

The Long Way Home: The Social Diagraming of Philippine School Doha Alumni in the Philippines

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Abstract: ***Background:** As students repatriate, the possibility of experiencing reverse culture shock is high. They can experience various hardships socially, culturally, environmentally, and educationally. **Method:** A phenomenological research design was employed in this qualitative paper to understand the lived experiences of Philippine School Doha graduates, relative to the central question: "What common difficulties do Philippine School Doha graduates experience after moving to the Philippines?" Data were gathered through a twenty-five semi-structured interview, and were analyzed using an inductive approach in theme development. **Findings:** Findings have shown the common difficulties of graduates' experience with regard to their adjustments which show the different aspects of it that PSD graduates go through when they study in the Philippines. **Conclusion:** The challenges and pressure points that students encounter is extensive and influence their capacity to adjust in life in their host institution. **Recommendation:** In order to fill the gap of this study, the paper suggests to have equal number of respondents to compare the differences. Furthermore, people with reverse culture shock should analyze what was learned abroad to make wise decisions. Thus, the need to incorporate distinct habits of the host country should be learned carefully and be able to start thinking on how to apply it scholastically and professionally.*

Keywords: Repatriation, Reverse Culture Shock, Philippine School Doha, Adaptation

1. Introduction

Social adjustment is an endeavor made by an individual to handle the standards, values and needs of a society in order to be accepted. It can be demarcated in an emotional process. It involves coping with new paradigm and value. The study of student's social adjustment is indispensable for two reasons: first, patterns of behavior and attitudes formed early are rather persistent and second, the kind of social adjustment children have contributed to the evolution of their self-concept. The degree with which a student adjusts to other people and the group with which he identifies, given an idea of skills such as the ability to effectively deal both friends and strangers, etc. Thus, it can be noted that socially well-adjusted students generally develop favorable social attitudes towards other members of the society. Nowadays, a lot of students in Qatar are Filipinos, thus there are Philippine schools, and one of them is Philippine School Doha (PSD). However, although students in PSD enjoy studying there, the time will come that they have to back to their home country, the Philippines. Petersen et al. (2015) found that students who felt a sense of belonging at university, and were well-adjusted to the academic and personal/emotional demands of the university, achieved higher academic grades at the end of their first academic year. Therefore, when referring to how well a student is adjusting to university one must consider the academic, social and emotional adjustment. (Sevinc & Gizir, 2014). Hence one can reason that a well-adjusted student is a person whose academic, social and personal-emotional needs are being met. If these specifications are not fulfilled students often have a negative experience in university, which can lead to the student dropping out or doing very poorly. Those responsible for the adjustment the student include the student themselves, their support system (often their family and friends), and the university at which they are studying. The failure of one to

make an effort can hinder the student's adjustment to university.

The adjustment of first-year undergraduates to university life is considered to be a significant process which holds various challenges which can affect this process. Whether these challenges are overcome or overwhelming depends on the individual student (Wintre & Yaffe, 2000). Therefore, a variety of factors have the ability to positively or negatively affect a student's adjustment to university life. The focus is to discuss both the positive and negative effects on the four types of adjustment which impact the overall adjustment to university life. As the students go back to their home country, the possibility of experiencing culture shock is high. Students can experience struggles in different aspects such as social, cultural, environmental, and educational. They can also experience reverse culture shock and can have difficulties in adjusting to their environment, even when it's their home country. Jenkins (2013) state that first generation students face additional challenges during their first year of college compared to non-first generation students. Ultimately, there are many disadvantages towards achieving academic success and college completion before first year students begin college. In fact, Brown and Welty (2010) found that large groups of students struggle transitioning the first year, due to the demands of academics, new social settings, environmental settings, finances, and career decisions. Sevinc and Gizir (2014) imply that colleges and universities expect students to navigate through college with some level of independence. All the while, many students feel overwhelmed and experience problems transitioning to university life. In order to become responsible and dependent on the support provided from resources on campus, young adults are to become more responsible, and less reliant on their families. However, the need for parental support for young adults is beneficial throughout students' college education.

This phenomenon of a feeling of not belonging to their native culture after spending a substantial amount of time abroad has been labeled as reverse culture shock or re-entry shock. (Hertz, 2007, Wakhtar, Hayee, Imtiaz, & Kamal, 2018). The roots of reverse culture shock can be found in the work on culture shock since the underlying concept is quite similar. Additionally, culture shock, the parent construct of reverse culture shock, is said to be precipitated by the anxiety that results from losing all familiar signs and symbols of social intercourse (Oberg, 2006, p. 142; Sreelakha 2014). Despite these initial feelings of bewilderment, reverse culture shock is a vital part of their development as they become adults. It significantly helps them to understand their cultural values and biases better. Moreover, it provides an opportunity for them to reconnect with their friends and family.

This research paper brings out insights about reverse culture shock issues faced in the home country as well as in the host country. The researchers are also Filipino students who are studying in a Philippine school abroad with the plan to go back to their home country to study for college, which makes this study highly significant for both the readers and the researchers.

The returnees, as well as the readers, can use this research paper as a learning medium and guide on how to cope with reverse culture shock as they return to their home country and be guided by the respondent's stories through their struggles and how they have overcome it, their coping mechanisms, their values, and opinions regarding the change they've gone through.

The study used a qualitative approach and made use of a phenomenological research design to gather results. Its central point was to understand the lived experiences of the participants that were involved in the study rather than quantifying it.

The necessary data for the study was gathered through a semi-structured interview. A robotfoto and a twenty-five semi-structured interview guide were also used to obtain data. Preliminarily, copies of robotfoto (Kelchtermans & Ballet, 2002; Garcia & Acosta, 2016) were given to the respondents in person. The researchers sought the demographic sketch of the participants namely years of studying in Qatar, years of studying in the Philippines, and the current school he/she is enrolled in.

2. Method

2.1 Research Design

The study used a qualitative approach and made use of a phenomenological research design to gather results. Its central point was to understand the lived experiences of the participants that were involved in the study rather than quantifying it. This study is qualitative in focus and firmly, a phenomenological research design. Qualitative research takes its inspiration primarily from the cultural and social sciences such as anthropology and sociology (Umali, 2019; Ren, 2015). The main aspect of this approach is to understand the essence of the experience that participants

share within a common ground (Umali 2019, Padilla-Diaz, 2015). This is highly substantial in understanding subjective experiences and gaining insights about people's motivations and decisions. Here, the aim of the researchers is to describe as accurately as possible the phenomenon, refraining from any pre-given framework, but remaining true to the facts (Umali 2019, Lesler 1997; Groenewald, 2004).

The 'life world' was understood as what we experienced pre-reflectively, without resorting to categorization or conceptualization, and quite often included what was taken for granted or those things that were common sense (Husserl, 1970) This strategy that was employed intended to return and re-examine these taken for granted experiences and perhaps uncover new and/or forgotten meanings.

The aim of the researchers was to focus on the spoken words of participants rather than on their observed behaviors through in-depth interviews. The words of the participants, which described their experiences, were the major research data. Data collected was qualitative and analysis included an attempt to identify themes or made generalizations regarding how a particular phenomenon was actually perceived or experienced. This research was utilized to explore the reactions, perceptions and feelings of an individual or a group of individuals having experienced an event in order to understand its occurrence beyond purely quantitative details regarding the social adjustments of PSD graduates in the Philippine setting.

2.2 Research Locus and Sample

This study was conducted at Philippine School Doha (PSD), the leading learning institution in the State of Qatar that was founded in October 1992. PSD has always been recognized as an outstanding Philippine school in the Middle East due to its national and regional accomplishments. The school was selected due to the accessibility of the researchers' adviser, Dr. Fredelito Don John A. Vallesteros to assist and guide the researchers throughout the course of the study.



Figure 1: Location of the county of Qatar taken cc: Google Images



Figure 2: Location of Philippine school Doha at AL-Messiah, Doha, Qatar cc: Google Images

The participants that were selected for this study were 1st year college students who are currently residing in the Philippines and are PSD graduates in the year 2017-2018. The researchers made use of qualitative purposive sampling in order to select the 5 participants that would partake in the study. This is characterized by the incorporation of specific criteria met by the participants at the moment of selection (Padilla-Diaz, 2015). The participants were chosen considering the fact they are foreign to the Philippine setting and are PSD graduates in the year 2017-2018 under the K-12 education system. The researchers believe their insights are constructive because they have undergone social adjustments through living and studying in a Philippine setting.

2.3 Data Collection and Ethical Consideration

The necessary data for the study was gathered through a semi-structured interview.

A *robotfoto* and a twenty-five semi-structured interview guide were also used to obtain data.

Preliminarily, copies of *robotfoto* (Kelchtermans & Ballet, 2002; Garcia & Acosta, 2016) were given to the respondents in person. The researchers sought for the demographic sketch of the participants namely years of studying in Qatar, years of studying in the Philippines, and current school he/she is enrolled in. The twenty-five item semi-structured interview guide was also used to discover the perception of students about the chosen topic.

Data gathered were transcribed verbatim with the help of the recording gadgets of the researchers wherein audio recordings were saved. The researchers then assured the participants that their answers will only be shared among the researchers and their research adviser to assure the participants that confidentiality of their answers will be upheld. (Kayed & Hassan, 2013).

Prior to the interview proper, preparations such as the scheduling of the interview were done. Subsequently, the researchers sought approval from the participants through a consent letter that was given to the participants to inform

them about the purpose of the study they are about to partake in.

Data Analysis

The researchers have followed an inductive approach in developing themes (Ryan, 2003; Vallesteros, 2018) to have the gathered data analyzed comprehensively by the researchers: (1) listening and re-listening to the audio recordings of the participants to further understand their perception about the topic ; (2) doing the emic transcription by transcribing the data obtained word-per-word; (3) transforming emic transcription to etic transcription which is the understanding of the researchers based on the participants' responses ; (4) organizing formulated meanings into categories, placing thought units, and cluster of themes via a *dendrogram* to show the similarities of the data (5) creating a simulacrum to serve as the visual representation of the findings.



Figure 3: Simulacrum Common Difficulties of the PSD Graduates

3. Findings

This phenomenological study describes the lived experiences of Filipino student repatriates who are studying in the Philippines, relative to the central question: “How do PSD graduates adapt to the Philippine setting?”. Moreover, this study focused on the specific question: “What common difficulties do Philippine School Doha graduates experience after moving to the Philippines?” Repatriation can bring about several difficulties to a student and it is solely up to an individual on how one learns to cope with these changes in their life. Due to the life-changing, identity-altering experiences student repatriates had had overseas, their adjustment journeys will likely be a long and complex process (Journal of International Students, Vol. 7, Issue 3 (2017), p.464)

Figure 3 shows the simulacrum focused on four major themes: *educational adjustments*, *social adjustments*, *environmental adjustments*, and *emotional adjustment*. These encompass how each student expatriate deals with the struggles they face as they go back to their home country.

Furthermore, these themes show the different aspects of adjustments that PSD graduates go through when they study in the Philippines.

Educational Adjustments

Education is crucial for the youth to be able to acquire knowledge, skills, values, habits, and beliefs to help bring changes in the society. Educational adjustment means how an individual handles one's duties towards their education. The youth is full of stresses and strains making it hard for them to focus on their education especially on a new environment where everything seems so unaccustomed.

An educationally well-adjusted person must be able to cope up with various adjustment problems and balance between their academic, intellectual, emotional, social and other needs and their satisfaction. One must be able to manage their academic and curricular performances excellently with the guidance of experiences of each from the previous schools and be able to execute different courses of actions when the individual is not doing good in school.

The two main components that will immensely influence educational adjustments are academic and curricular performances. In educational institutions, success is measured by the student's academic and curricular performances. Today, changes have been made to incorporate differentiation for individual students' abilities, and exploration of alternate methods of measuring performance is ongoing. Few of these examples could be the school learning environment, different teaching methods of a teacher, discipline, schedule, behaviors of his/her classmates, co-curricular activities which greatly influences a student's adjustment.

Repatriation brings upon many changes, one of which manifests in one's academic performance. Comparing and tracking one's academic performance is unavoidable especially when a huge change as such was experienced.

Qatar had been the home to many Filipino students for a very long time. He/she has been used to the education system and learning environment in the said country. Additionally, the relationships he/she had with his/her teachers, friends, and classmates were of great help to his/her academic performance. As a result, his/her academic performance is good and above average. As two respondents said:

It was fine. The learning environment was okay, then the teachers were like family since usually, the students there had been studying in Qatar for like 5 years. My academic performance was good since it was also because I shared my struggles with my classmates and batch mates. (R1)

It was mediocre. I did above average but it's just how everybody is. Majority of the people I know are that way. I had a lot of line of nine as my grade. (R5)

Having studied in a Philippine school overseas rather than an international school, it had brought several advantages regarding their re-adjustment period as it served as a

preparation for them. It educated them in a way that there are parallels and similarities on the aspects that can be seen in our home country carried upon by the Filipinos who built a community in abroad. A respondent emphasized:

Definitely. I feel like if I studied in an international school I wouldn't have been exposed to even the most minimal Philippine culture since I'd be more surrounded with that variety of people and probably not too many Filipinos so it's really good that I did study in a Philippine school before I actually went back to study in the Philippines (R5)

Studying in a Philippine school served as a groundwork for them due to the exposure to the Philippine culture in such setting. Regarding their academic environment, the institution follows the same academic curriculum. It also practices similar aspect of customs such as the social characteristic of communicating with fellow Filipinos as claimed by our respondents:

Of course, it did because they have similarities. For example, being connected with your professors. Unlike if you studied in an international school, the culture and approach is different. (R1)

Yes, it did help since studying in a Philippine school kind of prepares you for the colleges in the Philippines and they're kind of the same thing. The only difference is the school but the environment is the same. (R4)

Pursuing College in the Philippines is a decision; for some, it may be his/her own decision while the latter have their parents who decided that it is time for them to come back home. However, with the decision to come back home to pursue college comes the hardships of re-adjusting. Additionally, the fact that one had studied in a Philippine School overseas is not a guarantee that the readjustment period will be easy nor fast. His/her school may have followed a Philippine curriculum but the environments of both Qatar and Philippines are different from one another thus, differences are visible as the respondent said:

For me, the education in the Philippines is very different. I compared it with my friends who stayed in Qatar to pursue college and they said that it was really lax. They are just carefree, unlike the college here. I think in the Philippines, you get to sharpen your skills more and that there's better-quality education. (R1)

Consequently, it takes time for an individual to prepare for schools as there are a lot of things to take care of especially when one is returning back from another country. As the students were given the opportunity to study abroad in a Philippine school, they were already trained and exposed to opportunities that shaped them to be better individuals as a respondent said:

Within the Qatar setup, it taught me dedication because as we all know, in PSD, it is bombarded in works and there are many co-curricular activities. So, I was able to

learn time management which I can apply here in the Philippines. (R1)

During the preparation of the individuals, doubts and worries enveloped their heart and minds thus, they inquired and researched to know more as the respondent have confirmed:

Before I went back to the Philippines, I was really worried that students in my school would be way out of my league or that the people I would meet are people who I have difficulty with if I didn't do something. So, I read a lot about my course and I did a lot of research about how to go around the Philippines from where I'm from. (R5)

Although, some individuals had an advantage as they had relatives who also had the same experience as them which meant that they had someone to ask or go to for tips as a respondent confirmed:

Since my sisters went back to the Philippines much earlier than me, they pretty much have the idea of how Philippine education works. So, I asked tips from them and also from my blockmates who previously studied in the same university in senior high which gave me idea on how it works and how I should adjust. (R1)

Being in a new learning environment requires students to cope with educational adjustments whilst managing their academic performance. Repatriating could cause a student to struggle a bit which could consequently affect their academic performance as he/she readjusts into their own culture.

Signs of gaps on their abilities emerge and they start to notice their weaknesses and shortcomings as they compare themselves to people around them.

Most of my block mates studied here in the Philippines and whenever we have lessons, they are able to understand it easily unlike me who's still struggling. I'm not sure if it's because I'm adjusting or it's because I studied in a different country. (R2)

Thus, each student has their own tactic or certain approach to be able to deal with these adjustments properly in order to not let their grades get affected by their living circumstances as mentioned:

I didn't really let my living circumstances affect my academic performance. All I did was just pretend that everything is just normal until I actually am comfortable as in nothing would really be hard for me. (R5)

In addition to that, she also mentioned that not much changes had to be done as she tackled these certain adjustments to manage her academic performance. Although she had to make a few changes in her studying habits and had to be more involved in school:

I didn't really do anything big. I have been the same way I was when I studied in Qatar. I didn't study as much like before but I actually had to be more active in

particular activities and I did a lot of reading that could help me. (R5)

Although managing one's academic performance ultimately depends on the course a student will be taking up in college since each course has a different level of difficulty and it varies for each student as confirmed:

My course is not that hard. I actually had a harder time during senior high school there in PSD than here in my college right now so I can't say anything about it that much. (R4)

Social Adjustments

Society has standards and people, mostly teenagers, have a hard time coping up with them. For students who lived most of their lives in another country, adjusting and coping up with the society of their home country can be difficult once the time comes that they have to come back home. Social Adjustments are efforts done by people to be able to cope up with the standards set by the society in order to be accepted and valued. It is a process that involves new standards and adapting to changes to fit in and be seen as normal. It is important for an individual to be able to adjust because not being able to adjust to one's environment can cause conflict in different aspects. Socially speaking, adjustments are hard because one does not know how and what others expect from him/her. Expectations are set and even though they are not necessarily needed to be followed, it becomes hard for a teenager not to think about it because nowadays, social acceptance is needed by an individual for validation.

A part of social adjustments is culture adaptation wherein the students have to exert effort in order to fully adapt and adjust to their environment. For students who spent most of their lives abroad, it is harder for them to do such as they grew up in an environment that practiced a different culture from their home country, the Philippines. Culture Adaptation is a process and it is not an easy one. Through this process, the individual goes through a rollercoaster of emotions and hardships. Spending over a decade in Qatar, students of Philippine School Doha had admitted that social adjustment is not a walk in the park and that time is really needed to adjust and adapt.

Moving back to your home country it's not as easy as it may seem especially after being away for so long. One must prepare himself or herself mentally and emotionally of living in a once familiar area that is now deemed unfamiliar. Having certain expectations, worries, and uncertainties is a common feeling shared among the respondents. It is normal to become anxious before returning back home as one will be facing a new set of friends, a completely new environment, and a culture that is both familiar yet unfamiliar. The life style and upbringing of Filipinos in the Philippines are very different than in Qatar. It is normal to be anxious in meeting different people for they can from different backgrounds and may be different from the kind of crowd a person is used to. A respondent shared her thoughts on this:

"Before I went back to the Philippines, I was really worried that students in my school would be way out of my

league or that the people I would meet are people who I have difficulty with if I didn't do something. So, I read a lot about my course and I did a lot of research about how to go around the Philippines from where I'm from." (R5)

Other respondents are taught to become more cautious since safety is a concern of most people who come from abroad. This is due to the fact that crime in the Philippines is more rampant as compared to crime in Qatar. A respondent in particular had to prepare herself on what to do in the Philippines since it is a different environment than in Qatar as confirmed:

"When we were in Qatar, we were always reminded to be vigilant because it's a different environment in the Philippines. You can't just be negligent and they reminded us to always be extra careful." (R2)

However, there are some students who don't undergo through any type of preparation which in turn had a resulting consequence that affected them after moving to a new environment and contributed to their struggles as confirmed:

"Actually, in terms of preparation, I believe there was none. That is what I regret since I did not get any idea on what I'm going to encounter. So, I think that it was also a factor on why I had many struggles when I first went to school here." (R1)

The reason as to why students undergo through certain preparations is because they have been away from their home country for a significant amount of time and this in turn would affect how they would live their lives in the Philippines. After being away for so long, many students undergo struggles which is a result of repatriation. Repatriation is an act of returning to one's own country and a once familiar place could become unfamiliar to a person especially when they have been living abroad for a long time. The period of time they have spent out of the country affects them and is a factor as to why certain PSDians have struggles in re-adjusting back to their home country as said by our respondents:

"Ten years from 2008-2018. Yes, considering I was gone for quite a while. I spent third to twelfth grade in Qatar so it's like I've lived almost half of my life away from where I am right now which definitely could have made things really difficult for me." (R5)

"I studied for 17 years in Qatar. It does affect the impact of difficulties I experienced because when you have spent a long time in one place, it is harder to go back and adjust to another place again." (R3)

After living in Qatar for a long period of time, students become accustomed to the culture and can greatly affect a student's life as they grew up in that kind of environment and have adapted to the lifestyle of the country. Due to this they can experience certain difficulties along the way as mentioned:

"Nine years. If you stayed in Qatar for 1 year then you went back home to the Philippines afterwards, you just

go through it again. Unlike if you stayed in Qatar for so long, you don't know some of the culture and the way of living in the Philippines. So, it wasn't easy." (R1)

Repatriating to the Philippines may cause one to feel disoriented when they are suddenly subjected to an unaccustomed culture, way of life, or set of attitudes. This is what we call culture shock. Many people experience this once they go back to their home country after being away for so long. Though there are some exceptions as some people who are exposed to things that are similar to the ones in their home country are likely to not experience culture shock. Just like as one respondent said:

"Not really since it's a given that we studied in a Philippine school, we were exposed to the Filipino culture which I believe is one of the advantages of studying in a Philippine school." (R1)

Studying in the Philippine school mitigated the effects of culture shock to them as they went back to the Philippines to pursue college.

"It actually helped that I'm in a Philippine school so I'm surrounded by Filipinos which wouldn't make it that different because it's the same to the Philippines. But for the most part, studying itself in act of learning and taking in new information, I feel like it didn't help me that much." (R5)

Despite being exposed to the Filipino culture, they still experienced some struggles as they had witnessed the actual culture and way of life in the Philippines and how different it is from Qatar.

"It really was hard because we grew up in Qatar and we experienced culture shock here in the Philippine. It was very different. For example, in Qatar you could go out anytime you wanted because you knew that the environment was safe but in the Philippines, you have to think of a lot of things such as making sure your things are safe and isn't placed anywhere carelessly because it's risky." (R2)

Going back to the Philippines especially when their parents or family had to stay in the host country, they can get a sense of liberty, freedom, and independence. They struggled with this at first as they adapt to not being around their loved ones and having to do daily tasks on their own but after a while, they realize that it is part of being an adult as it will shape them to be self-reliant and responsible.

"I live with my grandparents but they're hardly ever home so in a way, yes. There's food and house cleaning, especially the toilets. In Qatar, we clean the toilets but we take turns so I don't do it that often. In here, you actually have to do it by yourself and when it comes to meals and you're alone, you still have to find and buy meals." (R4)

"Yes, with my brother. In the Philippines, you have to do everything. For example, when you get home there's no food. I miss having my parents around." (R2)

Living in another country by yourself and being away from people whom you've always depended on allows a student

to acquire independence and acknowledge the fact that they need to learn how to do things by themselves and learn how to get by with their own efforts. Doing so fosters personal growth and maturity within themselves.

“As for the positive effects, I guess it’s the feeling that you’re capable of being independent. For the negative effects, I guess it’s crying over a subject you’re not supposed to.” (R2)

“Positive, because of the freedom that I had, I was really overjoyed. I was happier and I felt like I could think more clearly. Negative, not really anything except for the fact that I isolated myself a bit more during my vacant time because I see my friends every day, every hour, I got a bit tired of it but I don’t think that’s too negative.” (R5)

Repatriation brings upon many changes, struggles, and difficulties to them. A common struggle is the transportation. They got used to the fast-paced traffic and highly accessible transportation system in Qatar so they had a difficult time when they found out that it’s completely opposite in the Philippines – heavy traffic jam, complex routes, and crowded transportation vehicles.

“Of course not. I went to Qatar when I was only grade 4 and then went home after Senior High. I only went back to the Philippines when we usually have vacation and we don’t stay for long. So, I faced obstacles like in commuting since I don’t know how.” (R1)

“It was hard. For example, in Qatar, I used to ride in a car going to school, but here in the Philippines, I just walk every day since the school is near.” (R3)

Though it may be quite difficult, having someone help you can reduce the struggle of using the public transport. It is also important for them to stay vigilant when using the public transport to be safe.

“It wasn’t exactly easy but I had some help since my mom wouldn’t leave me alone. She went with me to commute for three months. But she started letting me go off on my own and everything’s fine, I’m doing pretty okay. I have to commute going to and from the school or anywhere else since we didn’t have a car for a while. I’m not really used to the environment there, anything could happen. And the fact that my parents have always warned me of possible situations that could go wrong. I was a bit anxious but I still went on. So that kind of helped and now everything is just the usual.” (R5)

Fortunately, after struggling for a while they can get the hang of it. With enough practice and experience, they get used to it and thus able to use various transportation means with ease and go to where they want to go to.

“It wasn’t that hard since we are in the Philippines almost every year and I live with my aunt and her house is just in front of UST so my cousins and I go inside the university every afternoon to play. It’s why I’m used to the place already. Also, it wasn’t that hard to adjust to the new setting since I know where the offices and the good places to go to are.” (R4)

Environmental Adjustments

Moving from another country back to the students’ own country arises many stages of adjustments, from their emotional to social capabilities. One of these phases revolves around the environmental difference that a person will encounter and live in. Environmental adjustments refer to the effort exerted by people to familiarize and engage themselves with their surroundings. It is their behavior and actions towards the unfamiliar circumstances that they get to experience. As for the repatriating students, these would affect their learning for there will be many situations that will put them to test and push their limits as brought up-on a change in setting. This is of challenge and pressure especially when they were exposed and got used to something different therefore it is natural for it to be feared and get anxious about.

Regarding their learning environment, there would be foreign experiences on the way they usually learn and digest information. However, one needs to cope in such conditions as it would help them as a person. It is a matter of acceptance and time which would eventually lead to the unknown slowly shifting to something being accustomed at.

Studying abroad offers a different kind of learning environment for the Filipino students compared to the environment that the Philippine setting provides. Despite the long duration of living overseas, Philippines give more learning prospects due to the exploration opportunities that arises which can’t be obtained within the walls of a small foreign country as emphasized by our respondent:

“I prefer the learning environment of the Philippines. I’ll be biased if I’d choose Qatar because I’ve lived there my whole life and if you compare it to the learning environment, Philippines is better because you’d be able to explore more things. Qatar’s learning environment is very boxed and comfortable so there’s not much to explore.” (R3)

Being exposed to the educational environment in their home country, gaps between the two were observed. It challenges them to move away from their comfort zones yet it is preferred over the other as claimed by the respondent:

“I actually prefer the Philippines learning environment. One just seems to be lacking what the other does not. I feel Qatar has a lot more room for improvement. There are some things that Philippines is much better at compared to Qatar. Qatar tend to spoon-feed students and it is quantity over quality.” (R5)

A new environment can be very difficult to cope with, but with the help of the right people who was able to genuinely support and assist them fully, the college graduates was able to manage, achieve success and accomplish their goals. Those people who go out their way to be nice to them and sacrifice their time for them are very influential and crucial to one’s adjustment in a new and unfamiliar environment. Each of these supporters has different talents, skills, interests, and abilities that might have contributed to their quest of adaptation. This could be their teachers, friends and school staffs as one respondent insisted:

"I never did feel left out since some of my teachers have the same attitude with some of my teachers back in PSD which was pretty good so I didn't have to be too shocked. Although, they have some stuff they differ in. I'm okay with my friends. School staff are really nice there. Everybody's really nice where I'm studying so I'm doing good." (R1)

Early preparation is needed so they can adjust easily in a way that it could enhance their strategic thinking. Through practice and experience, one's thought processes will expand with fluidity and flexibility. Life can be spontaneous and seemingly random at times and there are many things that can take one by surprise that they never see coming. Thus, it will be better for one to be exposed earlier to the new environment of the Philippines where they could at least be educated about the things they should look out for the most when studying in the Philippines. A respondent disclosed that:

"If your purpose is for you to adjust easily then, yes. It will be really advantageous for you if you were exposed to the Philippines much earlier since you will be enlightened on things that might happen. Unlike when you are in Qatar and you just suddenly went home, it will be a shock for you as you don't know how to adjust." (R1)

In addition, being prepared will be able to help them be informed about the unforeseen scenarios that they would not be able to experience when they studied in Qatar since it is in a different learning environment such as the various teaching methods of the professors in a particular university and the subjects that the student will take. One respondent claimed:

"Yes, because if I have studied senior high in the Philippines then I would've been more prepared for the subjects and teaching methods of the teachers and professors here in the university." (R4)

Nevertheless, one respondent argued that being in a different environment has helped in enjoying the freedom of studying effectively in college in the Philippines. However, it might have been an unlikely case for them to study in the Philippines when they are on high school. Early preparation is indeed essential to be able to adjust comfortably; nonetheless, happiness and gratification must be prioritized as well as one respondent stated:

"For a while, I've actually been thinking this like yes, maybe it would have been better if I did study high school in some school in Pasig or someplace but now, I don't really think so since I'm only able to enjoy where I am right now because I'm in college which means I have much more freedom and if I studied here in the Philippines in high school. I wouldn't have been able to do these things I do right now so no I don't think so." (R5)

It is definitely advantageous for the college graduates studying in a school in Qatar where it practices the same curriculum as the universities in the Philippines. Philippine School Doha offers programs prescribed by the Department of Education, Philippines, acknowledged and recognized by

the Ministry of Education and Higher Education, Qatar. Due to this, there are many similarities when it comes to the subjects and lessons being discussed which made it easier for them to study comfortably and learn in a new environment. The respondent stated that:

"It's almost similar since PSD follows the same education system as the DepEd's so there are similarities in terms of the lessons discussed. However, it also depends on the teachers or the school despite its similarities." (R3)

"Since PSD is a Philippine School, it wasn't that hard to adjust since you already know the classroom layout because the class is somewhat still the same and the only thing that changed is the people around me." (R4)

Students often depend on the teaching style of the teachers when it comes to learning while teachers have different styles when it comes to teaching. Meanwhile, not all strategies/ways of teaching are compatible with the students as each individual has different ways of absorbing knowledge. Like students, teachers also have different ways of presenting their lessons. Some like to teach with visual aids and some like to focus on teaching verbally. Some are book based and some are all based on understanding the lessons rather than letting the students memorize each topic word-per-word which can be a hard time for students. Even though different teaching styles were given to the students, it is still apparent that it did not hinder the students to learn as they learned to cope up with the differences. Additionally, it was not hard for them to adjust with the teaching styles of the teachers in the Philippines since they gave extra information to make it easier for the students to understand as a respondent confirmed:

"I can't give a very good comparison since I am studying in a university rather than an all-around high school but I did observe that in PSD it's a bit mixed, there are good teaching styles that can be applied to any student because they are compatible with them but there are also some that give the students a hard time. Meanwhile, in the Philippines I feel like all the teaching styles used are completely flexible. The teachers there make sure that all the students understand. If ever their teaching style isn't compatible with particular students, they make sure to make up for it by giving extra information or something to compensate for that." (R5)

Despite the different teaching styles of the teachers, the PSDians still managed to cope up with the setup of the Philippine Schools. Moreover, PSD has held a lot of events and gave a lot of activities that made the students realize the importance of both co-curricular activities and academics. With these events and activities, the students learned how to manage their time and balance their time for family, academics, co-curricular, friends, and leisure activities. Another result of these was that students learned how to be dedicated with what they do and as time passed by, they learned how to manage not just their time, but also their grades as they perform their roles as a part of different activities. All of this was confirmed as a respondent said:

“Within the Qatar setup, it taught me dedication because as we all know, in PSD, it is bombarded in works and there are many co-curricular activities. So, I was able to learn time management which I can apply here in the Philippines.” (R1)

Consequently, it has been easier for the students in Philippine School Doha to learn since teachers do their best to make learning easier for the PSDians. The students have admitted that they got to learn more in PSD rather than in the schools in the Philippines. The teachers in PSD had spoon-fed the students in a way that the teachers made sure that the students understood every part of the lesson being taught. On the other hand, college in the Philippines has been proven to be different as a respondent said:

“I’d say that I get to learn more in Qatar than here in the Philippines because in Qatar, the teacher makes sure that every student learns the material first before moving on to the next topic unlike here in the Philippines, the teacher doesn’t care and just teaches. It is up to us if we understand it or not. It is more fun here, that’s what I can say about the school.” (R4)

“In PSD, the teachers are very dedicated to their students. I believe that the students in PSD are spoon-fed as they are provided with everything such as learning materials. Unlike in the Philippines, especially in college, you are on your own. If you do not understand anything you teach yourself.” (R1)

Before moving on to the next topic, the teachers in PSD makes sure that each student got the lesson which made it easier for them. Unlike in PSD, schools in the Philippines weren’t like that, especially in college. College is clearly harder because this is where one individual really learns the importance of being able to stand on their own because this is where the spoon-feeding stops. Critical thinking can also be acquired through college as most, if not all professors let the students be independent in a sense that they do not give out handouts anymore nor require notes because it is up to the students if they want to take down notes or not as each individual has different kinds of learning style as confirmed by the other respondents:

“Before moving on to the next topic, the teachers in PSD always make sure that every student learns it while here, the teacher just teaches. It depends on you whether you understand it or not.” (R4)

“PSD is spoon-feeding students since the teachers give out information and the learning styles are already known by the students so it’s a bit safer. Unlike here in the Philippines, the professors do not give every information because they want their students to be able to think more critically.” (R3)

As a result, students have a hard time coping up with the lessons and materials due to the fast-paced teaching style in college as compared to studying in PSD. Professors do not often go too in-depth with the discussion and discuss the little details and they especially do not care whether or not you are able to catch up with the pace of the discussion or if

you are able to fully understand the whole material. If one is unable to do so, it is their responsibility to catch up and study on their own regarding the material/s that they find difficult.

“In terms of teaching style, I think that PSD has a slow-paced approach. They tend to go into details. I remember a time when our biology teacher took at least two meetings to discuss one topic as it was hard for us to understand. Unlike in the Philippines, there are times when professors can fit three modules in one meeting. Then, if you can’t understand, then you study it on your own.” (R1)

This in turn would require students to have good time management and find time to go through the lessons by themselves and study independently. Skills that students were able to harness in PSD after studying in here and through their experiences they have developed a habit of being able to manage their time well despite the demand and numerous amounts of work that one has to do in college.

“PSD helped me adapt to my new learning environment through their high standards and many activities that taught me how to multitask which I have applied it here.” (R3)

Emotional Adjustments

Emotional adjustment is maintaining balance emotionally when challenged by either internal or external stressors. This can usually be done with the help of accepting the situation and adapting to the new environment. A well-adjusted person may have the following characteristics: emotional stability, high self-confidence, positive outlook in life, efficiency, productivity, and independence.

To aid in emotional adjustment, stress management should be utilized. It is a vast series of techniques and ways to control stress levels in order to improve one’s emotional well-being and everyday functioning. This consists of making rational changes to your life, practicing self-care and meditation, doing things that makes you happy, and managing your way of handling stressors when they come.

On their journey to emotional adjustment, the respondents went through acknowledging their emotional struggles, realizing the causes of their stress, dealing and coping with its effects, developing stress management skills, seeking emotional support, and finally achieving emotional maturity.

Going back to one’s home country seems like a comforting idea – they to see where they are from, one gets to go back home. However, that is not applicable to everyone. For students who spent almost a decade of their life living and studying abroad, re-adjusting is not easy. It may be their country, but how can they adjust to something so familiar yet isn’t? Philippines might be one’s home country but it doesn’t feel like home for students as they struggle to adjust with the differences between Qatar and Philippines. As respondents said their struggles:

“I guess one of the struggles is homesickness. I miss how school is like in Qatar wherein it’s possible for you to feel relaxed. Here in the Philippines, you’re always

stressed. Despite studying diligently, you still see bad results and you don't attain the score you're expecting to get". (R2)

"If you lived in Qatar, you get to share your fears. You get to do things as you're emotionally stable and being supported by your parents. While in here, you are on your own. That is what's hard since it's emotionally draining. You tend to worry about your food, your transportation, and your clothes which was all provided to us before when we were in Qatar." (R1)

Aligned with the struggles of re-adjusting to one's home country after almost a decade, stress is also experienced that has a lot of aspects as it can be experienced in different stages –in an academic and emotional level. One really can't live alone as someone once said that 'No man is an island' and when one lives alone after being surrounded with people close to them for almost their lives, it really takes a toll when the time comes that they have to get used to being alone to meet unfamiliar people as respondents confirmed:

"It was a bit nerve-wracking. The fact that I had to go to an unfamiliar situation on my own while I'm being expected to be tough and go through it without a problem, it really made it hard for me but all the while I couldn't really let it get to me so while it was in my mind the whole time I was still adjusting, I didn't really make it affect me too much." (R5)

"I miss all my friends there since we already went in our separate ways. Some are in Davao, some are in Qatar, and some are in some other place and there's a probability that we might not see each other again and I think that is what's hard for me that I can think of right now." (R4)

Consequently, stress can affect a person in different ways as it depends on the person's encounter with it. Stress can become negative (distress) when a person continuously faces challenges without having the opportunity to deal with it or relieve oneself in between these said challenges. As a result, several students become overworked, drained (physically and emotionally) and stress-related tension may build up due to consistent exposure to the cause of stress.

"I guess, I lacked focus. If you are emotionally unstable, you can't focus but you need to find ways on how to improve yourself. It is challenging, but it should not affect your whole system. You should cry it once but you should not let it affect your being and your performance as a student." (R1)

"As for the positive effects, I guess it's the feeling that you're capable of being independent. For the negative effects, I guess it's crying over a subject you're not supposed to." (R2)

"The positive emotional effect that I have experienced is that I learned how to adapt while the negative emotional effect is the feeling of being homesick from Qatar." (R3)

Stress is undeniably a feeling that is difficult to deal with especially if you are far from your family. It is common amongst teenagers to struggle with it when it comes to this aspect since they are unable to successfully balance their roles in life and are too preoccupied to deal with it. They also struggle in this aspect due to the fact that they must face this by themselves since they are far from their main support system which is their family. A respondent shared insight on how she often deals or cope with stress:

"I usually share it with my friends if ever I'm sad that my parents aren't here. I talk my struggles with them because as a college student, studying away from our parents is a common struggle for all of us. Basically, I get to cope by learning from their experiences." (R1)

"For me, the best way is through food. That's what I do if ever I'm stressed which is why you can notice that people who went back to the Philippines get fat. I used to ask myself, 'why do people who went back home get fat?' Now, I can relate to them. You should just eat it all out. So, you should give time for yourself, not always for school. Do things whenever you're stressed such as talking with your friends and going out with them. If you are stressed and you just keep it within yourself, it will only affect you. Not only emotionally but physically as well." (R1)

"I distract myself, for example instead of studying more and drowning myself in my studies, what I do is try to refresh my mind by taking a walk outside or listening to music, drawing, doing something that makes me happy or something that I enjoy. With that positive energy, I start to forget the stress of it or it becomes lesser and much more tolerable." (R5)

Learning how to manage stress skillfully takes time especially when college students have to juggle tasks between studies, family and other commitments while adjusting to a new learning environment where everything seems so unfamiliar and new to them. However, there will always be factors from their experiences that will help them out to break the hold stress has on their lives. The respondents have affirmed:

"Within the Qatar setup, it taught me dedication because as we all know, in PSD, it is bombarded in works and there are many co-curricular activities. So, I was able to learn time management which I can apply here in the Philippines." (R1)

"PSD helped me adapt to my new learning environment through their high standards and many activities that taught me how to multitask which I have applied it here." (R3)

In addition, emotional support is one of the most important components which can guide one to have an effective stress management. This could be loved ones, friends, teachers and other people in life, who would improve one's mood, provide comfort when troubled, and can protect the feelings of well-being. They have claimed that:

"I usually share it with my friends if ever I'm sad that my parents aren't here. I talk my struggles with them because as a college student, studying away from our

parents is a common struggle for all of us. Basically, I get to cope by learning from their experiences." (R1)

"My parents and I often talk through video calls. Actually, at first my brother and I were excited to live alone because of the freedom but as time passes you miss having parents around and seeing them personally. Although it's fine since we're always talking through video calls." (R2)

With numerous occurrences of unfamiliar culture in different surroundings, the stress of not knowing anything definitely drained them physically, mentally, and emotionally. Yet, as they keep on experiencing it repeatedly, it is a must that it should be overcome in order to adjust. Adapting to something new and welcoming change comes with acceptance. They slowly opened themselves to the unknown even with the feeling of fear as stated by them:

"I couldn't really let it get to me so while it was in my mind the whole time I was still adjusting." (R5)

Acceptance is their first step of coping. Thereafter, they start exploring countless ways that would enable them to adjust. Encountering such situations, they learn to be independent and more conscious of their decisions. It is a process towards emotional maturity which means that the stress they feel doesn't only come with agony but it would also emanate a lifetime lesson for them. The respondent said that:

"In positive terms, you learn to be responsible and mature of your actions and your decisions. You also learn to be strong because you know that not every time, there would be someone who would support you." (R1)

"It was a bit nerve-wracking. The fact that I had to go to an unfamiliar situation on my own while I'm being expected to be tough and go through it without a problem, it really made it hard for me but all the while I couldn't really let it get to me so while it was in my mind the whole time I was still adjusting." (R5)

4. Discussion

Philippine School Doha (PSD) is the leading basic learning institution in Qatar. Since its inception in 1992, The Philippine School Doha has been continually serving the growing population of Filipinos as far as Philippine basic education is concerned. The transfer to the permanent location in Messaimer is a new home of more than 4000 students. (PSD Website, 2019).

Since a lot of parents work in Qatar, their children are known to study in one of the Philippine Schools in Qatar, PSD. The trend of studying abroad is rapidly expanding worldwide. Even though research has examined the impact of studying abroad, the effects of stereotypes on students' overall cultural adaptation into the new culture have not been notably assessed. (Baumbaugh, Ariel D.)

In line with this, as the students finish high school, it is time to go back to the Philippines. However, going back to their home country can lead to reverse culture shock. Many people prepare for difficulties when they go abroad, but

often do not prepare for their reentry process. They expect a home to have remained as they knew it when they return. However, as many returnees sadly discover, people change and relationships change. (Mooradian, 2004).

Reentry has been termed reverse culture shock (Gaw, 2000) acculturation (Berry, 2005), repatriation (Sussman, 2000), returning (AFS, 2013), or coming home (Werkman, 1980). One pivotal issue here is thus a lack of common terminology. Arthur (2003) said that reentry is "better understood as a psychological process rather than physical relocation home" (p. 174). Similarly, Westwood et al. (1986) defined reentry as "the continuum of experience and behaviors which are encountered when an individual returns to a place of origin after having been immersed in another context for some time sufficient to cause some degree of mental and emotional adjustment" (p. 223). Despite the variance in definitions, however, there is agreement on the inconsistency between expectations and the reality of returning home (Brown, 2009; Christofi & Thompson, 2007; The Center for Global Education, 2012; Lau & Ng, 2012; Jung et al., 2013; Pan, Wong, Joubert, & Chang, 2007; Szkudlarek, 2009; Ward, Bochner, & Lurnham, 2001; Kostohryz, Katie; Wells, Pamela C; Wathen, Cristen C; Wilson, David., 2014).

Furnham and Bochner (1986) have argued that foreign students face several difficulties, some exclusive to them (as opposed to native students). There are the difficulties that face all young people, whether studying at home or abroad, in becoming emotionally independent, self-supporting, productive and responsible member of society. There are academic stresses when students are expected to work very hard, often under poor conditions, with complex material. (Furnham, 2004)

Research on international student mobility has been focused on the flow from home country to host country; less attention has been paid to what happens after graduation or after students return to their home countries, an issue often referred to as "reverse mobility" (Lee & Kim, 2010; Le, Anh T; LaCost Barbara Y., 2017)

Educational Adjustments

The shift from high school to college is an adjustment that every student has to cope in their pursuit of a college education. College provides a pathway for students to explore their interests, their socio-cultural experiences, and to build a more promising career. (Salinas & Cuy, 2019)

Due to the rapid pace of development in Qatar, which included dramatic economic shifts, changes in higher education, and was influenced by globalization (Al-Thani, 2017). Studying abroad has become the most viable option for students who wish to get hands-on contact with the world and immerse themselves in a culture that is different from their own. Research also shows that undergraduate students who chose to spend one or more semesters abroad will develop a greater sense of cultural awareness (Rexeisen, Anderson, Lawton, & Hubbard, 2008; Buckley, 2017).

Furthermore, students who return from studying abroad often state that the experience changed their lives (Williams, 2009). Upon returning, students claim that they have grown more mature, sophisticated, hungry for knowledge,

culturally aware, and sensitive. (Buckley, 2017) Students not only had academics and extra-curricular activities to manage, but they also did what was necessary to maintain their family obligations and secure access to college information and support. For a majority of students, family members, many of who lacked a college education themselves, were driving forces behind students' college aspirations. (Welton, Anjalé D; Martinez, Melissa A, 2014)

Apart from this, the personal and professional benefits of studying abroad are correlated with the positive experiences that study abroad programs offer. Studying abroad engages and affects participants' worldview, personal development, cultural interests, influence decision-making process decisions (Norris and Gillespie, 2008). Students can compare their homes to the host country, and these comparisons help them to broaden their horizons and better understand where they come from (Soto, 2015).

Regarding what occurs in schools, teachers' perceptions are valuable in guiding what would be beneficial or not (Romanowski, Cherif, AlAmmari, & AlAttayah, 2013)

Without a doubt, a conducive home influence manifests itself further in the school environment. It helps plan, executes and evaluates child's school experiences. Concerning the level of maturation and mental health of the child to help him/her excel academically. Furthermore, it has been x-rayed that some factors, which are attributed present in the family contribute greatly to the academic performance of students. (Mekonnen, 2014)

Also, student self-discipline and parental involvement are crucial factors in academic performance. Among the subscales of self-discipline, diligence showed the highest positive correlation with academic performance while distractions showed the highest negative correlation with academic performance. (Mbaluka, 2017)

Moreover, poor college preparation, lack of support such as family, teacher, available mentorship, and poor study skills were those things that prevented students from succeeding academically (Murphy, 2006; Claud-West, Shana L., 2018).

Social Adjustments

Culture shock has an impact on several outcomes, one of which is adaptation. Research has shown that culture shock can either minimize or prolong the adaptation period of an individual in his or her new cultural environment (e.g., Zhou, Jindal-Snape, Topping, & Todman, 2008 ; Fanari, 2018) depending on the emotional, psychological and/or physical stresses and difficulties associated with culture shock (Ward, Bochner, & Furnham, 2001). (Fanari, 2018)

Moreover, a research also stated that the longer the permanence in the host country, the higher the level of reentry shock (Tohyama, 2008; Wielkiewicz & Turkowski, 2010 ; Fanari, 2018)

In addition, returnees expressed frustration at having to perform simple tasks, such as going to the supermarket or standing in line because they could no longer predict behaviors they would encounter and expressed surprise or

shock when they did. Simple culturally mediated public behaviors, such as queuing, parking, giving way to pedestrians, staying in traffic lanes, holding a door for someone, or making eye contact, were all sources of confusion in the home culture environment (Marquis, 2018)

Lastly, there were returnees who noticed that being away from their parents helped them appreciate their parents more which resulted in improved relationships. As for communication with friends, it seemed to be even more challenging than with parents (Martin, 1986; Ward, Bochner & Furnham, 2001). Many returnees tend to find that they are off track for academic success because of their cultural minority status (Shimomura, 2014)

Thus, psychological readjustment is important to assist returnees in readjusting in their home country context, such as work, social interactions and relationships. Therefore, schools and universities are highly recommended to provide this service through an appropriate unit. (Martin and Harrell, 2004; Christofi and Thompson, 2007; Talawanich, Suwadee, 2019)

Environmental Adjustments

After fitting into a new environment overseas, these young travelers will face a similar challenge and experience another process of cultural adaptation known as reverse culture shock (RCS) when they return home (Gullahorn & Gullahorn, 1963; Shannon-Baker, Peggy A., 2015). This situation is common and inevitable, and it creates an unpleasant feeling for these youth (Allison, Davis-Berman, & Berman, 2012; Dettweiler et al., 2015). They become frustrated and confused with the cultural adaptation process. But, this time, the negative feeling is caused by the home environment.

However, studying in the right and suitable school can mitigate or even eliminate the effects of reverse culture shock. This is because the school is the major socialization institution for any child. It is the child's first contact with the world outside the house. For nearly 12 years, a child spends 5 to 7 hours a day in the school. School is one of the most important foundation pillars on which the child's personality develops. Children learn proficiencies in various abilities like learning process and homework, social communications, handling emotion, and the management of day-to-day interactions at home and school (Raju & Rahamtulla, 2007, A.S. (2016).

Furthermore, in reality, the growing child is dependent on the immediate environment, i.e. the house and the school meet his growth needs. The concern, therefore extends to how the school facilities can be enhanced and improved to meet the growth needs of the children. (J Master, A. S., & Arul Lawrence, A.S. (2016)

Moreover, Tsaliki (2017) argued that the appropriate psychological climate and ethos should be cultivated in the classroom and in the school, in general. According to teachers, this is imperative if we want foreign and repatriate pupils to feel comfortable and happy to come to the school. Besides, speaking in pedagogical terms it is commonly

accepted that a child needs to feel comfortable enough in the school before any formal learning starts taking place.

Students found it easier to adjust to the environment with the help of supportive and understanding people around them. In line with this, teachers also stress the importance of their behaving equally to all pupils irrespective of their origin and their special personal characteristics as well as the importance of their establishing trust between themselves and their pupils. As the establishment of a strong positive teacher-pupil relationship influences the performance of pupils, especially those with cultural differences. (Shinn, 1972; Tsaliki, 2017)

As these children grow older away from their home country, they find it harder to re-adjust when they return. A couple of studies investigated the effect of time spent abroad (number of assignment and duration) on critical repatriation outcomes. For example, (Tahir and Azhar 2013; Knocke and Schuster, 2017) have found a negative impact of assignment duration on the readjustment process of repatriates.

Another example is how time in the U.S. had changed Vietnamese students considerably, making it difficult for them to fit back into their old lives in Vietnam. Most of them did not expect to experience reverse culture shock, and most had made real efforts to fit back into the Vietnamese environment and culture. (Le and Lacost, 2017)

On a lighter note, repatriation and environmental adjustment helped in developing various positive attitudes within the students. Brown and Graham (2009) noted that students viewed study abroad experience as removal from routine and transfer to a new role, where they described themselves as more “culturally aware”, “independent”, “confident”, and “assertive” after studying abroad.

Overall, upon return to one's original environment, several transitions take place in the returnees themselves and the surrounding people. The returnees come home with a new self-identity and worldviews (Le & LaCost, 2017; Mooradian, 2004).

Emotional Adjustments

The established concept of reverse culture shock postulates a state of emotional being, wherein negative feelings about one's own culture occur upon returning home. Instead, these tourists tend to romanticize their native culture and idealize their country of origin during their visit. This contemporary culture shock presents as a reactive state to their stigmatization in the country visited, resulting in psychological shocks. Cultural shocks and reverse culture shock have widely been studied from the Western prism. (AlSaleh, Dhoha; Moufakkir, Oct 2019)

Before studying abroad, students need to go to a mandatory meeting where the risks of culture shock are explained to them.

Culture shock is like a wave, they say. At first you will be excited to be in another country, then overwhelmed by how different everything is. As time goes by, the excitement will fade and some students even enter a small depression,

because they are assimilating to a new way of living. The silver lining of this depression is that after that, the student becomes used to the new customs of their host country. They assimilate and become part of the community and the culture.

When students study abroad, they are prepared for the swing of emotions that come with it, and for some students they experience varying moods. What people failed to express to us is that when we return from months of being immersed in a simpler lifestyle, in a country where no one speaks English, coming home can be just as hard, if not harder, than leaving. (Rugolo, 2016)

While much research has been done on acculturative stress in higher education, particularly among international students (Furnham, 2004), studies of reverse acculturative stress are much less common (Mooradian, 2004). Yet reverse acculturative stress can have negative effects on the mental health of students returning home after time in a foreign country. Reverse culture shock upon returning home is a very real, documentable phenomenon that affects the psychological, social, and economic well-being of thousands of young Saudis, both male and female. (Alkhalaf, K., 2019)

Although students experienced cultural, social, linguistic, national/political, professional, and educational difficulties upon their return home (Marsh, 1975), the greatest challenge was found with interpersonal relationships, because these interactions shaped personal identity and fulfilled needs of affection, inclusiveness, and control (Martin, 1986; Miller, 2015).

Firstly, many scholars suggested that coming back was harder because most sojourners did not expect it –therefore they were not prepared to deal with it (Adler, 1981; Callahan, 2010; Christofi & Thompson, 2007; Neuliep, 2015; Storti, 2003; Fanari, 2018)

Secondly, reverse culture shock, while connected to one's initial culture shock experienced while abroad, is influenced by a unique set of circumstances, i.e. having to find a way to fit in one's experiences with their home life. (Shannon-Baker, Peggy A., 2018)

Thirdly, the intensity of depression expressed by participants varied with some expressing the feeling like one of sadness and others saying it was a dark and oppressive feeling that consumed their every thought. (Smith, Virginia J; Kearney, Kerri S., 2016).

Lastly, for some, the reverse culture shock was more challenging because students went abroad during a phase of self-discovery (high school or college) when they were formulating their core values, beliefs, and lifestyle (Storti, 2003; Fanari, 2018).

In line with these struggles, there are also ways to help in coping up with them such as the presence of friends which is more helpful for returnees' smooth reentry to school life. (Shimomura, 2014)

5. Conclusions

Moving back to one's home country has brought about several changes and adjustments to students in different aspects especially after being away from the home country for a long period of time. These challenges and pressure points are extensive and impact their subsequent ability to adjust to life in their host institution (Caldwell & Ssekasi, 2016). Due to this, people experience reverse culture shock or re-entry shock which is essentially the mental and emotional process of readjusting to your life back home.

However, few people are aware that reverse culture shock even exists, including those who have experienced or will eventually experience it. Students are not fully prepared for the difficulties they will face when returning home, whether it be isolation, depression or otherwise, which makes the transition that much more distressing (Tate, 2014). A large body of literature provides support for this proposition, with research demonstrating that there are several dimensions of adjustment—such as academic, social, and personal/emotional—that contribute to overall college adjustment (see Gerdes & Mallinckrodt, 1994, for a review of the research; as cited by Meave, Shirley, Park, et. al., 2018)

If one has studied abroad at an international school, moving back to one's home country and feeling a sense of unfamiliarity is normal for a student to feel. Different teaching styles and a different learning environment could affect a student's academic standing but is solely subjective and the degree of adjustment that a student goes through varies. However, students would struggle in adjusting when being exposed to a curriculum abroad that has a different curriculum being followed by the current university in the Philippines. More specifically, Asian students employ different learning approaches (e.g., traditional lecture format) from their American classmates. East Asian students focus on memorization with the purpose of obtaining satisfied grades and passing exams (Li, Wang, Liu, et. al., 2018, Leder & Forgasz, 2004; Samuelowicz, 1987). These students are sometimes labelled as surface or passive learners by Western society (Li, Wang, Liu, et. al., 2018, Biggs, 1996; Watkins, 1996).

Moreover, students moving to a new environment and seeking a sense of belongingness could serve as a struggle for students. Creating and forming new relationships to people who are raised differently as you are could be difficult despite sharing the same culture, although it isn't the sole reason for a person's struggles socially. In the study of Li, Wang, Liu, et. al. (2018), the feelings that these students described in their interviews were associated with academic stress from heavy course load, academic competence, and high expectations. This is in line with Liao and Wei's (2014) finding that academic stress impacts international students' psychosocial adjustment to life in the United States. In spite of this, most Filipino student repatriates would not undergo struggles in socializing especially if one is capable of using the Filipino language. It is because language adaptation plays an important role in the process of socialization, which directly affects the success of communication. Among these difficulties, scientists

emphasize the significance of insufficient knowledge of the language in a new socio-cultural environment, the inability to define various social roles that are assumed by participants, and ignorance of implications that are clear to native speakers (Nabivacheva, 2006; Valieva, Sagimbayeva, Kurmanayeva, et. al., 2019)

Just as studying abroad demanded a number of lifestyle changes, so too does returning home. (Stimac, 2018) A student continues to experience difficulty in adjusting environmentally once the pace of life and activity around that student is unfamiliar when one returns home which can be very stressful and overwhelming. However, with the help of several adjustments, the person experiencing reverse culture shock will finally be able to put back the pieces together again. Students must be able to reflect critically on the cultural assumptions, values, beliefs, and behaviors that guide their everyday activities. (Wayland, 2015) The returnees should put their experience into their advantage once they have returned home as they become more culturally aware and independent after studying abroad.

In addition to environmental adjustments, the emotional difficulty of returning home as a changed person frequently surprises sojourners. Some argue that the shock of the return can be harder than the shock of going abroad, especially because it is unexpected. Students might feel like outcasts, alienated and lonely because they feel different from the people around them. (Wayland, 2015) The yearning for a possibly idealized experience ever receding into the past can engender a loss arousing predictable separation and grief reactions. Part of the reentry process might focus on how to integrate that distinct window of time in the student's life into a broader sense of identity and values. (Gray & Savicki, 2015)

As based from this study's simulacrum, the struggles of Philippine School Doha graduates in the Philippine setting specifically educational adjustments, social adjustments, environmental adjustments, and emotional adjustments, efficiently help in realizing how the Philippine School Doha graduates have adapted to the Philippine Setting. This paper makes the following recommendations for future research purposes: to have an equal number of male and female respondents to compare their differences; to differentiate between the graduates with and without guidance of parents; to have a more specific main theme for the simulacrum; and to obtain longer sufficient responses from the respondents. It is also highly recommended that people with reverse culture shock analyze what one has learned abroad and decide how it will be applied to one's home country. It may be possible to incorporate certain characteristics or habits of the host culture into the daily life of the returnee and may start thinking about how to apply what one has learned academically and professionally.

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Author Profile



Jolienne Merrie T. Tubello was born on October 30, 2002 at Catarman, Northern Samar, Philippines. She only studied until Grade 3 in the Philippines and moved to Qatar to study in Philippine School Doha for about 9 years. As of now, she is in her senior year as a grade 12 student of Mercury under the academic strand of Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM). Music has always been one of her ways to express herself when words fall short. During her intermediate grade, she participated in the junior dance. She also joined Guitar Club for a year during Senior High School.

Other than music, she also loves making different kinds of collections and keeps them for memories as well as making creative letters and journals. She was also a consistent academic awardee during her junior days and at present, she has been a Laureola awardee for 3 consecutive semesters. It will definitely be an exciting challenge for her after living comfortably in Qatar for 9 years and finally graduate to study for College in the Philippines. She plans to continue her studies and pursue Civil Engineering in Mapua University. She will always be thankful for her loving family who supported her unconditionally as always giving her the best motivation to be stronger and better in every struggle her life may bring.



Maria Angelica D. Dela Cruz was born on May 22, 2002 at Manila, Philippines. 5 months after her birth, she moved to Qatar and studied in Philippine School Doha. Eventually, 14 years passed and currently, she is in her senior year as a grade 12 student under the academic strand of Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM). Academically, she has been a consistent awardee during her junior high days and at present, she has been a Laureola awardee for 3 consecutive semesters. She is currently part of the girl scout organization as a member of the Senior Planning Board (SPB). Moreover, she is also a cartoonist in the school's only publication, *The Link*. Having been abroad for 17 years her whole life, she is about to welcome a new chapter of her journey after she will graduate on April 2020 and leave the borders of PSD as she will go back to her home country - Philippines to study for college. Despite being a STEM student, she will pursue her passion of arts in St. Benilde - De La Salle College in the course of Multimedia Arts.



Alexandra Isabelle G. Delavin was born on December 14, 2001, in Balanga, Bataan. She is currently a Grade 12 student under the STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math) strand of Philippine School Doha (PSD), Qatar. During her Junior High School days, she was a consistent honor student and graduated with honors. She also presented and participated in the Qatar National Research Fair. During her Senior High School days, she became a Silver Awardee during the 1st Semester. She also accomplished accolades in the field of research such as being one of the top-performing groups during the experimental research during the academic year 2017-2018, presenting in Qatar National Research Fair 2018, and competing during the International Conference on Developmental Research 2018. During her tenure in Philippine School Doha, she joined inter-school competitions such as the Philippine Institute of Civil Engineers (PICE) 2018 and Indian Women Association (IWA) 2014-2015. She always had a passion for writing and has recently joined the only publication of PSD, *The Link*. After just a year of joining, she has managed to become the News Editor. She was the Vice-Principal during her 11th year in her TLE Specialization, Drafting, and is currently the P.R.O. in her 12th year. She also joined various organizations such as the Qatar Scouting, Young Rhetoricians Club (YRC), C.A.T., and the Senior Safety Squad during her Junior and Senior High School years. After graduating from High School in April 2020, her goal is to pursue a career in the engineering field. She plans to take BS Civil Engineering at the University of the Philippines (UP) and become a licensed engineer someday.



Allyza Reigh C. Platitas III was born on the 23rd of November in Rizal, Philippines. She spent her primary and intermediate years studying in public schools in the Philippines. Then, she moved to Qatar to continue her studies. She is currently a Grade 12 STEM student in Philippine School Doha. She has been a consistent honor student from Kindergarten to Senior High School. In the 10th Grade, she graduated as the first honorable mention. Consequently, during 11th Grade, she received a Silver award in the Laureola Ceremony. In

her high school years, she received both major and minor academic and non-academic awards such as Apollonius award, CEM award, Best in Basic Calculus, Best in essay writing, Scrabble Champion, Best Research, and many more. Furthermore, she is the current president of the Dunong Academic Guild, Business Manager of the Senior Planning Board of the Girl Scout Organization and a writer in the organization for the school paper. She had also been a participant and presenter in the 2016 and 2018 National Student Research Fair for her group's Qualitative and Experimental Research Paper, respectively. These gave her more experience and knowledge in conducting various types of Research and shaped her to become the researcher she is now. In the near future, she plans to pursue Bachelor of Science in Psychology in the University of the Philippines to exercise her passion and interest in people's mental health and well-being.



Andrianna Dawn R. Merced was born on December 30, 2000 in a small city-town named Dumaguete City, Negros Oriental in the Visayas region. She is currently a Grade 12 student under the STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math) strand of Philippine School Doha, Qatar. During her Junior High School days, she was as a consistent top student and has always been involved in the school's extra-curricular activities. She graduated from Junior High School with flying colors as the 4th Honor of the entire batch and received both major and minor awards. In Senior High School, she has also remained as a top student in her class and a Silver Awardee recipient in every Laureola Ceremony. She has always enjoyed leadership and has always been involved in several school clubs and organizations. Outside of academics, she is currently the Editor-In-Chief of The Link, the only and official publication of PSD, the vice president of the Senior Girl Scouts, the vice president of her entire batch - Batch Cavalier, the treasurer of her TLE (Technology and Livelihood Education) specialization which is Civil Technology, and the auditor in both Dunong: Academic Guild and the Senior Safety Squad. She strives to become an active student who not only seeks to improve her academic standing but also her leadership skills and values. Moreover, she has also joined several competitions that helped hone her skills at such a young age. Joining competitions held by the Student Education Council and representing the school when she was in Grade 6 with her Science Investigatory Project entitled "The Effectiveness of Orange Peelings as a Biodegradable Plastic Container". She was also a part of the ASTR (Asian Society of Teachers for Research) research presentation last November of 2018 with their research title "Feasibility of Polypropylene as the Main Component of Oil Production". She has also taken part in other inter-school competitions such as the Qatar (Philippine Institute of Civil Engineers Qatar Chapter) Math Whiz Competition 2019 and was able to make it until the Semi-Final rounds. After graduating from High School on April 2020, her next goal is to pursue a career in the medical field. She plans to take Biomedicine as a Pre-Med course at Qatar University, then migrate to Canada to take her Medicine proper and complete her residency.