their businesses in the Philippines, one because she gained the training that she wanted.</p> <p>All prepared for their return and confidently returned, finances-wise (calculated and raised the money needed for their families to live in the Philippines without having to work, raised the necessary capital for their intended business in the Philippines, accumulated real estate properties—farm lands, house and lots—and financial investments, gained financial freedom—ability to live decently for years without worry about sources of income)</p> <p>one expressed fear of not being able to socially integrate in the Philippines because of getting used to a comfortable life in Saudi Arabia.</p>

<b>Themes from Individual Professionals' Successful Return</b>	<b>Main Themes of Successful Return of Professionals</b>
<p>office as education specialist because of her work experience in Jakarta, returned after two years</p> <p>Part of H1...saved a lot and invested in lands and after 11 years returned to oversee investments and establish businesses ('projects')</p>	
<p>A3. although engagements in business not yet profitable, considered her return successful because:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>--attained professional success: well-educated and trained and achieved a top position in hospital training young nurses-</li> <li>-a happy family, married life and a responsible child (despite being left with her sister for so many years)</li> <li>--provided for the education of nieces and nephews who are currently employed abroad who in turn re helping them</li> <li>--travelled to different places in the world</li> </ul> <p>B3. success means dreaming big, pursuing and achieving these dreams; felt satisfied because of the following that he has achieved:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>--first and foremost, an intact family (with children finishing college)</li> <li>--amassed wealth and properties and manages businesses that provide well for his children and grandchildren</li> <li>--helped his relatives financially by setting up businesses for them</li> <li>--involved in housing projects of Gawad Kalinga and CFC activities and in associations of hog and poultry raisers</li> </ul> <p>C3. successful OFW returnee meant being contented and self-fulfilled for</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>--raising six responsible and God-fearing children who earned college degrees and are earning their own money</li> <li>--operating her own profitable construction business despite earlier business failures</li> </ul>	<p><b>C. Meanings and feelings of successful return</b></p> <p>Successful return meant a return to the Philippines which entails</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) a life better than before they left and when they were young;</li> <li>2) financial success which essentially defines successful return (i.e. profitable businesses, acquisition of properties, substantial financial investments, attainment of financial freedom—worry-free financial status that can afford a comfortable life);</li> <li>3) attainment of professional growth (i.e. gained knowledge and professional training, reached top positions in their companies and institutions with high salaries and benefits);</li> <li>4) unlike other OFW families, despite separation with families, have maintained and returned to a happy and intact family life, good marriage, and responsible children;</li> <li>5) able to help financially other relatives and for three of them who engaged in politics, to help other people. They all attached self-fulfillment, satisfaction and contentment in what they have accomplished and achieved as OFW and upon return to the Philippines. They are happy and contented with their lives in the Philippines.</li> </ol>

<b>Themes from Individual Professionals' Successful Return</b>	<b>Main Themes of Successful Return of Professionals</b>
<p>--giving back to her fellow OFWs by helping them and to the community by her involvement in politics and migrant concerns</p> <p>D6. success means</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>--raising children who were achievers and responsible and being able to provide well for them</li> <li>--providing for her sisters' college education</li> <li>--contentment and fulfillment in the ability to afford what she wants while able to provide help others (financially) who she would like to help</li> <li>--despite earlier marital problems, had worked out on the relationship and saved the marriage and family</li> </ul> <p>E6. own successful return</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>--comfortable and simple life without serious problems with the family and in health</li> <li>--managed successfully set-up businesses without exploiting others</li> <li>--raised his children well who earned college degrees and are in top positions of their companies</li> <li>--mentored and helped other OFWs and continuously advocates for migrants' welfare and concerns</li> </ul> <p>F4. success means the attainment of financial freedom and leading a simple, worry-free life and being free to do what he wants and without working under an employer</p> <p>G3. success is attaining the goal set for migration—learning the Singaporean way of teaching (plus earned some money to buy a house and lot and help relatives finish their education)—and acquiring a professional position that allowed her to apply her acquired knowledge and skills; success is also means widening of horizons, gaining confidence, appreciating and enjoying one's work and responsibility</p>	

Themes from Individual Professionals' Successful Return	Main Themes of Successful Return of Professionals
<p>H2. success meant a much better life than his life before migration; a financial success—huge savings from work abroad, accumulated properties, profitable businesses—which allowed the family to afford their wants and desires; a good family life—good marriage and responsible children</p>	
<p>Part of A4... these contributed to her successful return  --she is saving not only for her family but also for herself  -- prepared, adjusted and accepted a life in the Philippines</p> <p>B4. unlike other Filipinos and OFWs, is successful because of  --hard work and dedication to work during stint abroad and upon return  --business-mindedness which includes studying and learning about and operating businesses  --planned well for his return: saved substantial amounts of money (together with his wife) and made good investments  --religious faith which provides strength in facing challenges while abroad and upon return  --positive outlook in life and in business</p> <p>C4. returned successfully because  --worked hard in her profession and at the same time engaged in other sources of income, had a business mind-set  --planned and prepared well (saving for what the family needs when she returned granting that she would not find any work)  -- set goals through time, one at a time:  1) pay off debts, 2) build a house, 3) college education of children and 4) own business to manage upon return and deliberately worked and saved for these goals (e.g. sending home her children and being away with them, is</p>	<p><b>D. Individual attributes and acts that explain successful return</b></p> <p>Their individual attributes and the actions that they took in preparing for their return explain their successful return.</p> <p>Individual attributes and acts include:</p> <p>1) hard work, dedication to profession which reaped for them top positions, salaries and benefits (two even had other jobs aside from their professional work);</p> <p>2) set concrete and attainable goals for their migration and quantified these goals in monetary terms;</p> <p>3) planned well for their return: a) computed the amount of money they needed upon return (costs of education of their children, living expenses, capital needed for their intended businesses, miscellaneous expenses without having no regular income for years upon return and raised the need money while abroad; b) set up businesses and acquired properties that can be used for businesses while abroad;</p> <p>4) exercised discipline, prudence in managing their finances and deliberately saved money with intended purposes and 5) avoided the mistakes of other OFWs in managing their finances, making investments and</p>

<b>Themes from Individual Professionals' Successful Return</b>	<b>Main Themes of Successful Return of Professionals</b>
<p>cost effective wand would mean more savings for the family)  --avoided mistakes of other OFWs (i.e. spending beyond their means, lavish lifestyle, mismanagement of remittances, dependent on remittances and did not seek other sources of income)</p> <p>D5. despite earlier difficulties and money losses, the family (she, her husband and daughter) strived, prudent in managing their resources, studied well the business until their coconut sugar and syrup business became a more than 10-million-peso business and has expanded into other ventures</p> <p>E5. preoccupation upon return  --enrolled in MBA, used his experience in Saudi Arabia, managed well different corporations; lending, and marketing corporations, construction and recruitment companies  --involved in party list politics, chief of staff of congressman and active in advocacies for OFWs  --prepared his family to adjust to a life in the Philippines especially his children who grew up in Saudi Arabia</p> <p>E7. success due to:  --preparedness--prepared family to lead simply and not waste money upon return, secured passive income  --prudence in use of resources by leading a simple lifestyle  --with concrete plan and determination (returned at age 40 as planned, set plans and goals and implemented them)  --continuous learning  --maintained a healthy body and did abuse himself when abroad  Other OFWs need to be assisted in their reintegration (e.g. making investments and setting up businesses)</p>	<p>setting up businesses and in maintaining a family and raising children.</p>



<b>Themes from Individual Professionals' Successful Return</b>	<b>Main Themes of Successful Return of Professionals</b>
<p>F2. deliberately planned for his return: with a financial plan (i.e. computations of family's needs and US college education of children upon return, investments are to be decided upon return with the available money and not while abroad) raised the money (retirement pay and savings) and confidently returned to the Philippines</p> <p>F3. invested in stocks and built a family-owned social enterprise to secure his children's and siblings' future and to help others in need</p> <p>H3. success due to:  --learning from mistakes of other OFWs  --good financial planning and management  --good investments  --previous business experience  --sought guidance from God</p>	
<p>Part of A 4...these contributed to her successful return  --a hospital that provided her training, high salary and benefits  --a sister that took care and raised her child while she was away</p> <p>C5. difficult life as a youngster and later as a mother of six, got seriously sick while working abroad, and mistakes of her father and other male relatives who were OFWs, made her determined to work harder, save for the future and become successful</p> <p>D5. despite earlier difficulties and money losses, the family (she, her husband and daughter) strived, prudent in managing their resources, studied well the business until their coconut sugar and syrup business became a more than 10-million-peso business and has expanded into other ventures</p>	<p><b>E. Specific circumstances and people helped them achieve their successful return</b></p> <p>Two circumstances helped them achieve success:  1) employment in companies and institutions which provided good work setting, recognized their hard work and dedication, and provided them and their families (for those who could bring their wives and children abroad) handsome salaries and benefits; and</p> <p>2) a responsible wife or husband who managed remittances well and became able business partners and/or have raised their children well and responsible children who brought no problem to the family, finished their education and are earning their own living. For one, fellow professional OFWs who pooled their money to set up businesses facilitated his successful return.</p>

<b>Themes from Individual Professionals' Successful Return</b>	<b>Main Themes of Successful Return of Professionals</b>
<p>Part of E3... numerous benefits from company resulting to a comfortable life in Saudi Arabia with his family</p> <p>Part of E4...--pooled savings cum capital together with other professional-friends in Saudi Arabia to set up businesses in the Philippines as part of their reintegration plan</p> <p>Part of F1... with a mindset that overseas work is temporary and a vow not to experience economic hardship when he was young</p> <p>Part of G1.. underwent training and taught in an international school in Jakarta for two years</p> <p>Part of H3...success due to:  --employed by a company that provided hefty salary and benefits  --he and his wife were working as OFW professionals with high salaries</p>	

## Appendix 6. Main Themes of Lived Experiences of Successful Return of Eight Workers

Eight individuals, four men and four women, who worked as skilled and semi-skilled workers abroad participated in the study. These former migrant workers who shared their experiences were Glen Barrera, Jaime Sequio, Loreto Soriano, Lucita Cerbas, Magdalena Garcia Rogelio, Marites Nagrono, Nasrine Evangelio, and Yco Tan. They are listed in the first column of the table below as A, B, C, D, E, F, G, and H respectively.

The final themes drawn from the analyses of the experiences of the eight workers were listed and cited with corresponding letter and number. In the first column of the table below, D1 means the first final theme drawn from the experiences of Lucita Cerbas. The individual themes of the eight former workers were examined and clustered into the main themes that characterized the experiences of successful return of the occupational grouping of workers.

Final Themes of Individual Worker's Successful Return	Main Themes of Successful Return of Eight Workers
<p>A1. worked at a young age in the Philippines; a hard-working sewer, promoted as line leader and supervisor in a factory in Brunei, also had part-time jobs and side-line businesses</p> <p>B1. worked for 19 years in Saudi Arabia as fire protection foreman to provide for his family and his children's and siblings' education</p> <p>B2. salary not that high for 13 years, almost all earnings went to college education; practically no savings</p> <p>C1. an RCPI manager in the Philippines, had no qualms in working as telex operator in Saudi Arabia to provide for his wife and three children</p> <p>D1. for a year and a half, worked as DH in Oman to earn for her family; fought the maltreatment of her abusive employers, got fired but fortunately released through the intercession of the kind brother of his employer</p> <p>D2. endured hard work and separation from family, worked as promo girl for 17</p>	<p><b>A. Worked as skilled or semi-skilled workers to provide for family and education of children and siblings, save for business or prove one's worth to the family</b></p> <p>Varied jobs to provide for family and education of children (for those five who were married and have children when they migrated) or save for intended business or to prove one's worth to the family by making the most out of work abroad (for those who were single when they migrated)</p> <p>--Without four-year college degrees except one, took different jobs: sewer, fire protection foreman, telex operator, promo girl, quality assurance manager, hotel desk service officer, warehouse boy to mall manager</p> <p>--Jobs were the same or related to what they had before or experienced or related to college degree attained</p> <p>--Worked for an average of 10.75 years (from 5 years to more than 19 years)</p> <p>--Half of them (Glen, Loreto, Lucita, Marites) took sideline jobs or side</p>

<b>Final Themes of Individual Worker's Successful Return</b>	<b>Main Themes of Successful Return of Eight Workers</b>
<p>years, also had sideline jobs to send children through college---her main goal in working overseas</p> <p>E1. tough and hardworking QA manager in Vietnam for 8 years; endured loneliness. Without financial obligation to family, intended to save for a business in the Philippines</p> <p>F1. after separating from her husband, went back abroad to work as masseur for a rich Arab family Saudi Arabia to provide for her three young children she left behind to the care of her mother</p> <p>F2. for a total of more than 7 years worked as DH in Taiwan (a year), as masseur in Saudi Arabia (6 years) and as tutor/driver and other jobs in Dubai (for some months); overcame difficulties and challenges, worked and save extra hard for her children's needs and especially for their education</p> <p>G1. a hotel desk service officer for 5 years in Dubai, a back-breaking job but with modest salary and many monetary benefits; work abroad, not a family obligation but a way of proving one's worth as the youngest child in the family</p> <p>H1. Hoped for a better life (from a poor Chinese family) worked in a mall in Saudi Arabia to provide for a child with a live-in partner and help siblings with their education</p> <p>H2. Rose to the ranks (from warehouse boy to supervisor to assistant manager) to become the mall manager after completing a correspondence education in South Africa funded by the company</p>	<p>businesses to increase the amount of remittances to be sent to the family --Five of them were promoted to higher positions (Nasrine, Rogelio, Yco, Glen, Jaime) but only one after being sent to study, transitioned from being skilled worker to a professional</p>
<p>A2. wanted new challenges and a lot more for himself, with savings of 4.8</p>	<p><b>B. A life with their families and other reasons and circumstances for return</b></p>

Final Themes of Individual Worker's Successful Return	Main Themes of Successful Return of Eight Workers
<p>million pesos, returned to set up his business</p> <p>B3. with delayed salaries in his last work assignment and wanting to rest his body, returned home; not much to go home with but satisfied for fulfilling his desire to provide for the college education of his children and siblings who in turn, graduated with their degrees</p> <p>C3. returned out of frustration of not promoted despite good work performance for almost six years but together with his wife secured sources of income before actual return (worked secretly as marketing manager in Saudi Arabia and wife operating a profitable carinderia in the Philippines); fear of returning to the country without securing a stable life for his family—i.e. without savings, no business and no employment upon return—haunted him since he left for Saudi Arabia</p> <p>D3. returned home for good for the following reasons: a) children asked her to come home since two of them have already finished college and are working; b) got tired of working abroad; c) had high blood pressure; and d) wanted to be with her husband and children</p> <p>E2. marriage and a child fulfilled, prepared for permanent return to lead a family life in the Philippines</p> <p>F3. circumstances leading to return: a) no employer to provide her working visa in Dubai; b) mother got sickly; and c) children were in their adolescence and feared that without her guidance they would go astray</p> <p>G3. return---a vow to make it in the Philippines, live together, and not to</p>	<p><b>Varied reasons for return but foremost reason was to be with their families/children and/or to start their own families; another reason was the intent to start their own business (read: to be their own employers)</b></p> <p>--events/circumstances that 'pushed' return (negative: delayed salaries, failing health, no employer to provide working visa, impossibility of permanent residency; positive: fulfilled goal of sending children to college who have attained their degrees; substantial savings and capital for business)</p>

<b>Final Themes of Individual Worker's Successful Return</b>	<b>Main Themes of Successful Return of Eight Workers</b>
<p>work abroad anymore and went home when financially ready (i.e. set up an eatery business while abroad, saved at least half a million before returning), saved by reducing shopping expenses and limiting money sent to relatives in the Philippines</p> <p>H3. After marriage and three more children, with prodding from his wife, decided, planned and prepared for a permanent return to the Philippines; recognized that they could not stay permanently in Saudi Arabia and decided against living in the US</p>	
<p>A3. engaged in various businesses which all closed shop, got depressed but with the help of her life partner and the town mayor, bounced back and set up a flourishing sewing business</p> <p>B4. after setbacks and difficulties, established a pension house business that ably supports his and his family's needs</p> <p>C4. attained the following upon return--owns and operates three (millions worth) companies (recruitment and two software companies); built his dream house; became head of the association of recruitment companies</p> <p>Part of F4.... setting up and managing a profitable rice trading business upon return which became the family's main source of income</p> <p>G4. a year of return meant husband operating two family businesses and she works on line as English language tutor and selling beauty cosmetic products; still at times, with separation anxiety from colleagues and environment in Dubai but happy to be home</p>	<p><b>C. Life and engagements upon return to the Philippines</b></p> <p><b>All engaged in family businesses, except for two (Lucita and Magdalena) who devoted most of their time to be wife and mother; four are active in civic and political engagements</b></p> <p>--All experienced difficulties of varying types and degrees in business (i.e. mismanagement, stiff competition, bankruptcy, etc.), overcame them and made their businesses grow and become profitable</p> <p>--Four of them (Yco, Jaime, Loreto, Glen) who have profitable businesses are active in local politics, CSR, migrant advocacies, providing scholarships) while Lucita is active in church and migrant programs</p>

<b>Final Themes of Individual Worker's Successful Return</b>	<b>Main Themes of Successful Return of Eight Workers</b>
<p>H4. Established and manages profitable, varied yet related family businesses in Bicol: salon, spa, beauty supplies and equipment distributorship, and training school</p>	
<p>A4. success meant setting goals and passionately working to achieve them despite difficult challenges and attaining the capacity to share his blessings to his workers, young people and others in the community</p> <p>B5. success is attainment of peace of mind for having fulfilled his migration goal and a business that provides a simple, worry-free life; happy in having his children lead a comfortable life and for being engaged in politics and other civic engagements Part of B6. good marital and family life, simple yet comfortable (sustainable) life...</p> <p>C5. felt satisfaction and pride in raising responsible children who finished college and are running with him the three companies, through the recruitment agency is helping people find opportunities and become successful, speaks in public gatherings about migration and development despite being a non-college graduate</p> <p>C7. advocates for a clear migration policy which is linked with national development plan, has an exit strategy and provides for the needs of migrant returnees</p> <p>D5. success is not material nor financial for she returned with none of those; her children's success (responsible children finishing college and currently employed as professionals) is her own success; success is being happy in living a worry-free life with her husband and accomplished with her church work and work among migrant families</p>	<p>D. Meanings and feelings attached to successful return</p> <p>--success meant attainment of goals for migration (e.g. education of children, business of their own, good family life and financial security) by working hard and overcoming difficulties during migration and upon return</p> <p>--successful return is not simply material nor financial success but also happiness and contentment in living a good marital and family life (family life and financial security)</p> <p>--successful return is pride and satisfaction in raising responsible children who are college graduates and earning a living</p> <p>--success is attainment of 'a far better life' than before (i.e. poverty/economic hardships when they were young and/or before migration, rising from the ranks, establishing businesses</p>

<b>Final Themes of Individual Worker's Successful Return</b>	<b>Main Themes of Successful Return of Eight Workers</b>
<p>Part of D4. success that of having responsible and accomplished children...</p> <p>E3. successful return is a happy family life and financial security; pride in being instrumental in training and sending many to work in Vietnam</p> <p>F4. success is pride and joy in a) providing for her children's education, from elementary to college; b) having raised responsible children who are all college degree holders; c) providing for her mother when she was alive, having acquired a lot and built her house and setting up and managing a profitable rice trading business upon return which became the family's main source of income; and 4) overcoming difficulties and challenges as an OFW and single parent without the need to work abroad again</p> <p>G5. success means contentment, happiness and satisfaction in leading a life with the family after a good work experience abroad</p> <p>H5. Success is overcoming poverty, working and rising from the ranks, establishing businesses and attaining a far better life than before; success is more than financial and business achievements, it is the satisfaction derived from helping other people by providing training and employment; success is also providing college education of children for them to be capable in living their own lives</p>	
<p>Part of A1. a hard-working sewer, ...also had part-time jobs and side-line businesses</p> <p>A5. attained success by being prudent in spending money as an OFW, having a reliable partner upon return,</p>	<p><b>E. Individual acts, role of other people and circumstances that led to the attainment of successful return</b></p> <p>--individual acts: treated work abroad as an opportunity to earn and save money and thus, should not be wasted;</p>



<b>Final Themes of Individual Worker's Successful Return</b>	<b>Main Themes of Successful Return of Eight Workers</b>
<p>engaging in work and business that he has the knowledge and skills and being passionate about, continuous learning the craft and doing business</p> <p>B6. good marital and family life, simple yet comfortable (sustainable) life achieved through the following: a) treated work abroad as an opportunity and blessing not to be wasted—led a not extravagant life abroad and in the Philippines and did not excessively spend money as an OFW; b) difficulties and setbacks made him grab opportunities with caution—careful in dealings with other people and in business; and c) put family first, nurtured relations with wife and children unlike other OFWs who have broken marital relations and family</p> <p>Part of C3:... fear of returning to the country without securing a stable life for his family—i.e. without savings, no business and no employment upon return—haunted him since he left for Saudi Arabia</p> <p>C6. experiencing difficulties in earlier life, most especially he, being exploited in Saudi Arabia, motivated him to strive harder and plan for his successful return by earning, saving, and learning more</p> <p>D4. success that of having responsible and accomplished children due to: a) children made aware of her hardships for them to value the money sent and her sacrifices; b) children made do with the budget and diligent in their studies; c) husband reared the children well and imposed discipline especially with their studies; d) her hard work and sacrifices abroad to provide for the needs and education of her children; and e) companies that she worked for which provided for her food and accommodation that helped her provide more for her families</p>	<p>exercised prudence in managing money and disavowed extravagance; devising a concrete plan (with numerical values) of return to the Philippines; engaged in work and business that is knowledgeable or had previous experience or studied well; persistent in overcoming business setbacks and challenges and hands-on management of business; nurtured relations with wife and husband and raised children fully aware of one's work and difficulties abroad (all these acts made in comparison to what other OFWs and returnees did which resulted into their failed return)</p> <p>--other people important to the attainment of success:</p> <p>a. a partner (husband or wife) upon return who is a good parent (reared, imposed discipline on children, and monitored their studies); a hardworking wife who contributed to family income while abroad and initiated and directed his focus in planning to secure their family's future; a wife or husband who is a reliable business partner</p> <p>b. Children aware of their parents' sacrifices made do with tight budget and remained diligent in their studies</p> <p>--circumstances contributing to attainment of successful return:</p> <p>a. companies (and some employers) that they worked for which provided for them high salaries and/or other benefits like free food and accommodation helped them to provide for their families and save more money; (for one, his company paid for his correspondence school education which paved for his promotion as the mall manager)</p> <p>b. fears and difficulties experienced served as motivation to strive harder</p>

<b>Final Themes of Individual Worker's Successful Return</b>	<b>Main Themes of Successful Return of Eight Workers</b>
<p>E4. hard work and systematic saving while abroad, prudence in managing household and business in the Philippines, focus of attention is child and husband are keys to successful return</p> <p>F5. circumstance to her success—her separation from and receiving nothing from her husband, drove her to work abroad, overcome the challenges to provide for her three children  ---things that helped her achieve successful return:  a) exercise prudence in managing her money, systematically saved her earnings and shied away from extravagant and luxurious ways and practices of fellow OFWs;  b) raised her children to be responsible, frugal, and value her work and their education  c) learned, worked hard for and personally managed a profitable business</p> <p>G6. learning from her own mistakes, i.e., splurging money in her first two years, to attain successful return one must be financially ready (self-control in spending money, with enough savings and concrete plan where to invest them properly, and must have a long-term plan already at the onset of one's migration)</p> <p>H6. Successful return was achieved because of: a) a hardworking and very organized wife who contributed to family income while abroad; who pushed for them to set up a plan for their return and who directed him to focus in securing their family's future; and who is a partner in managing their finances and businesses; b) devising a concrete plan (with numerical values) of return to the Philippines; c)</p>	<p>--Loreto: insecurity of job abroad engendered fear of returning to the country without securing a stable life for family (i.e. without savings, no business and no employment upon return) drove him to plan his return  Marites: her separation from and receiving nothing from her husband, drove her to work abroad, overcome the challenges to provide for her three children  Loreto: difficulties when he was young, and being 'exploited' in Saudi Arabia, motivated him to strive harder and plan for his successful return by earning, saving, and learning more</p>

<b>Final Themes of Individual Worker's Successful Return</b>	<b>Main Themes of Successful Return of Eight Workers</b>
<p>overcoming business setbacks and challenges by applying acquired business sense, learning the businesses (knowledge and skills required) and hands-on managing them; and d) a company that he worked with for more than 19 years which provided him well (salaries, benefits, promotions, continuing education) that enabled him to have substantial savings for his return to the Philippines</p>	

## Appendix 7. Main Themes of Successful Return Experiences of Men and Women

Main Themes of Successful Return of Migrant Women	Main Themes of Successful Return of Migrant Men
<p><b>A. Worked in varied jobs and countries for 5-25 years to provide for their children's college education among other reasons. Other reasons:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>--provide for the education of siblings,</li> <li>--pay off debts,</li> <li>--to save for an intended business in the Philippines</li> <li>--acquire training in Singaporean way of teaching,</li> <li>--as the youngest in the family to prove one's worth to the family,</li> <li>--envious of other OFW's wealth and properties sought to also have them by working abroad</li> </ul> <p>Almost all were married and have children when they migrated women) felt moral and familial obligation to provide for their families and education of children, and who had difficulty meeting the needs of the family and or could not afford to send children to school and especially to college; Two who were not married when they migrated and two who are married but have a seafarer-husbands had no obligation to financially help their families.</p>	<p><b>A. Worked as seafarers in different types of ships, as skilled workers (sewer, fire protection foreman, telex operator, warehouse man) and as civil, mechanical and agricultural engineers, accountant for companies in Saudi Arabia and a factory in Brunei</b></p> <p>Foremost reason among them was to provide for their families and secure a better life for them, included was to provide for the education of children and siblings; Three seafarers sought a professional career at sea and an advanced training and work experience as an engineer;</p> <p>One worked to earn and save for a n intended business and another was asked by the mother to go abroad for security reason because of his political involvement</p>
<p><b>B. Regardless of work/profession, all endured hard work, homesickness and loneliness for being away from home and their children</b></p> <p><b>All seven DH and two workers who initially worked as DH experienced exploitation and abuse from their first employers (i.e. non-stop work, verbal abuse, denied decent food and free time and other forms of maltreatment); Other workers and all professionals had no such experience</b></p> <p>All women found and stayed with good employers, companies and hospitals</p>	<p><b>B. Seafarers except for two, rose from the ranks till becoming the ship captain and chief engineer, one from being a warehouse boy to becoming a mall manager; other workers except for one and all other professionals were promoted to responsible positions in their companies due to hard work and good performance</b></p> <p>Many of them describe their experience abroad as difficult yet fulfilling jobs.</p>

<b>Main Themes of Successful Return of Migrant Women</b>	<b>Main Themes of Successful Return of Migrant Men</b>
<p>most of their working years abroad and were treated well with relatively modest for DH and workers or high salaries professionals, numerous benefits, free time, and good training (for the professionals). Two workers and three professionals were promoted to higher positions.</p> <p>Most of them (all DH, two workers, and two professionals) aside from their regular jobs had part-time jobs to earn and save more for their families and children</p>	
<p><b>C. Returned for varied reasons, the foremost reason was the attainment of main goal of migration, that of children finishing college; coupled with acquired sickness (at least five of them) and pleadings of their children to come home and promising them that they (children) would provide for them constitute a strong push to come home</b></p> <p>Other women returned because of 1) one woman because mandatory retirement in the host country; 2) another woman was asked to run for elections and help manage family business; 3) two women got married while abroad and wanted to build a family in the Philippines</p>	<p><b>C. Different circumstances and reasons of return, deliberately planned or not, all were ready to return because of secured sources of income for themselves and their families---</b>  <b>employment, owned and managed businesses, with substantial amounts of savings brought home</b>  <b>circumstances/reasons of return</b>  --two offered jobs in their land-based company in the Philippines  --two returned after retirement  --two because of frustration of not being promoted  --returned to be with families (with one after graduation of children)  --to personally set up business or manage their existing businesses in the Philippines  --a set plan to return at 40, with enough savings to live with the family in the Philippines</p>
<p><b>D. Upon return, seven of them manage (micro to medium) family businesses built from their savings, three DH-women and two worker-women opted to be full time-homemakers/mothers while three are employed (as teacher, education expert and on line language tutor)</b></p> <p>Four women own and manage or partly manage medium* companies (two DH: IT and mango processing; two</p>	

<b>Main Themes of Successful Return of Migrant Women</b>	<b>Main Themes of Successful Return of Migrant Men</b>
<p>professionals: coconut products processing and construction company). The three other women operate microbusinesses* in rice trading and apartment rental.</p> <p>Two of those employed are married to seafarers. One has a husband who operate their micro family businesses. Those who opted to be full-time homemakers were supported by their children.</p> <p>(micro: below PhP3 million; small: PhP3 million-15 million; medium: PhP15,000,001-PhP100 million; large: above 100 million)</p>	
<p><b>E. Varied meanings of successful return</b></p> <p>Dominant meanings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-- passionately fulfilling set dreams for migration, especially that children attaining their college degrees, and not giving up despite difficulties; their children's success are their own success</li> <li>-- happiness and satisfaction out of being a successful migrant returnee recognized for her accomplishments as compared with other migrants who returned with nothing, i.e. migrants/returnees who failed, has not achieved financial security and happy family life</li> <li>--attaining a decent/comfortable life through work overseas, employment and business in the Philippines, a far cry from life before (i.e. when they were young and what they were and their families before migration)</li> <li>-- not essentially material nor financial success but a good, intact, worry-free, happy and comfortable not necessarily affluent life with their children or family</li> <li>--attainment of freedom to do what one wants and not serving anybody, exactly opposite of what they were as OFWs</li> </ul>	<p><b>D. Meanings and feelings attached to successful return</b></p> <p>Dominant meanings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>--success meant setting goals and passionately working to achieve them despite difficult challenges</li> <li>--an acquired high economic status, attained financial success/financial freedom (i.e. huge savings from work abroad, accumulated properties, profitable businesses) that allowed the family to afford its wants and desires and being free to do what one wants and without working under an employer</li> <li>---professional success, i.e. rose from the ranks and attained top ship positions or responsible positions in the companies that employed them</li> <li>--a good family life—good marriage and responsible children who finished college unlike many seafarers and returnees' situation--leading a simple yet comfortable, sickness-free, worry-free, and happy family life (good marriage and responsible children)</li> <li>---peace of mind attained by living in the Philippines and no need to work in a stress, anxiety, worry-filled abroad</li> </ul> <p>Other meanings:</p>

<b>Main Themes of Successful Return of Migrant Women</b>	<b>Main Themes of Successful Return of Migrant Men</b>
<p>Other meanings:  -- bouncing back from a difficult life upon return as a single and unwed mother  --attained professional success: well-educated and trained abroad and working in a responsible position in the Philippines that allowed application of acquired knowledge and skills  --attained capacity to help others and contentment in giving back to others</p>	<p>--a life totally different and a lot better than earlier life that provides happiness and satisfaction  --contentment, fulfillment, respect from others out of active social engagements; satisfaction derived from helping other people by providing them training and employment and engaging in politics and other civic engagements</p>
<p><b>E. Keys to success</b></p> <p>-- exercise prudence while abroad and upon return: managed money, frugal and systematically saved earnings, shied away from extravagant and luxurious ways and practices of other OFWs; manages well household and business finances in the Philippines  --planned and prepared well for return (saved for what the family needs upon return enough until stable sources of income were established; saved enough money and invested them properly)  -- raised children to be responsible, frugal, and to value their education (e.g. being honest to children about their work overseas for them to value their parents' hard work and money sent)  --firm resolve not to work again abroad by working and earning in the Philippines; learned, worked hard for, studied well and personally managed the business</p>	<p><b>E. Attitudes, acts done towards success</b></p> <p>--treated work abroad as an opportunity and blessing not to be wasted—was frugal, exercised self-discipline and had no vices, avoided the mistakes of his fellow seafarers (splurging money, engaging in gambling, getting indebted to flaunt supposed wealth; living beyond their means and strong family ties (and dependency) that drained their resources)  --devised a concrete plan (with numerical values) of return to the Philippines; prepared family to lead simply and not waste money upon return, secured passive sources of income (e.g. invested in stocks and built a family-owned social enterprise to secure his children's and siblings' future)  --engaged in work and business that one has knowledge and skills and being passionate about; overcoming business setbacks and challenges by applying acquired business sense, learning the businesses (knowledge and skills required) and continuously learned and managed well the businesses  -- put family first, nurtured relations with wife and children unlike other OFWs who have broken marital relations and family</p>
<p><b>F. Circumstances (significant people, events, relationships, situation, experiences) in successful return</b></p>	<p><b>F. Circumstances (significant people, events, relationships, situation, experiences) in successful return</b></p>

<b>Main Themes of Successful Return of Migrant Women</b>	<b>Main Themes of Successful Return of Migrant Men</b>
<p>--bad experiences like economically difficult life as a youngster and early married life, separation from husband, a single parent, failures of relatives who were OFWs and of other OFWs motivated them to work and strive harder</p> <p>--kind and generous employers and good companies provided them good salaries and handsome benefits and assistance that afforded them to save and return</p> <p>--responsible children who managed finances and have done well in school and college</p> <p>--some husbands who worked and contributed to family income and reared their children well</p>	<p>-- central role played by wife in attainment of success (managed remittances and family finances well, a good partner in investments and businesses, raised children well, earned and contributed money when they were abroad)</p> <p>--good companies which provided them well (salaries, benefits, promotions, continuing education, retirement benefits) that enabled them to have substantial savings for their return to the Philippines</p> <p>--government officials and some government agencies which provided financial help to set up and expand businesses</p> <p>--negative experiences like economic hardships when they were young, frustrations of not getting promotions, initial setback in businesses drove them to aspire and strive harder</p>