



The Search for Meaning: Existential Anxiety and Coping Strategies among OFW Teachers at Sarasas Witaed Suksa, Thailand

Joan Ebare Magbanua

Graduate School, University of Perpetual Help System DALTA, Alabang-Zapote Road, Las Piñas City 1740, Philippines

ABSTRACT

This mixed-methods study explored existential anxiety, meaning in life, and coping strategies among 58 Overseas Filipino Worker (OFW) teachers at Sarasas Witaed Suksa School in Thailand, predominantly early to mid-adult females who were mostly single and had resided in Thailand for over five years. Quantitative results revealed moderate to high existential anxiety, with homesickness and financial responsibility as the most significant stressors, alongside cultural dissonance, identity conflict, professional stress, job insecurity, social isolation, and work-life imbalance. Despite these challenges, most participants reported a positive sense of professional fulfillment and perceived their work as meaningful, with many actively seeking deeper existential purpose. Coping strategies commonly used included problem-focused engagement, positive cognitive reframing, emotion-focused engagement characterized by faith and optimism, and moderate emotion-focused disengagement. Correlational analyses showed no significant association between existential anxiety and the presence or search for meaning, indicating that adaptive coping mechanisms and resilience likely buffer anxiety's negative impact. Qualitative findings further revealed coping approaches centered on emotional regulation through disengagement, resilience through acceptance of uncontrollable circumstances, and reliance on social and spiritual support, with prayer, peer solidarity, and goal-oriented purpose, especially in supporting families, identified as key to psychological well-being. The study concludes that although existential anxiety is prevalent, OFW teachers' coping strategies and sources of meaning foster resilience and sustain professional commitment. These findings underscore the need for comprehensive interventions including intercultural orientation, mental health support, financial counseling, career development, and strengthening of social and spiritual networks to enhance the well-being and professional sustainability of OFW teachers working in challenging overseas environments.

Keywords: Existential anxiety; Meaning in life; Coping strategies; Overseas Filipino Worker (OFW) teachers; Resilience; Professional fulfillment; Cultural dissonance; Financial responsibility; Homesickness; Social and spiritual support; Psychological well-being; Thailand

Introduction

Existential anxiety is a deep psychological distress tied to questions of purpose, freedom, isolation, and mortality. Educators in emotionally demanding and cross-cultural settings have increasingly recognized it as a significant issue. For Overseas Filipino Workers (OFWs) working as teachers abroad, this anxiety became especially urgent. They faced not only the expectations of their jobs but also the personal sacrifices and identity challenges that come with migration. At Sarasas Witaed Suksa School in Thailand, Filipino teachers dealt with the pressure of institutional demands while struggling with feelings of displacement, uncertainty about their purpose in life, and the need to balance their roles as educators, providers, and individuals seeking personal fulfillment. These challenges went beyond typical work-related stress. They involved an inner struggle with existential questions like, "Why am I here?" and "Is this sacrifice really meaningful?"

Recent studies emphasize the importance of psychological well-being for teachers' effectiveness and personal health. Nwoko et al. (2023) identified occupational well-being as a key factor in teacher performance. This is influenced by individual coping skills and the support from their organizations. Yburan and Tantiado (2025) further pointed out that work-life balance significantly impacts the emotional resilience and teaching skills of Filipino educators in private schools. Additionally, Bontilao and Genuba (2024), along with Acuña and Ancho (2023), highlighted how collegial relationships and support from school leaders can reduce teacher stress and improve professional commitment. However, despite these insights into teacher well-being, there is still a gap in the literature regarding the existential anxiety experienced by OFW teachers. Most existing research on OFWs focuses on general mental health issues and does not explore the unique challenges migrant educators face, such as identity loss, cultural dislocation, and finding meaning in unfamiliar settings (PCHRD, 2025).

The significance of this issue lies not just in how it impacts the teachers personally, but also in its effects on schools and student success. Teachers facing unresolved existential anxiety often deal with emotional exhaustion, lower job satisfaction, and decreased teaching effectiveness. These personal challenges extend outward, impacting the quality of classroom instruction, student engagement, and the overall school environment. As Day and Gu (2023) pointed out, the emotional well-being of teachers directly affects their ability to create positive learning spaces and achieve educational success.

Therefore, it is crucial to understand and address the existential challenges that OFW teachers face to maintain a motivated and effective teaching workforce.

This study looked into existential anxiety among OFW teachers at Sarasas Witaed Suksa School in Thailand. It examined the ways these teachers coped with their psychological challenges. Specifically, it investigated the sources and signs of existential anxiety related to teaching abroad. It identified and reviewed the coping strategies used by Filipino educators. The findings offer valuable insights for schools, administrators, and policymakers to create support systems that meet the emotional needs of migrant teachers. By highlighting these often-ignored psychological experiences, the study helped improve institutional policies that protect the well-being of OFW educators in international settings.

Background of the Study

The search for meaning in life is a universal experience. However, for Overseas Filipino Worker (OFW) teachers in Thailand, it becomes much more complicated. They face the challenges of adapting to a new culture, feeling emotionally distant from their families, and trying to maintain their identity in a different environment. These challenges often lead to feelings of discomfort, including disconnection and low self-worth, as individuals wrestle with questions about their personal and professional significance. Recent research on OFWs' mental health found high levels of anxiety and depression caused by isolation, stigma, financial stress, and cultural differences. Respondents said they coped through religion, social support, and a strong attitude (Manila Bulletin, 2024). Likewise, Deguma, Cacho, and Deguma (2022) described the experiences of Filipino teachers in Thailand during the pandemic as a constant struggle for mental stability in the face of cultural displacement and job challenges abroad.

Empirical studies on general teacher stress and coping among Filipino educators provide a foundational understanding of emotional resilience within this demographic. Amata (2023) investigated stress levels and coping strategies among offshore and Philippine-based teachers, finding that Filipino educators abroad experienced varying stress intensities yet employed adaptive coping strategies through emotion-focused and problem-focused approaches. Likewise, Ellovido and Quirap (2024) reported that public school teachers in the Philippines experienced moderate to high levels of occupational stress and primarily utilized emotion-focused and problem-solving coping strategies to manage these pressures. Additionally, a study conducted by the University of La Salette (2022) on private secondary school teachers revealed that cognitive reappraisal, relaxation techniques, social support, and religious practices were commonly adopted coping mechanisms to maintain mental well-being and professional functionality.

Despite the importance of these findings, the specific aspects of anxiety, such as finding meaning, negotiating identity, and seeking belonging, that Overseas Filipino Worker (OFW) teachers face in Southeast Asian host countries remain underexplored. Much of the current literature on migrant educators often centers on economic issues, homesickness, or cultural adjustment challenges. It tends to overlook the deeper internal struggles related to finding personal significance in foreign teaching environments. This study aimed to fill that gap by looking at the lived experiences of Filipino educators in Thailand. It focused on how they dealt with existential distress while working to maintain their emotional well-being and professional effectiveness. By doing so, it helped enhance the understanding of how existential concerns relate to job stress and coping. The goal was to inform support systems and interventions specifically tailored for OFW educators in international contexts.

Theoretical Framework

This study is grounded in the integration of three complementary theories: Existential Psychology, Logotherapy, and Coping Theory. Together, they provide a comprehensive framework to understand the existential concerns, meaning construction, and coping appraisal processes experienced by Overseas Filipino Workers (OFWs), particularly teachers, working abroad.

Existential Psychology

Existential psychology addresses fundamental human concerns such as isolation, freedom, mortality, and the search for meaning that give rise to existential concerns when individuals confront life's uncertainties (Yalom, 1980). These concerns often manifest as feelings of disconnection, loss of identity, and anxiety about one's purpose. For OFW teachers, the experience of cultural displacement and separation from family intensifies these existential concerns, which can negatively affect their psychological well-being (Bernardo & Estrellado, 2017). This theory frames the internal conflicts OFW teachers face regarding their sense of belonging and personal significance in a foreign context.

Logotherapy

Viktor Frankl's Logotherapy focuses on the central human motivation to engage in meaning construction, even amidst suffering (Frankl, 1985). When individuals fail to find meaning or purpose in their lives a state termed existential frustration, they experience heightened existential concerns, including anxiety and despair. For OFW teachers, challenges balancing personal and professional lives abroad can obstruct meaning construction, leading to psychological distress. Research indicates that meaning-centered approaches can foster resilience and improve mental health among educators facing adversity (Panisoara et al., 2020). Thus, Logotherapy offers a lens to explore how OFW teachers seek and create meaning to alleviate existential concerns.

Coping Theory

Lazarus and Folkman's (1984) Coping Theory emphasizes coping appraisal the process by which individuals evaluate stressors and mobilize resources to manage them. Coping strategies are classified as problem-focused (directly addressing stressors) or emotion-focused (regulating emotional responses). OFW teachers encounter unique stressors such as cross-cultural adjustment and professional demands, and their coping appraisal influences how effectively they manage these challenges. Empirical studies show that adaptive coping strategies, including social support and positive reframing, correlate with lower psychological distress and higher job satisfaction in migrant teacher populations (Giorgi et al., 2015; Bautista et al., 2021). Coping Theory thus elucidates the practical ways OFW teachers respond to existential concerns and maintain psychological resilience.

Conceptual Framework

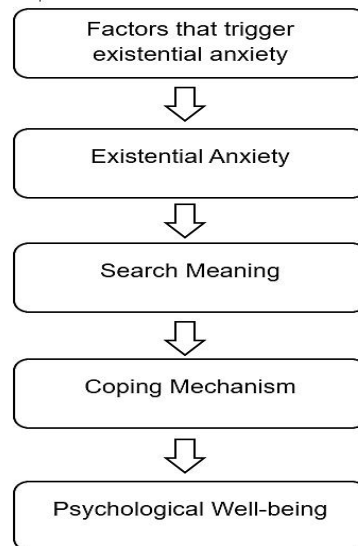


Figure 1. Research Paradigm (Quantitative)

The framework as presented in Figure 1 suggested that existential anxiety triggers a search for meaning, which in turn influences the coping mechanisms individuals adopt. The effectiveness of these coping strategies ultimately determines their psychological well-being. This model helped explain the adaptive processes OFW teachers go through to maintain their mental and emotional health while working abroad.

This conceptual framework illustrated the relationship between factors that trigger existential anxiety, existential anxiety, the search for meaning, coping mechanisms, and psychological well-being among OFW teachers at Sarasas Witaed Suksa School, Thailand. The framework followed a sequential process, showing how these key variables interact with one another.

The factors that trigger existential anxiety were the life experiences and challenges encountered by Overseas Filipino Worker (OFW) teachers that gave rise to existential concerns. Such factors included homesickness, cultural dissonance, professional stress, identity conflict, and job insecurity, all of which evoked deep reflections on purpose, belonging, and future uncertainties.

On the other hand, the existential anxiety pertained to the feelings of uncertainty, fear, or distress that arise when individuals confront fundamental questions of existence such as meaning, freedom, isolation, and mortality. For OFW teachers, such anxiety may be triggered by their physical separation from home, difficulties adapting to a foreign culture, career-related insecurities, or sacrifices made for their families.

In terms of search for meaning part, individuals often engaged in a process of meaning-making to create purpose out of their experiences in the face of existential anxiety. OFW teachers may find meaning through dedication to their profession, personal growth, spiritual beliefs, or sustaining relationships, which helps them endure the challenges of working abroad.

Coping mechanisms of Filipino teachers in Thailand tried different strategies to manage the distress brought by existential anxiety. These strategies included problem-focused coping such as seeking social support, learning new skills or emotion-focused coping like spiritual practices, mindfulness, cognitive reframing. The choice and effectiveness of these strategies greatly influence the individual's psychological adjustment.

Psychological well-being was considered the desired outcome of confronting and managing existential anxiety through the recommended support program.

On the other hand, FIGURE 2 – Research Paradigm (Qualitative) presented the systematic process undertaken to capture and interpret the lived experiences of OFW teachers in Thailand, focusing on how they confronted existential anxiety, discovered meaning in life, and applied coping strategies in a foreign work environment. The input stage drew primarily from rich qualitative data obtained through in-depth, semi-structured interviews, where teachers shared personal accounts.

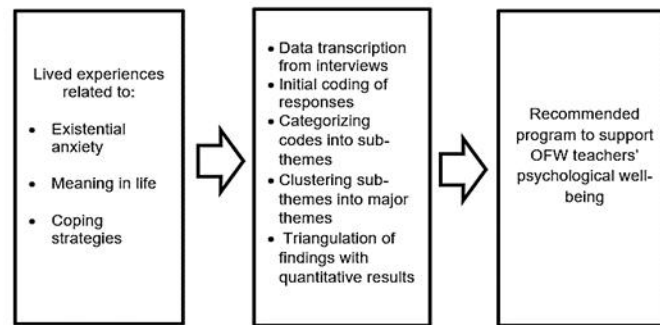


FIGURE 2. Research Paradigm (Qualitative)

FIGURE 2 – Research Paradigm (Qualitative) presented the systematic process undertaken to capture and interpret the lived experiences of OFW teachers in Thailand, focusing on how they confronted existential anxiety, discovered meaning in life, and applied coping strategies in a foreign work environment. The input stage drew primarily from rich qualitative data obtained through in-depth, semi-structured interviews, where teachers shared personal accounts.

In the process stage, these narratives were analyzed using Braun and Clarke's (2021) Thematic Analysis. Statements were coded and organized into sub-themes, which were further clustered into broader themes. This step prioritized the voices of the teachers, ensuring that their lived experiences drove the thematic structure.

The output stage presented emergent themes and sub-themes that portrayed the reality of OFW teachers' daily struggles and strengths in Thailand. These qualitative insights, rooted in the teachers' own words, offered a deeper understanding of why certain coping styles may have buffered existential anxiety, explaining the lack of significant correlation in the quantitative phase. Ultimately, these findings informed the development of a targeted support program to help OFW teachers manage anxiety, sustain meaning in life, and maintain psychological resilience while working abroad.

Statement of the Problem

The problem addressed by the study "The Search for Meaning: Existential Anxiety and Coping Mechanisms Among OFW Teachers at Sarasas Witaed Suksa School, Thailand" revolved around understanding the existential anxiety experienced by Overseas Filipino Workers (OFWs) in the teaching profession. The study aimed to explore the level of existential anxiety, the meaning of life, and identify the coping mechanisms employed by the teachers. Specifically, the following were the research questions:

1. What is the profile of the respondents in terms of age, sex, marital status, length of stay in Thailand and teaching level?
2. What factors trigger existential anxiety among OFW teachers at Sarasas Witaed Suksa School in Thailand?
3. What is the level of existential anxiety among OFW teachers at Sarasas Witaed Suksa School?
4. How do OFW teachers perceive meaning in life while working abroad?
5. What are the most commonly used coping strategies among OFW teachers in response to stress and anxiety?
6. Is there a significant relationship between existential anxiety and meaning in life among OFW teachers?
7. How do OFW teachers in Thailand describe their experiences in finding purpose and coping with the challenges of living and working abroad?
8. What program can be recommended to support OFW's psychological well-being?

Hypothesis

There is a significant relationship between existential anxiety and meaning in life among OFW teachers.

Scope and Delimitation of the Study

This study employed a mixed-method convergent parallel design to explore the phenomenon of existential anxiety among Overseas Filipino Worker (OFW) teachers at Sarasas Witaed Suksa School in Thailand. Specifically, it aimed to quantitatively examine the factors that triggered existential anxiety, assess the levels of existential anxiety, determine the degree of the search for meaning in life, and identify the coping mechanisms used by OFW teachers. Simultaneously, it qualitatively explored the lived experiences of these teachers through their personal narratives, focusing on their feelings, triggers, coping strategies, and sense of purpose while working abroad.

The quantitative component involved the use of standardized instruments, including the Existential Anxiety Questionnaire, the Meaning in Life Questionnaire (MLQ), and the Coping Strategies Inventory (CSI). These tools provided measurable data that allowed for statistical analysis of patterns

and relationships among psychological constructs, as well as how these were influenced by demographic variables such as age, gender, marital status, length of stay in Thailand, and teaching level.

The qualitative component involved the collection of narrative data through semi-structured interviews with selected participants. These interviews were designed to provide a deeper understanding of the participants' subjective experiences of existential anxiety, their coping mechanisms, and their search for meaning and purpose while teaching abroad.

The scope of the study was delimited to 58 OFW teachers who were employed at Sarasas Witaed Suksa School. Total population sampling was used due to the manageable size of the target population. Participants in the qualitative phase were purposively selected from this group to ensure diversity in demographic backgrounds and teaching experiences.

This study was delimited in terms of location and participant type; it focused solely on OFW teachers at Sarasas Witaed Suksa School and did not include educators from other schools or nationalities. While the mixed-method approach enhanced the depth and breadth of the findings, the results might not be fully generalizable to all OFW teachers or to those working in different cultural or institutional contexts. By integrating quantitative and qualitative data, this study sought to provide a comprehensive understanding of the existential concerns faced by OFW teachers, combining measurable trends with rich personal insights.

Significance of the Study

This study, titled "The Search for Meaning: Existential Anxiety and Coping Mechanisms Among OFW Teachers at Sarasas Witaed Suksa School, Thailand," addressed a critical gap in understanding the psychological and emotional experiences of Overseas Filipino Workers (OFWs) in the teaching profession. Specifically, it focused on existential anxiety deep feelings of uncertainty and distress related to meaning, purpose, and identity that these teachers faced while working abroad. By exploring the level of existential anxiety, the meaning OFW teachers ascribed to their lives, and the coping mechanisms they used, this research provided important insights with both practical and theoretical value.

The study was significant because it aimed to answer key questions about the triggers and intensity of existential anxiety among OFW teachers, how they perceived meaning in life despite being far from home, and which coping strategies were most effective in managing their stress and emotional struggles. Additionally, by examining the relationship between existential anxiety and meaning in life, the study contributed to a deeper psychological understanding of how Filipino teachers sustained resilience in foreign work environments. The exploration of their lived experiences and coping methods aimed to create a responsive framework that educational institutions, mental health practitioners, and policymakers could use to better support OFW teachers.

Ultimately, this study benefits multiple stakeholders:

OFW teachers. They will gain awareness of their psychological challenges and practical coping tools to improve their well-being and job satisfaction.

Educational institutions and school administration. They can develop more effective support systems and mental health programs tailored to the unique needs of international teachers, fostering a more supportive work environment.

Mental health professionals. They will find valuable data to design culturally sensitive counseling and interventions.

Policymakers. Policy makers may use the findings to craft policies that enhance mental health support and promote the welfare of Filipino teachers working abroad, ensuring they thrive both personally and professionally in their international assignments.

The researcher. She may contribute new knowledge to the field, gaining experience in addressing cross-cultural psychological issues, and identifying practical applications for future educational and counseling practices.

Future researchers. They can build upon this study's findings to explore related topics such as long-term effects of existential anxiety, effectiveness of specific interventions, or comparative studies with OFWs in other professions or countries.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE AND STUDIES

Factors Triggering Existential Anxiety Among OFW Teachers

Existential anxiety, which encompasses feelings of isolation, meaninglessness, and uncertainty about one's purpose, is a common experience among Overseas Filipino Workers (OFWs), particularly teachers working abroad. For these teachers, the challenges they face while adjusting to new cultural and professional environments often trigger deep existential concerns. One of the primary sources of existential anxiety is the emotional toll of being separated from family. Homesickness is a significant stressor, with many teachers longing to reconnect with their loved ones, which often leads to feelings of loneliness and emotional vulnerability. The psychological distress caused by separation can lead teachers to question their purpose and the value of their sacrifice. As noted by Shama (2021), OFWs, particularly teachers, often struggle with balancing the demands of their professional roles with the emotional distress of being away from home, triggering questions about the meaning and purpose of their lives abroad.

Cultural dissonance is another major factor that triggers existential anxiety among OFW teachers. Adapting to a foreign culture can be difficult, and for teachers, the challenges are further compounded by the need to adjust to unfamiliar educational systems and societal norms. Language barriers and differences in teaching methods can leave teachers feeling out of place, contributing to their sense of alienation and insecurity. According to Sullivan

(2020), the struggle to adapt to a new culture can lead teachers to question their sense of belonging, identity, and professional role, making them vulnerable to existential concerns about their worth and place in the world. Moreover, many OFW teachers experience identity conflict, as they grapple with the disconnect between their self-perception as educators in their home country and their roles in the host country's educational system. This conflict often leads to questions about their identity as teachers, especially when they struggle to integrate into the foreign educational environment. Research by Garcia (2022) highlights that identity conflict is particularly prominent when teachers feel they are unable to meet the expectations of their students or colleagues, resulting in existential anxiety as they question their professional identity and effectiveness in a foreign setting.

The professional stress that teachers face is another significant contributor to existential anxiety. Teachers abroad are often under intense pressure to perform well in a new educational system, meet the expectations of their students, and satisfy the demands of school administrators. These high expectations, combined with the pressures of cultural adaptation, can lead to burnout and a sense of futility. As Sullivan (2020) suggests, when teachers feel overwhelmed by professional demands, they may begin to question the meaning of their work, wondering if their efforts are truly making a difference in their students' lives or whether they are merely fulfilling a role without fulfilment.

Job insecurity is an additional factor that exacerbates existential anxiety among OFW teachers. Many teachers working abroad is on temporary contracts, and the fear of losing their job due to unforeseen circumstances such as changes in school policies, economic downturns, or expulsion from the host country, creates anxiety about their future. Teachers often worry about their ability to maintain financial stability and secure long-term employment, leading to uncertainty about their career and personal life abroad. As indicated by Ramos et al. (2021), the instability and uncertainty about the future can trigger feelings of existential doubt, making teachers question whether their career abroad will provide lasting fulfillment or if their journey is merely temporary and precarious.

Financial responsibility is another stressor that often triggers existential anxiety for OFW teachers. Many Filipino teachers view their work abroad to support their families financially. The pressure to meet the financial expectations of their families back home can create significant stress, leading to anxiety about the adequacy of their earnings and the potential consequences if they are unable to fulfill their financial obligations. This sense of financial responsibility can create an existential crisis, where teachers wonder if their sacrifices are truly improving the lives of their families or if they are simply trapped in an endless cycle of work and emotional strain.

Uncertainty about the future is another pervasive factor that contributes to existential anxiety. OFW teachers often face an uncertain career trajectory, with little clarity about future opportunities for professional growth or personal development. This uncertainty can lead to existential concerns about the choices they have made in life and the direction their career is taking. As Tan and Arriola (2020) suggest, teachers often wonder if their current path is the right one and whether they will achieve the life they envisioned, which can fuel existential anxiety about the future and the meaning of their current existence abroad.

Social isolation is another key factor contributing to existential anxiety. Many OFW teachers feel disconnected from their host society due to language barriers, cultural differences, and the absence of a strong social support network. This isolation often leads to feelings of loneliness and alienation, which can trigger deep existential questioning about one's connections to others and the meaning of their life abroad. As Punzalan (2020) points out, when teachers feel disconnected from others, they may struggle to find meaning in their experiences and wonder if their work and life abroad have any lasting value or impact.

Finally, maintaining a healthy work-life balance is a constant challenge for OFW teachers, many of whom are overwhelmed by the demands of their jobs while also navigating the complexities of life in a foreign country. Teachers often struggle to balance their professional responsibilities with personal well-being, which can lead to burnout and emotional exhaustion. This difficulty in achieving a balanced life can contribute to existential anxiety, as teachers question whether their lives are truly fulfilling or if they are simply surviving rather than thriving in their work and personal lives abroad.

The factors that trigger existential anxiety among OFW teachers are multifaceted and interrelated. Homesickness, cultural dissonance, identity conflict, professional stress, job insecurity, financial responsibility, uncertainty about the future, social isolation, and work-life balance all contribute to the emotional and psychological challenges that teachers face while working abroad. These stressors create a complex web of existential concerns, causing teachers to question their purpose, identity, and meaning in life while navigating the demands of their professional roles and personal lives in a foreign context.

Level of Existential Anxiety Among OFW Teachers

The level of existential anxiety experienced by teachers working abroad is influenced by a combination of individual factors, including personal coping skills, the availability of social support systems, and the degree to which they have adjusted to the host culture. As many teachers working abroad are faced with the challenges of cultural adaptation, professional expectations, and emotional isolation, their existential well-being can be significantly impacted. The psychological strain resulting from these factors often manifests in heightened levels of existential anxiety, which is characterized by feelings of isolation, meaninglessness, and uncertainty about one's purpose and identity.

A study by Santos et al. (2020) underscores that Overseas Filipino Workers (OFWs), including teachers, often report elevated levels of existential anxiety due to experiences of loneliness, separation from family, and the lack of a supportive social network in their host country. Teachers are vulnerable to these emotional stressors, as their professional roles demand emotional engagement and interpersonal connections with students and

colleagues, making the absence of familial and social support even more impactful. In international schools, where cultural and language differences are pronounced, teachers often feel emotionally isolated, which exacerbates their feelings of anxiety and uncertainty. The alienation that results from this isolation can trigger existential concerns, leading teachers to question their purpose abroad and the value of their efforts.

Furthermore, research has demonstrated that the level of existential anxiety among teachers is significantly influenced by various demographic factors, such as age, sex, marital status, and the length of time spent abroad. According to Garcia (2022), younger teachers and those who have been abroad for extended periods tend to experience higher levels of existential anxiety. This could be attributed to the emotional toll of prolonged separation from family members, which often intensifies over time. The longer the duration of the stay abroad, the more difficult it becomes for teachers to reconcile their personal and professional lives, and they may begin to question the meaning and fulfillment of their work. Young teachers may struggle more with the lack of a support network, as they are less likely to have established strong personal connections in their host country.

Moreover, the degree of cultural integration also plays a crucial role in the level of existential anxiety experienced. Teachers who have a higher degree of cultural adjustment tend to experience lower levels of anxiety, as they can navigate their social and professional environments more effectively. However, for teachers who struggle with cultural integration, the gap between their home culture and the host culture can lead to a heightened sense of alienation, exacerbating existential concerns about identity, belonging, and the purpose of their professional and personal lives abroad. As noted by Shamai (2021), teachers who feel disconnected from both their host culture and their home culture are more likely to experience profound existential anxiety, as they grapple with questions of self-identity and the meaning of their life abroad.

In addition to these factors, marital status also plays a significant role in the level of existential anxiety among teachers. Studies have shown that married teachers, particularly those who have left spouses and children behind, experience heightened levels of anxiety due to the emotional strain of maintaining relationships from a distance. The emotional burden of missing family members and the difficulty of managing relationships through long-distance communication often leads to feelings of guilt and inadequacy, which contribute to existential concerns. In contrast, single teachers may experience anxiety related to the challenges of establishing new social connections and maintaining a sense of belonging in their host country. Regardless of marital status, the inability to form deep, meaningful connections while abroad is a common trigger of existential anxiety.

The interplay of these factors, cultural adaptation, demographic variables, and social support systems, creates a complex landscape in which the experience of existential anxiety varies among teachers abroad. As Sullivan (2020) points out, the existential challenges faced by teachers working in foreign educational systems are often multifaceted, requiring them to address not only professional demands but also personal and cultural adjustments that significantly influence their emotional and psychological well-being.

Perceptions of Meaning in Life While Working Abroad

The perception of meaning in life is central to how individuals navigate existential anxiety and cope with the stressors associated with living and working abroad. For Overseas Filipino Workers (OFWs), particularly teachers, the ability to derive meaning from their professional and personal lives is often a powerful mechanism for managing the emotional and psychological challenges they face. Viktor Frankl's (2006) logotherapy theory is particularly relevant here, as it suggests that individuals can find meaning in three major areas: work, relationships, and even suffering. Frankl posits that people who perceive their life as meaningful, despite external challenges, are better equipped to handle existential anxiety. This theory resonates strongly with teachers, who may derive purpose and satisfaction from their roles as educators, even when faced with personal challenges such as isolation or cultural adjustment.

A study by Hernandez et al. (2021) investigated the perceptions of meaning in life among Filipino teachers working abroad. Their findings reveal that many teachers perceive their work as meaningful, particularly when they link it to their professional identity and the belief that their efforts abroad contribute significantly to the well-being of their families back home. These teachers often view their roles as educational figures not only as a profession but also as a vital source of financial support for their families. The perception that their work can have influence in their students' lives or provide for their loved ones seems to be a powerful buffer against existential anxiety. Teachers who could find meaning in their roles, either through the success of their students or their ability to support their families financially, reported lower levels of existential anxiety and greater job satisfaction. The sense of purpose provided by these perceptions, particularly in the face of the emotional toll of living abroad, underscores the importance of meaning in alleviating feelings of loneliness and dislocation (Hernandez et al., 2021).

Similarly, Tan and Arriola (2020) found that Filipino teachers in Thailand derived meaning from their roles as educational role models for their students and as cultural ambassadors who helped bridge cultural gaps between their home country and the host country. These teachers often embraced the role of educating their students not just academically, but also in terms of cultural exchange. The opportunity to serve as bridges between two cultures allowed them to feel a sense of purpose and fulfillment despite the challenges of adapting to a foreign environment. These findings suggest that when teachers can perceive their work as contributing to a larger social or cultural mission, they are better able to combat feelings of existential anxiety and meaninglessness. By focusing on the positive impact of their work on both their students and their broader community, they develop a sense of value and purpose that helps mitigate the emotional and psychological burdens of expatriate life (Tan & Arriola, 2020).

The ability to derive meaning from their work also significantly influences how teachers perceive their overall life abroad. In addition to professional roles, Filipino teachers often connect their sense of purpose to their ability to improve their personal circumstances or their family's well-being. For example, Filipino teachers who find meaning in their ability to send money home for their children's education or contribute to family expenses often

experience a sense of accomplishment and purpose. This perception of contributing to a greater good, such as supporting family members or advancing community welfare, serves as a form of self-affirmation that counters feelings of isolation or self-doubt (Hernandez et al., 2021).

Beyond professional roles and financial contributions, mindfulness-based strategies have been recognized as effective tools for reducing existential anxiety. Studies indicate that mindfulness techniques such as meditation and yoga are increasingly used by teachers to cope with the emotional challenges of living and working abroad. These practices help individuals stay present in the moment and develop a sense of emotional control, which can significantly alleviate anxiety. Mindfulness has been shown to increase resilience by enabling individuals to focus on the present rather than ruminate on future uncertainties or past regrets. Teachers who engage in mindfulness practices report feeling more grounded and better equipped to manage the emotional and psychological demands of expatriate life (Punzalan, 2020).

Additionally, creative outlets such as writing, painting, or engaging in hobbies have also been reported by teachers as effective ways to provide emotional relief and a sense of escape. These activities allow teachers to express themselves and disconnect from the pressures of their daily lives, offering them an emotional respite that enhances their overall sense of well-being. For teachers who feel emotionally overwhelmed by their roles and experiences abroad, these creative outlets serve as a necessary coping mechanism, enabling them to reflect on their experiences and regain a sense of emotional equilibrium (Punzalan, 2020).

Cultural adaptation also plays a significant role in how teachers perceive meaning in their lives abroad. In the case of Filipino teachers in Thailand, studies have found that actively engaging in cultural adaptation strategies, such as learning the Thai language or participating in cultural exchange activities, can significantly reduce feelings of isolation and meaninglessness. As Tan and Arriola (2020) note, teachers who successfully integrate into the local culture often report feeling a stronger sense of belonging, which alleviates existential anxiety. By embracing and understanding the host culture, teachers not only improve their social and professional experiences but also develop a deeper sense of purpose through their connection to the local community.

In conclusion, the perception of meaning in life is crucial for managing existential anxiety among teachers abroad. Teachers who derive meaning from their professional roles, whether through their impact on students, their contributions to cultural exchange, or their financial support of family members, are better able to cope with the emotional and psychological challenges of living and working in a foreign country. Additionally, engaging in mindfulness practices and creative outlets further enhances their sense of purpose and emotional well-being. The findings from these studies underscore the importance of fostering a sense of meaning and purpose, as it serves as a powerful coping strategy in the face of existential challenges.

Relationship Between Existential Anxiety and Meaning in Life Among OFW Teachers

The relationship between existential anxiety and the search for meaning in life is crucial to understanding the psychological well-being of Overseas Filipino Workers (OFWs), particularly teachers. Existential anxiety, often defined as a deep-seated sense of fear or unease about one's existence, can stem from feelings of isolation, loss of purpose, and uncertainty about life's meaning. On the other hand, the search for meaning, which is the process through which individuals strive to find significance and purpose in their lives, has been shown to be an essential factor in alleviating these feelings of anxiety (Frankl, 2020). Frankl's logotherapy theory emphasizes that finding meaning in life, whether through work, relationships, or suffering, can serve as a profound antidote to existential distress. His perspective is especially relevant to teachers working abroad, where the dual challenges of professional demands and personal adjustment often lead to heightened existential concerns.

The relationship between existential anxiety and meaning in life is particularly salient for OFW teachers. Research has demonstrated that individuals who perceive their lives as meaningful are less likely to suffer from chronic existential anxiety, as the act of finding purpose in one's life provides emotional resilience. For OFW teachers, meaning can be derived from various sources, including their role as educators, the opportunity to support their families financially, or the belief that they are contributing to cross-cultural understanding and development (Frankl, 2006). The sense of purpose derived from these roles not only provides emotional satisfaction but also serves as a protective buffer against feelings of isolation and existential distress.

A study by Ramos et al. (2021) explored the relationship between existential anxiety and meaning in life among Filipino teachers working abroad. The study found that teachers who were able to find meaning in their roles, whether through their professional impact on students or their financial contributions to their families, reported significantly lower levels of existential anxiety. These teachers viewed their work as an important part of their identity and a key to fulfilling their familial and personal goals. In contrast, teachers who struggled to find meaning in their work or who faced personal challenges, such as prolonged separation from their families or difficulty adjusting to the host culture, exhibited higher levels of existential distress. This finding supports Frankl's (2006) assertion that a lack of meaning in life can exacerbate existential anxiety and contribute to overall dissatisfaction with life.

The connection between existential anxiety and meaning in life has also been examined in the context of job satisfaction and professional identity among teachers abroad. Research suggests that teachers who derive meaning from their work, whether through positive student outcomes, personal growth, or fulfilling their responsibilities as providers for their families, experience a sense of fulfillment that reduces their anxiety (Sullivan, 2020). For many OFW teachers, particularly those in international schools, the perception that their work holds significance beyond the classroom (i.e., contributing to their family's welfare or their community's development) can enhance their sense of purpose and, in turn, reduce feelings of existential anxiety. This aligns with the findings of Tan and Arriola (2020), who reported that teachers who viewed their role as educational role models or cultural ambassadors felt more fulfilled and less anxious, when faced with the challenges of living abroad.

Additionally, studies on the coping mechanisms of OFW teachers have shown that those who engage in meaning-making activities are more resilient in the face of existential anxiety. For instance, Punzalan (2020) found that Filipino teachers who actively engaged in cultural exchange programs or community outreach initiatives were more likely to experience a stronger sense of belonging and purpose in their host country. This sense of cultural integration allowed teachers to feel connected not only to their work but also to the broader community, helping to reduce the psychological effects of isolation and anxiety. Furthermore, mindfulness practices, such as meditation or yoga, have been recognized as effective strategies for enhancing one's sense of meaning and reducing existential anxiety. These practices help individuals focus on the present moment, facilitating a deeper connection to their purpose and reducing the impact of stress and existential concerns (Punzalan, 2020).

The role of social support in the relationship between existential anxiety and meaning in life is also significant. Teachers who have strong social support networks whether through family, friends, or colleagues tend to report higher levels of meaning and lower levels of existential anxiety. A supportive environment enables teachers to share their experiences, cope with stressors, and reinforce their sense of purpose. In contrast, teachers who feel socially isolated may struggle to find meaning in their lives, which can contribute to higher levels of anxiety and psychological distress (Santos et al., 2020). Social connections, therefore, not only provide emotional support but also offer a framework through which teachers can derive meaning, further highlighting the importance of meaningful relationships in mitigating existential anxiety.

Moreover, the demographic factors such as age, marital status, and length of stay abroad further influence how meaning and existential anxiety are intertwined. Younger teachers, for example, may struggle more with establishing meaning in their roles as they navigate the challenges of cultural adaptation and career development (Garcia, 2022). Conversely, older teachers or those who have been abroad for longer periods may have developed stronger coping mechanisms, such as a greater sense of professional identity or clearer goals regarding their families' future. These differences suggest that the relationship between meaning, and existential anxiety is not uniform and can vary significantly based on an individual's personal circumstances and experiences abroad.

The relationship between existential anxiety and meaning in life is crucial for understanding the well-being of OFW teachers. Teachers who can derive meaning from their work, whether through their professional contributions, their role as providers, or their cultural engagement, experience lower levels of existential anxiety and greater job satisfaction. This aligns with Frankl's (2006) assertion that finding meaning in life can be an essential buffer against existential distress.

The findings from various studies highlight the importance of fostering a sense of meaning among OFW teachers, as it plays a pivotal role in their psychological resilience and overall well-being. Furthermore, the role of social support, cultural integration, and coping mechanisms such as mindfulness practices underscores the complex ways in which teachers can manage existential anxiety while working abroad.

Synthesis

Existential anxiety is a significant challenge for Overseas Filipino Workers (OFWs), particularly teachers, due to multiple stressors. Separation from family, cultural dissonance, identity conflicts, and professional pressures contribute to feelings of isolation, meaninglessness, and uncertainty. Homesickness and the emotional toll of being away from loved ones are major sources of existential distress for teachers abroad, often leading them to question the value of their sacrifices (Shamai, 2021). Additionally, cultural adaptation challenges, language barriers, and professional expectations heighten feelings of alienation and insecurity (Sullivan, 2020).

Job insecurity and financial responsibilities also intensify existential anxiety. Many teachers work on temporary contracts and are pressured to support families back home, leading them to question whether their sacrifices are truly worthwhile (Ramos et al., 2021). Despite these stressors, finding meaning in their roles is key to coping with anxiety. According to Frankl's (2006) logotherapy, individuals who perceive their lives as meaningful are less likely to experience debilitating anxiety. Studies show that teachers who view their work as meaningful, whether through supporting their families or impacting students, report lower levels of existential distress (Hernandez et al., 2021; Tan & Arriola, 2020).

Cultural integration also helps alleviate existential anxiety, as teachers who adapt to their host culture feel a greater sense of belonging and purpose (Tan & Arriola, 2020). Coping strategies like mindfulness practices and creative outlets (e.g., meditation, writing, or painting) further reduce anxiety by helping teachers manage emotional strain (Punzalan, 2020). In conclusion, while OFW teachers face significant existential challenges, finding meaning in their work, relationships, and cultural adaptation plays a vital role in managing anxiety and enhancing their overall well-being.

Although existing literature highlights the critical factors that contribute to existential anxiety among OFW teachers, there remains a gap in understanding the specific coping strategies employed by these teachers in Thailand, particularly within the context of Sarasas Witaed Suksa School. While previous studies have explored existential anxiety in general, few have specifically addressed the unique socio-cultural environment of OFWs in Thai international schools. Additionally, while research emphasizes the role of meaning in life in reducing anxiety, more detailed exploration is needed on how Filipino teachers in particular perceive and derive meaning from their professional and personal experiences abroad. This study seeks to fill this gap by focusing on the experiences of Filipino teachers in Thailand, exploring how they cope with existential anxiety and how their perceptions of meaning influence their well-being.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study aimed to examine the factors that triggered existential anxiety, the levels of existential anxiety, the degree of search for meaning in life, and the coping mechanisms utilized by Overseas Filipino Worker (OFW) teachers who were employed at Sarasas Witaed Suksa School in Thailand. Utilizing a mixed-method convergent parallel research design, the study collected and analyzed both quantitative and qualitative data simultaneously to provide a comprehensive understanding of the psychological experiences of OFW teachers. This design allowed for the integration of measurable data with rich, descriptive narratives to enhance the interpretation of findings (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018).

The quantitative component adopted a descriptive-correlational approach to measure the levels of existential anxiety, search for meaning, and coping strategies, and to examine the relationships among these variables. It also considered demographic factors such as age, gender, marital status, length of stay in Thailand, and teaching level to determine their potential influence on the psychological constructs. The study employed standardized instruments: the Existential Anxiety Questionnaire, the Meaning in Life Questionnaire (MLQ), and the Coping Strategies Inventory (CSI).

The qualitative component, meanwhile, explored how OFW teachers experienced existential anxiety and how they made meaning and coped with it in the context of their lives abroad. This aspect of the study aimed to provide deeper insights into the lived experiences that could not be fully captured by quantitative measures alone.

Population and Sampling

The population consisted of all Overseas Filipino Worker (OFW) teachers employed at Sarasas Witaed Suksa School in Thailand, totaling approximately 58 individuals across different grade levels. A total enumeration sampling technique was used for the quantitative phase, inviting all 58 OFW teachers to participate to ensure comprehensive coverage of the target population.

For the qualitative phase, a purposeful sampling approach selected a smaller subset of participants, 20 participants, based on criteria such as willingness to share in-depth experiences, length of stay (minimum six months), and representation of diverse teaching levels. This ensured rich qualitative data reflecting varied perspectives on existential anxiety and coping.

Respondents of the Study

The respondents of the study were the 58 Overseas Filipino Worker (OFW) teachers who met the following criteria: they were Filipino citizens employed full-time at Sarasas Witaed Suksa School and had at least six months of teaching experience at the school to ensure familiarity with the work environment. For the qualitative phase, an additional criterion was the respondents' willingness to participate in in-depth interviews, from which twenty teachers were selected to provide deeper insights into their lived experiences.

Research Instruments

This study employed multiple research instruments to collect both quantitative and qualitative data on existential anxiety, meaning in life, and coping strategies among Overseas Filipino Worker (OFW) teachers at Sarasas Witaed Suksa School in Thailand.

Quantitative Instruments

Four main quantitative instruments were utilized:

1. Demographic Survey and Self-Made Questionnaire on Factors Triggering Existential Anxiety

This self-developed questionnaire gathered demographic information, including age, gender, marital status, length of stay in Thailand, and teaching level. It also contained items identifying specific factors that trigger existential anxiety among OFW teachers. Respondents rated each item on a 4-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 4 (Strongly Agree). Scores were averaged per factor to determine the intensity of anxiety triggers, with higher mean scores indicating stronger agreement and greater impact.

2. Existential Anxiety Questionnaire

This instrument measured respondents' levels of existential anxiety across core themes such as meaninglessness, death, isolation, and freedom. Participants answered "Yes" or "No" to each item, with some items reverse scored. Specifically, items 2, 4, 7, 9, 10, 11, and 12 were reverse scored, where a "Yes" response was assigned 0 points and "No" was assigned 1 point. For all other items, a "Yes" response was scored as 1 point and "No" as 0 points. Total scores were calculated by summing item scores, with higher totals indicating greater levels of existential anxiety (0 – 2, High; 3 – 8, Moderate; 9 – 13, High).

3. Meaning in Life Questionnaire (MLQ)

The MLQ assesses two dimensions: *Presence of Meaning* (Items 1, 4, 5, 6, and 9, where Item 9 is reverse scored) and *Search for Meaning* (Items 2, 3, 7, 8, and 10). Each dimension comprises five items rated on a 7-point Likert scale from 1 (Absolutely Untrue) to 7 (Absolutely True). Scores for each subscale were summed separately, where higher scores indicate a stronger presence of meaning or a more active search for meaning in life (High, ≥ 27 ; Moderate, 19 – 26; Low, ≤ 18).

4. Coping Strategies Inventory – Short Form (CSI-SF)

The Coping Strategies Inventory (CSI) is a psychological assessment tool designed to measure how individuals cope with stress. The CSI Short Form (CSI-SF) is a validated 16-item instrument that assesses engagement and disengagement coping styles, helping to identify how a person confronts

stressors. Originally developed to assess age-relevant coping responses to specified stress situations, CSI-SF has been widely used in research. It has four parts namely problem-focused engagement (Items 5,6,11,13), problem-focused disengagement (Items 1,2,8,9), emotion-focused engagement (Items 4,7,12,14), and emotion-focused disengagement (Items 3,10, 15,16). In this study, participants responded to 16 items using a 5 -point Likert scale ranging from 0 (Not at all) to 4 (Very much). Scores for each coping subscale were calculated by averaging the ratings of the corresponding items. Higher scores indicate greater utilization of that specific coping style.

All quantitative instruments employed standardized Likert-type scales with established scoring procedures to ensure reliable and valid measurement of psychological constructs. Expert reviews were conducted to ensure cultural appropriateness and relevance for OFW teachers.

Qualitative Instrument

A semi-structured interview guide was carefully developed to explore the participants' subjective lived experiences of existential anxiety and their processes of meaning construction. The guide consisted of open-ended questions designed to encourage reflection and elicit rich, detailed narratives. These questions probed into the teachers' emotional struggles, the coping strategies they employed, and the personal or social sources from which they derived meaning in the context of their overseas teaching experiences.

Validation of the Instruments

For the four sets of questions in the quantitative part of the study, three were standardized questionnaires and thus required no validation. However, the questionnaire on factors that trigger existential anxiety was self-developed and underwent a validation process. Its face validity was first assessed by the research adviser. Subsequently, its content was reviewed by three experts who provided comments and suggestions. All feedback was incorporated before the instrument was pilot-tested among other teachers in Thailand. The data from the pilot testing were then analyzed, and the resulting Cronbach's alpha value of 0.891 indicated that the survey questionnaire had acceptable reliability.

Data Gathering Procedures

The data gathering procedure began with obtaining formal approval from the administration of Sarasas Witaed Suksa School, followed by securing ethical clearance from the appropriate institutional review board. Once approval was granted, participants were recruited and informed about the study's purpose, procedures, confidentiality measures, and the voluntary nature of their participation. Written informed consent was obtained from all participants prior to data collection.

For the quantitative phase, surveys were distributed via Google Forms. Respondents were given approximately one week to complete the survey, with reminders sent after the initial week to encourage participation. In the qualitative phase, purposefully selected participants were invited to participate in semi-structured interviews conducted in person. These interviews were audio-recorded with the participants' consent and later transcribed for analysis. Throughout the entire data collection process, all data was anonymized and securely stored to ensure confidentiality and data protection.

Statistical Treatment of Data

Quantitative Analysis:

Descriptive statistics were employed to summarize and interpret the data. Specifically, frequency and percentage were used to describe the demographic profile of the respondents, their perceived meaning in life, and their level of existential anxiety. The mean was applied to determine the extent to which various coping mechanisms were utilized, while frequency, percentage, mean, and standard deviation were employed to analyze the factors influencing existential anxiety.

The Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient was employed to examine the relationship between existential anxiety and meaning in life.

Qualitative Analysis:

Thematic analysis was used to analyze interview transcripts. This involves coding the data to identify patterns and themes related to existential anxiety experiences, meaning construction, and coping mechanisms. Triangulation with quantitative data was conducted to integrate findings for comprehensive interpretation.

Ethical Considerations

This study adhered to ethical standards to ensure the protection, dignity, and rights of all participants. Prior to data collection, the research proposal underwent review and approval by the appropriate academic authorities. Permission to conduct the study was sought from the school administration of Sarasas Witaed Suksa School and other relevant stakeholders.

Participation in the study was entirely voluntary. The purpose, procedures, potential risks, and benefits were clearly explained to each participant through an informed consent form. Participants were assured that they could decline to answer any question or withdraw from the study at any time without penalty or negative consequences. Written informed consent was obtained before administering questionnaires and conducting interviews.

Confidentiality and anonymity were strictly maintained. For the quantitative phase, all responses were recorded without identifying information, and for the qualitative phase, pseudonyms were assigned to protect the identities of the teachers. Audio recordings of interviews, transcripts, and survey data were stored securely accessible only to the researcher. The well-being of participants was prioritized, and any emotional discomfort experienced during the interviews was addressed with sensitivity, with participants being offered the option to pause or stop the session.

PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS, AND INTERPRETATION OF DATA

Problem No.1 What is the profile of the respondents in terms of age, sex, marital status, length of stay in Thailand and teaching level?

The respondents were predominantly in early to mid-adulthood, with most aged 31–35 years (27.6%), followed by 41–50 years (22.4%) and 26–30 years (20.7%). The majority were female (82.8%) and single (60.3%), reflecting a gender imbalance and a younger, unmarried demographic that may influence coping strategies and emotional support systems. Nearly half (46.6%) had lived and worked in Thailand for more than five years, while others had shorter tenures, suggesting a mix of newly relocated and well-settled teachers. In terms of teaching level, most respondents were assigned to primary education (50%), followed by kindergarten (36.2%) and secondary education (13.8%), indicating that the majority of Overseas Filipino Worker (OFW) teachers at Sarasas Witaed Suksa School work with younger students, where professional experiences and existential challenges may vary across educational levels.

Problem No. 2. What factors trigger existential anxiety among OFW teachers at Sarasas Witaed Suksa School in Thailand?

The study identified key factors contributing to existential anxiety among Overseas Filipino Worker (OFW) teachers. Homesickness (mean = 3.17, SD = 0.71) and cultural dissonance (mean = 2.78, SD = 0.74) were significant, reflecting emotional distress and difficulties adjusting to local norms. Identity conflict (mean = 2.86, SD = 0.75), professional stress (mean = 3.05, SD = 0.73), job insecurity (mean = 2.98, SD = 0.75), and financial responsibility (mean = 3.17, SD = 0.65) further highlighted concerns over professional identity, performance expectations, and family obligations. Social isolation (mean = 2.69, SD = 0.79), work-life imbalance (mean = 2.88, SD = 0.74), uncertainty about the future (mean = 3.05, SD = 0.75), and existential meaning (mean = 3.05, SD = 0.59) indicated challenges in forming connections, maintaining balance, and reflecting on professional purpose. Overall, the findings reveal that these moderately to highly experienced stressors significantly shape OFW teachers' emotional well-being and underscore the need for targeted support, counseling, and interventions in foreign teaching contexts.

Problem No. 3. What is the level of existential anxiety among OFW teachers at Sarasas Witaed Suksa School?

The study assessed the level of existential anxiety among 58 Overseas Filipino Worker (OFW) teachers at Sarasas Witaed Suksa School. Results showed that 22.4% of respondents reported a high level of existential anxiety, 55.2% were at a moderate level, and another 22.4% exhibited a low level, as measured by the Existential Anxiety Questionnaire. These findings indicate that a significant majority, 77.6%, experience at least a moderate degree of existential anxiety, which is higher than typical rates observed in non-clinical populations, where high-level existential anxiety usually ranges between 10–15%.

The relatively elevated anxiety among OFW teachers can be attributed to challenges such as cultural displacement, homesickness, uncertainty about long-term employment, and separation from familial and social support systems. The results align with Chen's (2021) findings on expatriate educators, which highlight heightened existential concerns related to life direction, personal meaning, and security following relocation. Similarly, Schueller et al. (2020) emphasized that working in a foreign cultural environment can provoke feelings of isolation and identity disruption, key contributors to existential anxiety. From an occupational health perspective, 22.4% of teachers experiencing high anxiety are at risk for burnout, reduced job satisfaction, and increased intentions to leave their positions, potentially affecting instructional quality and overall well-being. The equal proportion of high and low anxiety levels suggests that while some teachers have successfully adapted, a notable subset continues to experience significant psychological distress.

Problem No. 4. How do OFW teachers perceive meaning in life while working abroad?

The study examined the perceived meaning in life of 58 Overseas Filipino Worker (OFW) teachers using two dimensions of the Meaning in Life Questionnaire: Presence of Meaning and Search for Meaning. For Presence of Meaning, most respondents (55.2%) reported a moderate level, suggesting that they generally perceive their lives as meaningful but still encounter moments of uncertainty or questioning. A further 36.2% reported a high level of Presence of Meaning, reflecting a strong sense of life purpose and significance, while only 8.6% reported a low level, indicating that few respondents feel their lives lack clear meaning. This pattern highlights that many teachers abroad already recognize purpose in their lives, though some continue to experience periods of reflection or doubt.

In terms of Search for Meaning, more than half of the respondents (51.7%) scored high, indicating active exploration of deeper meaning in their lives. An additional 36.2% reported a moderate level, balancing contentment with openness to new sources of purpose, while 12.1% scored low, suggesting limited engagement in actively seeking meaning, potentially due to satisfaction with their current life direction. These findings suggest that while many OFW teachers perceive meaning in their lives, a substantial proportion continue to pursue deeper understanding and fulfillment.

The coexistence of a moderate Presence of Meaning with a high Search for Meaning aligns with Steger et al. (2006), who note that this is common among individuals undergoing transitions or adapting to challenging environments. For OFW teachers, adapting to a different cultural and professional context often prompts reflection, reassessment of values, and continuous personal growth. The moderate to high levels in Presence of Meaning suggest that teaching abroad serves not only as a profession but also as a source of personal and familial fulfillment, consistent with Frankl's (2006) logotherapy, which emphasizes deriving meaning from work, relationships, and even suffering. Filipino teachers often link their professional roles to identity and the belief that their work benefits both students and family members back home, particularly through financial support, serving as a buffer against existential anxiety (Hernandez et al., 2021).

The high scores in Search for Meaning indicate that many teachers actively pursue greater purpose even when meaning is already present. Filipino educators in Thailand often derive meaning by serving as role models and cultural ambassadors, bridging gaps between home and host cultures, fostering professional pride, and contributing to society (Tan & Arriola, 2020). The combination of moderate to high Presence and Search of Meaning suggests a dynamic process: while teachers feel purposeful, they continue to seek fulfillment in response to challenges such as cultural adaptation, professional expectations, and occasional social isolation. Strategies such as mindfulness, creative engagement, and proactive cultural adaptation have been shown to support teachers in managing existential anxiety while sustaining their search for meaning (Punzalan, 2020; Tan & Arriola, 2020).

Overall, the findings indicate that the OFW teachers perceived meaning in life encompasses both recognition of current purpose and ongoing exploration of deeper fulfillment, underscoring the complex interplay between professional roles, personal growth, and existential well-being in a foreign teaching context.

Problem No.5. What are the most commonly used coping strategies among OFW teachers in response to stress and anxiety?

Commonly Used Coping Strategies Among OFW Teachers in Response to Stress and Anxiety

The study examined the coping strategies employed by Overseas Filipino Worker (OFW) teachers at Sarasas Witaed Suksa School in Thailand in response to the stress and anxiety associated with working abroad. Four major categories of coping strategies were identified: problem-focused engagement, problem-focused disengagement, emotion-focused engagement, and emotion-focused disengagement.

Problem-Focused Engagement

OFW teachers reported frequently using problem-focused engagement strategies, with an overall mean of 2.71, interpreted as “quite a bit.” This indicates that teachers actively engage in strategies that help manage stressors and adapt to challenges. Among these strategies, “trying not to think about the problem” was the most common, suggesting that avoidance or mental disengagement is a frequent coping method. Similarly, “hoping for a miracle” reflects reliance on optimism or faith-based thinking, while talking with friends or family highlights the role of social support. Emotional expression, such as “letting emotions out,” was also used but slightly less than other strategies. These findings suggest that Filipino OFW teachers balance active coping methods, social support, and faith-based approaches, reflecting cultural tendencies toward resilience, spirituality, and interpersonal connections. While avoidance strategies may provide short-term relief, overreliance could limit problem-solving and long-term adjustment.

Problem-Focused Disengagement

Teachers also utilized problem-focused disengagement strategies, with a composite mean of 2.93, interpreted as “quite a bit.” Cognitive reframing and selective withdrawal were commonly used to manage stress. Notably, “looking for the silver lining” received the highest rating (3.29, interpreted as “very much”), indicating a strong reliance on optimism and positive reappraisal. Other strategies included stepping back to gain perspective, making a plan of action, and tackling problems directly. This combination of reflective thinking and constructive engagement demonstrates an action-oriented coping style that emphasizes optimism while balancing proactive problem-solving. Such strategies may serve as protective mechanisms against burnout and existential anxiety, especially in a foreign context characterized by uncertainty and distance from home. These results also align with Filipino cultural values of hope, resilience, and faith-based optimism.

Emotion-Focused Engagement

Emotion-focused engagement strategies were used “quite a bit” (mean = 2.64), suggesting that OFW teachers often employ methods centered on managing emotional distress rather than directly addressing problems. The highest-rated strategy, “hoping for a miracle” (2.97), indicates reliance on faith and spiritual optimism as a way to endure stress. Other strategies, such as putting problems out of mind or not thinking about them (2.60 each), reflect avoidance-oriented emotional regulation, which may temporarily reduce stress but not resolve underlying issues. Lower-rated strategies, like hoping the problem will resolve itself (2.38), indicate some tendency to defer problem resolution. These findings imply a balance between optimism rooted in faith and mental disengagement, consistent with Filipino cultural resilience. However, prolonged reliance on avoidance-based strategies may intensify existential anxiety in a foreign work environment.

Emotion-Focused Disengagement

Emotion-focused disengagement strategies were moderately employed, with a composite mean of 2.35, interpreted as “quite a bit.” Teachers commonly spend time alone (2.78), using solitude as a means to process emotions or temporarily escape stressors. Keeping thoughts and feelings to themselves (2.45) was also practiced, reflecting internalization of emotions, possibly due to cultural norms of emotional restraint or fear of being misunderstood. Less frequent strategies included self-blame (1.98) and self-criticism (2.19). Overall, emotion-focused disengagement leaned toward personal withdrawal and internalization rather than overt emotional expression. While solitude and reflection can aid emotional regulation, over-reliance on self-isolation and negative self-evaluation may hinder adaptive coping and exacerbate feelings of loneliness and existential anxiety.

Problem No.6. Is there a significant relationship between existential anxiety and meaning in life among OFW teachers?

A Pearson’s correlation was conducted to examine the relationship between existential anxiety and meaning in life among Overseas Filipino Worker (OFW) teachers, focusing on both the presence of meaning and the search for meaning. The analysis revealed a weak negative correlation between existential anxiety and the presence of meaning ($r = -0.084$, $p = 0.531$), which was not statistically significant, indicating that higher levels of existential anxiety do not meaningfully correspond with lower or higher levels of perceived meaning in life. Similarly, for the search for meaning, a weak negative

correlation was observed ($r = -0.223$, $p = 0.092$), suggesting that higher existential anxiety is slightly associated with a lower tendency to search for meaning, but this relationship was also not statistically significant.

These findings imply that, for this group of OFW teachers, existential anxiety does not have a clear, measurable influence on either the presence or pursuit of meaning in life. Several factors may explain this lack of significant relationship. It is possible that the teachers' experiences abroad have fostered adaptability, allowing them to maintain or seek meaning regardless of their levels of existential anxiety. Additionally, coping mechanisms such as problem-focused strategies, meaning-making activities, mindfulness practices, and engagement in social support networks may buffer the impact of existential anxiety on perceived meaning in life.

Teachers who actively participate in cultural exchange, community outreach, or spiritual practices may manage existential distress effectively, even if their sense of meaning is not particularly high. Conversely, those with a strong sense of meaning may still experience episodic existential anxiety, but their coping resources enable them to navigate these experiences without long-term psychological harm. Frankl's (2020) logotherapy framework supports this perspective, suggesting that finding meaning through work, relationships, or even suffering can serve as a protective factor against existential anxiety. However, the present findings indicate that, for OFW teachers, coping skills may play a more central role than the presence or pursuit of meaning itself in moderating the effects of existential anxiety. Filipino teachers abroad often derive meaning from professional responsibilities, financial contributions to family, and cultural ambassadorship, yet the ability to adapt to a foreign environment, manage stress, and maintain social and emotional connections can independently reduce existential anxiety, even when the sense of meaning in life fluctuates.

Problem No.7. How do OFW teachers in Thailand describe their experiences in finding purpose and coping with the challenges of living and working abroad?

This study explored the lived experiences of Overseas Filipino Worker (OFW) teachers in Thailand, focusing on their coping strategies and sense of purpose while living and working abroad. Using a convergent parallel mixed-method design, qualitative interviews were integrated with quantitative survey results on existential anxiety and meaning in life. Three major coping themes emerged: Emotion-Focused Disengagement, Adaptation and Resilience, and Social and Spiritual Support.

Emotion-Focused Disengagement

Teachers frequently used emotional withdrawal to manage stress. Sub-themes included withholding emotions, avoidance and wishful thinking, and self-isolation. Respondents often kept struggles private to avoid burdening others or relied on hope for resolution, exemplified by statements such as, "I don't share my problems because I don't want to burden others," and "I just hope things will get better eventually." Quantitative results indicated moderate existential anxiety, with homesickness, financial responsibilities, cultural dissonance, and identity conflict as prominent stressors. Disengagement served as a protective strategy to regulate overwhelming emotions in the absence of immediate family and familiar cultural support.

Adaptation and Resilience

Despite stressors, teachers demonstrated acceptance, goal-oriented meaning, and active distraction. Acceptance involved recognizing uncontrollable circumstances, illustrated by, "I've learned to accept that some things are beyond my control." Goal-oriented meaning was evident in prioritizing family, as in, "I endure difficulties because I know it's for my children's future." Active engagement in work or personal activities help reduce dwelling on stress. Survey results corresponded with these insights, showing moderate to high life meaning scores despite existential concerns, suggesting resilience through purposeful reframing of challenges.

Social and Spiritual Support

Teachers relied on peer networks and spirituality to cope. Peer support included sharing experiences with fellow OFWs, while faith and hope were central for meaning making. Statements such as, "I pray every night and trust God with my struggles," and "I hold on to the hope that my sacrifices will pay off someday," illustrate this reliance. Quantitative data confirmed high use of social support, spiritual practices, and optimism-related strategies. These resources mitigated the effects of isolation, cultural dissonance, and professional pressures, reinforcing psychological stability.

Integrated Interpretation

The integration of qualitative and quantitative data highlights the dual nature of coping among OFW teachers. While emotion-focused disengagement helped manage immediate stress, adaptation and resilience were sustained through acceptance, purpose, active engagement, peer support, and spirituality. Notably, survey results showed no strong correlation between existential anxiety and meaning in life; qualitative insights reveal that coping mechanisms mediated this relationship, allowing teachers to maintain a sense of purpose despite ongoing challenges.

Overall, OFW teachers in Thailand navigate complex emotional, professional, and cultural demands through a combination of disengagement, adaptive strategies, and social-spiritual support. These findings underscore the importance of institutional support, peer networks, and culturally sensitive interventions to enhance resilience, mental well-being, and sustained meaning in overseas teaching contexts.

Problem No.9. What program can be recommended to support OFW's psychological well-being?

The study identified key factors contributing to existential anxiety among Overseas Filipino Worker (OFW) teachers in Thailand. Homesickness was prevalent, with the majority of respondents reporting frequent longing for family, indicating moderate to high emotional distress. Cultural dissonance

was also significant, reflecting challenges in adapting to Thai norms and practices. Identity conflict emerged as an important dimension, as most teachers questioned their professional identity abroad, while professional stress, job insecurity, and financial responsibility highlighted pressures related to performance expectations, employment stability, and family obligations. Social isolation, work-life imbalance, uncertainty about the future, and existential meaning further revealed difficulties in forming connections, maintaining personal balance, and evaluating professional fulfillment. Collectively, these findings indicate that OFW teachers experience moderately to highly intense stressors that influence both their emotional well-being and professional functioning, emphasizing the need for targeted interventions to strengthen resilience and psychological health.

Based on these findings, the study recommends the implementation of a comprehensive support program titled **“Buhay Abroad: Strengthening the Psychological Well-being of OFW Teachers in Thailand.”** The program is designed to be collaboratively managed by the School Administration and Guidance Office, with active participation from Filipino Teacher Associations, community leaders, and external partners. Each unit is accountable for specific program components, including mental health services, intercultural training, financial literacy, and career development initiatives. Periodic evaluations using pre- and post-intervention surveys, participant feedback forms, attendance tracking, and follow-up interviews will ensure that the program remains responsive to the evolving needs of OFW teachers, with quarterly reviews guiding necessary modifications.

The program encompasses several key activities: Intercultural training and orientation aim to equip teachers with knowledge and skills to adapt to Thai culture, reducing cultural dissonance and related anxiety. Mental health support services provide accessible counseling, group therapy, and peer support to address homesickness, stress, and emotional regulation. Financial literacy and counseling workshops are designed to alleviate economic stress. Career development and job security initiatives offer clear pathways for professional growth, promoting employment stability and satisfaction. Social and spiritual support networks foster resilience through peer bonding and faith-based activities, addressing social isolation. Work-life balance policies encourage healthy integration of professional and personal life. Regular monitoring and evaluation track trends in teacher well-being and guide program improvements. Success indicators include measurable reductions in self-reported stress, improved cultural adaptation, enhanced job satisfaction, increased sense of belonging, and overall improvement in emotional and professional resilience among OFW teachers.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary of Findings

This study investigated the existential anxiety and coping mechanisms of Overseas Filipino Worker (OFW) teachers at Sarasas Witaed Suksa School in Thailand. The demographic profile revealed that most respondents belonged to the early to mid-adult age groups, with the largest proportion in their thirties, followed by those in their forties and late twenties. The majority were female and single, reflecting the growing feminization of migration within the teaching profession. Nearly half had resided in Thailand for more than five years, signifying relative stability and long-term adjustment in the host country. In terms of teaching assignments, most were engaged at the primary level, while others were distributed across kindergarten and secondary education, highlighting their diverse professional responsibilities.

The study uncovered several key factors contributing to existential anxiety among OFW teachers. Homesickness surfaced as the most dominant stressor, with participants consistently expressing a strong yearning for familial presence and connection. Alongside this, cultural dissonance and identity conflicts posed challenges as teachers struggled to reconcile Filipino values with Thai cultural expectations. Professional stressors, such as workload, classroom management, and performance expectations, further intensified their anxiety. Job insecurity and financial obligations, particularly the pressure to provide sustained support for families in the Philippines, were also significant contributors. Additional stressors included uncertainty about long-term prospects, social isolation, and difficulty balancing personal and professional life. Collectively, these findings demonstrate the multifaceted nature of existential anxiety, shaped by personal, cultural, and occupational dimensions.

Despite the prevalence of these challenges, many respondents reported deriving meaning and fulfillment from their professional roles. A majority indicated moderate to high levels of life purpose, with teaching abroad perceived as both a personal achievement and a means of supporting their families. However, a notable proportion admitted to lingering doubts and uncertainty about their future, revealing an ongoing search for deeper meaning. This tension between fulfillment and doubt underscores the dynamic nature of existential anxiety among OFW teachers. Quantitative results confirmed that most respondents experienced moderate to high levels of existential anxiety, with homesickness and financial responsibility emerging as the most pressing concerns.

Coping mechanisms played a vital role in mediating the impact of existential anxiety. Teachers employed a variety of strategies, including seeking social support from peers and communities, reframing problems with optimism, relying on spiritual faith, and practicing selective emotional withdrawal. These

strategies were instrumental in maintaining psychological balance and preserving meaning despite adversity. Interestingly, statistical analysis revealed no significant correlation between existential anxiety and the presence or search for meaning in life, suggesting that coping strategies and resilience served as protective buffers that allowed teachers to sustain a sense of purpose even in the face of anxiety-provoking stressors.

Qualitative insights further enriched the findings by illustrating the nuanced coping processes of OFW teachers. Many relied on emotional disengagement, self-reflection, adaptation, and resilience to navigate their struggles. Some adopted avoidance strategies, withholding emotions or avoiding conversations about their difficulties, which provided short-term relief but limited deeper social bonding. Others turned to solitude and self-isolation for reflection, which helped alleviate stress but sometimes reinforced feelings of disconnection. Conversely, resilience was evident in teachers who embraced acceptance of uncontrollable circumstances, maintained a goal-driven perspective, and found motivation in their commitment to family.

Spiritual faith and peer solidarity emerged as especially influential, with prayer, trust in God, and mutual support networks offering strength, hope, and comfort in a foreign environment.

Conclusions

This study reveals that OFW teachers at Sarasas Witaed Suksa School in Thailand experience moderate to high levels of existential anxiety, primarily influenced by homesickness, cultural adjustment difficulties, professional pressures, financial responsibilities, and social isolation. Despite these challenges, most teachers perceive their work as meaningful and continue to seek deeper life purpose.

Coping mechanisms such as acceptance, positive reframing, faith, and social support serve as important buffers, enabling teachers to maintain a sense of meaning and resilience in the face of anxiety. The absence of significant correlations between existential anxiety and meaning in life suggests that these coping strategies effectively sustain teachers' psychological well-being.

Overall, the findings highlight the necessity of a holistic support system that addresses cultural, psychological, financial, and professional needs. Such interventions can mitigate existential anxiety and foster a more positive and fulfilling overseas teaching experience, ultimately benefiting both teachers and the educational institutions they serve.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are proposed to support the well-being and professional development of Overseas Filipino Worker (OFW) teachers at Sarasas Witaed Suksa School in Thailand:

1. Intercultural Training Programs

Schools should implement comprehensive intercultural orientation and training to help OFW teachers better understand and adapt to Thai culture. This can reduce cultural dissonance and identity conflicts that contribute to existential anxiety.

2. Mental Health Support Services

The establishment of accessible mental health and counseling services is essential. These services should focus on addressing homesickness, social isolation, professional stress, and emotional regulation. Group counseling and peer support groups could foster a stronger sense of community.

3. Financial Counseling and Assistance

Given the high level of financial responsibility and anxiety among OFW teachers, financial literacy workshops and personalized financial counseling are recommended. Such interventions can help teachers manage their economic obligations and reduce related stress.

4. Career Development and Job Security Initiatives

Schools and policymakers should create clear career advancement opportunities and ensure job stability to alleviate concerns related to professional uncertainty and job insecurity.

5. Promotion of Social and Spiritual Support Networks

Encouraging peer support groups and spiritual activities can enhance resilience and emotional well-being. Facilitating spaces for sharing experiences and practicing faith may help reduce emotional withdrawal and foster solidarity.

6. Work-Life Balance Policies

Flexible work schedules and workload management should be considered to support teachers in achieving a healthy balance between professional duties and personal life, thereby reducing burnout.

7. Regular Monitoring and Evaluation

Ongoing assessment of teachers' mental health and coping mechanisms is recommended to identify emerging issues and adapt support programs accordingly.

By implementing these recommendations, schools and stakeholders can better address the complex challenges faced by OFW teachers, promote their psychological well-being, and support their sustained meaningful engagement in their teaching roles abroad.

REFERENCE

- Amata, C. L. C. (2023). Level of stress and coping strategies of public-school teachers during COVID-19 pandemic: The case of offshore and Philippine teachers. *AIDE Interdisciplinary Research Journal*, 3(1).
- Azurin, J. A., & Cruz, G. M. (2020). Challenges and adjustments overseas Filipino workers: A phenomenological study. *Journal of International Migration Studies*, 8(2), 125–141.

- Bontilao, & Genuba (2024); Acuña & Ancho (2023). Emotional well-being and organizational commitment of teachers in the Philippines. *International Journal of Research and Innovation in Social Science* (2024–23).
- Deguma, G. E., Cacho, A. A. A., & Deguma, R. D. (2022). “Paghimakas”: Lived experiences of Filipino teachers in Thailand during the pandemic. *International Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities Research*, 5(2).
- Dela Cruz, R. P. (2021). Meaning making among Overseas Filipino Workers: A phenomenological study. *Philippine Journal of Psychology*, 54(1), 23–37.
- Ellovido, B. R. I., & Quirap, E. A. (2024). Teachers’ occupational stress and coping mechanisms. *International Journal of Multidisciplinary Research and Analysis*, 7(3).
- Garcia, R. M. (2022). Psychosocial factors influencing existential anxiety among Filipino teachers working abroad: A qualitative approach. *Philippine Journal of Psychology*, 35(2), 45–62.
- Garcia, M. A. (2022). Identity conflict and professional integration among Filipino teachers abroad. *Journal of International Education Studies*, 15(2), 45–58.
- Gonzalez, M. A. (2021). The impact of COVID-19 on the mental health of teachers: A study on Filipino educators in international schools. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 113(5), 123–135. <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/34239334/>
- Hernandez, L. J., Cruz, T. R., & Villanueva, S. D. (2021). Perception of meaning in life among Filipino teachers working abroad: The role of professional identity. *Asian Journal of Education and Social Sciences*, 28(1), 80–93.
- Hernandez, R. M., Cruz, P. J., & De la Peña, M. (2021). Finding purpose through teaching: Meaning making and resilience among Filipino educators overseas. *Asia-Pacific Journal of Educational Research*, 9(3), 23–34.
- Lopez, M. D. (2022). Resilience among Filipino educators in Thailand: Coping through community and faith. *Southeast Asian Education Review*, 10(2), 88–101.
- Manila Bulletin. (2024, April 12). Study reveals alarming mental health issues among OFWs. Retrieved from <https://mb.com.ph/2024/4/12/study-reveals-alarming-mental-health-issues-among-of-ws>
- Mendoza, C. F. (2023). Existential anxiety and legal insecurity: A study of Filipino teachers in Thailand. *Asian Journal of Transnational Studies*, 5(1), 30–45.
- Niemi, H. (2020). Emotional and identity challenges faced by migrant teachers in Finland. *European Journal of Teacher Education*, 43(4), 478–495.
- Nwoko, J. C., Emeto, T. I., Malau-Aduli, A. E. O., & Malau-Aduli, B. S. (2023). A systematic review of the factors that influence teachers’ occupational well-being. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, 20(12), 6070.
- Punzalan, L. D. (2020). Mindfulness and creative coping: Strategies among Filipino expatriate teachers in Southeast Asia. *Philippine Journal of Counseling Psychology*, 22(1), 66–81.
- Ramos, J. A., Santos, A. M., & Lim, D. F. (2021). Existential anxiety and work-related meaning among Overseas Filipino Workers in education. *Journal of Migration and Mental Health*, 7(1), 14–30.
- Ramos, J. F., Dela Cruz, J. M., & Salinas, E. S. (2021). Psychological wellbeing and teaching effectiveness among OFW teachers: A correlational study. *Philippine Journal of Psychology and Education*, 45(2), 88–102.
- Ramos, S. J., Cruz, R. A., & Mercado, J. L. (2021). Coping strategies of teachers during the pandemic: An investigation of the psychological challenges faced by educators in Southeast Asia. *International Journal of Educational Research*, 58(3), 207–223. <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/34239334/>
- Ramos, S. J., Cruz, R. A., & Mercado, J. L. (2021). Coping strategies of teachers during the pandemic: An investigation of the psychological challenges faced by educators in Southeast Asia. *International Journal of Educational Research*, 58(3), 207–223. <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/34239334/>
- Reyes, J. T., & Santos, L. A. (2020). Finding purpose in teaching: Narratives of Filipino educators abroad. *Journal of Educational Research and Practice*, 10(4), 112–127.
- Santos, A. M., Lim, D. F., & Ramos, J. A. (2020). Loneliness, social support, and existential distress among Filipino professionals overseas. *International Journal of Psychological Studies*, 12(4), 87–95.
- Shamai, M. (2021). Emotional burden and purpose seeking in migrant educators: A cross-cultural perspective. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, 52(6), 512–528.
- Sullivan, B. T. (2020). Teaching abroad and the self: The interplay of cultural dissonance and existential questions among foreign educators. *Global Education Review*, 7(1), 41–58.

- Tan, C. R., & Arriola, J. P. (2020). Cultural adaptation and meaning construction among Filipino teachers in Thailand. *Southeast Asian Education Review*, 18(2), 101–119.
- Punzalan, J. D. (2020). Coping strategies and emotional well-being among Filipino teachers in international schools. *Asian Journal of Counseling and Psychology*, 18(3), 245–257.
- Santos, R. S., Bautista, R. P., & Magpantay, J. S. (2020). Existential anxiety among Filipino expatriate teachers in Southeast Asia: A study of coping mechanisms. *Journal of International Education*, 19(1), 78–89.
- Shamai, M. (2021). Emotional and psychological challenges among expatriate teachers: A comparative study. *International Journal of Educational Research*, 59(2), 116–127.
- Smith, J. A., & Kim, S. Y. (2021). The inner world of expatriate teachers: Meaning, motivation, and mental health. *International Journal of Educational Psychology*, 9(2), 103–121.
- Sullivan, K. A. (2020). Educational stress and teacher resilience: Coping strategies of Filipino teachers in Thailand. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, 51(4), 329–347.
- Sutton, R. E., & Soder, C. A. (2022). Teacher burnout: An exploration of its impact and solutions. *Teacher Education Quarterly*, 44(2), 75–98. <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/34239334/>
- Tan, M. L., & Arriola, S. P. (2020). *The role of cultural adaptation in enhancing meaning in life for Filipino teachers working in Thailand*. *International Journal of Teacher Development*, 11(2), 142–154.
- Torres, E. J. (2022). Mindfulness and emotional regulation among OFW teachers: A coping perspective. *Journal of Asian Psychology*, 7(1), 56–71.
- Verywell Mind. (2021). *How to cope with existential dread*. Verywell Mind. <https://www.verywellmind.com/coping-with-existential-dread-7972035>
- University of La Salette Inc. (2022). Mental health and coping strategies of private secondary school teachers in the new normal: Basis for a psycho-social wellbeing developmental program. Retrieved from <https://research.uls.edu.ph/2022/11/23/mental-health-and-coping-strategies-of-private-secondary-school-teachers-in-the-new-normal-basis-for-a-psycho-social-wellbeing-developmental-program/>
- Yburan, J. M., & Tantiado, R. C. (2025). Work-life balance and teaching competence among private school teachers. *International Journal of Multidisciplinary Research and Reviews*, 8(5), 75.