

EDUCATED IN THE PHILIPPINES, EMPLOYED OVERSEAS: NARRATIVES OF FILIPINO EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATORS

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Abstract: The present study investigates the narratives of Early Childhood Education (ECEd) Filipino teachers, with the main inquiry focusing on how they have applied what they have learned from their ECEd undergraduate training in the Philippines vis-à-vis their professional practice abroad. Twelve Filipino ECEd teachers were the participants in the study. They have finished their undergraduate degree in ECEd in the Philippines and are currently working as ECEd teachers in Singapore. Central to the phenomenological inquiry were the participants' common experiences as graduates of the ECEd programme in the Philippines and currently teaching abroad. Findings reveal that (1) pre-service training for ECEd is essential in preparing educators for their roles; (2) teachers pursue professional practice abroad for various reasons; (3) the BECEd programme at the university is successful; (4) Filipino ECEd practitioners working abroad face challenges; (5) ongoing professional development and training are also necessary for early childhood educators; (6) advanced language training, enhancement content and training, and stress management may help address the demands of teaching abroad; and (7) pre-service ECEd programme should promote inclusive education, enhance professional development, and cultivate the ability to adapt to different cultural environments.

Keywords: Filipino diaspora, Early Childhood Education (ECEd), overseas workers, teaching abroad.

Introduction

The significance of teachers in promoting the development of nations and economies cannot be disputed (Garcia & Martin, 2019). Teachers have supplied various professions with skilled and specialised human resources by producing capable graduates. The teaching profession has also played a vital role in shaping basic and higher education through curriculum reforms and teacher training policies. Teachers at all levels continue to contribute to the production and training of human resource skills, which is crucial for the growth and development of the nation's economy (Garcia & Martin, 2019).

Early childhood education in the Philippines emphasises the teaching of emotional, physical, cognitive, and social skills while emphasising the interests and socialisation activities of the learners with parents, friends, teachers, and

others in their surroundings (Jalongo, 2021). The formative period of children is critical (Bakken *et al.*, 2017) and plays a significant role in laying a strong foundation for their development. COVID-19 has forced early childhood educators to seek families' assistance in promoting their students' academic and social learning (Timmons *et al.*, 2021). The ECEd curriculum must address the contemporary challenges brought about by the pandemic, as they affect not only learners but also those who care for them. Emotional development is an essential aspect of a child's growth during this early stage (Denham & Liverette, 2019).

The passage of the Philippines' Republic Act 8980, otherwise known as the Early Childhood Care and Development Act, institutionalised the establishment of a national

system for Early Childhood Development Care and Development. Under this law, Filipinos, from birth to age six, are mandated to be provided with various services ranging from nutrition, education, and social assistance. Reforms in the ECE programme have also encompassed various drivers on a global scale, particularly sustainability, in which learners are being educated to act to effect change (Hedefalk, 2015).

The early childhood education curriculum in the Philippines has been subjected to various reviews and enhancements to address contemporary needs in the field. As policymakers proactively poured attention towards elevating the conditions of ECE programmes at all fronts (Bassok *et al.*, 2021), the Philippine Education Department has always been consistent in advocating quality training for teachers by instituting standards that reflect the competence and qualifications of Filipino teachers. Monitoring ECE programmes on a country level is one step ahead in realising education that upholds inclusion, equality, and equitability (Maldonado-Carreño *et al.*, 2022).

Filipino teachers, known for their excellent command of the English language, have been in demand overseas. According to Uytico and Abadiano (2020), Filipino millennials pursue teaching in other countries to achieve personal and professional success and self-worth (Wright & Villafior, 2019). However, teaching abroad can present challenges due to the lack of opportunities in their home country (Ulla, 2018). Despite this, Ulla (2019) notes that Filipino teachers also face concerns as “non-native speaker teachers”.

An attractive salary package is offered to qualified Filipinos who wish to teach abroad, specifically at the early childhood education (ECEd) level. Since 2016, there has been an increase in the trend of overseas Filipino workers (OFW), who are particularly teachers in their profession. It is worth noting how countries abroad inclined to provide English curricula at the ECEd level prefer to hire Filipino teachers. The internationalisation of education and the

impacts of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) integration are two drivers that intensify the interests of Filipinos to go overseas and practice their profession (Añar *et al.*, 2017). Filipinos who teach abroad are beyond the usual notion that these individuals only fill the scarcity of human resources in schools that need them (Modesto, 2020).

The present study attempts to contribute through the provision of inputs based on the research findings. As participants reflect on their teacher training period and the actual practice of their profession, the proponents of the study intend to identify areas for innovations in curriculum and pedagogy. Good or best practises identified that could be considered to enhance the present ECEd curriculum in the country will be given attention.

As participants are employed overseas, the present study intends to gather practises from abroad for enhancing the ECEd curriculum. According to Schuetze and Slowey (2017), internationalisation in education has been an emerging trend in response to the growing demand for global competencies. For example, internationalising teacher education has become important component in teacher preparation programmes. Studies by Kim and Yoon (2017) and Chen *et al.* (2020) have found that exposure to international practices and settings not only enhances teacher competencies but also promotes cultural sensitivity and understanding. Therefore, incorporating international practices into the ECEd curriculum through the present study could provide a more well-rounded and global perspective on teacher education.

The current study examines the accounts of Filipino ECEd teachers, with the primary investigation centering on the extent to which they have utilised the knowledge and skills acquired from their ECEd undergraduate education in the Philippines in their professional work abroad.

Methodology

A qualitative, phenomenological design is appropriate for the present study as it aims to

explore the shared meanings and experiences of Filipino ECEd teachers. Phenomenology is concerned with understanding the essence of a particular phenomenon or experience and in this case, the focus is on the experience of Filipino ECEd teachers. A qualitative approach allows in-depth exploration of the participants' subjective experiences and perspectives. Through this design, the study can identify common themes and patterns in the teachers' experiences, as well as the factors that shape their perceptions and practices. Therefore, a phenomenological design is suitable for the present study to gain a deeper understanding of the participants' experiences and provide rich and detailed data.

All research participants involved teach at the early childhood education level and are residing in Singapore. The study was conducted with a group of 12 Filipino ECEd teachers who had completed their undergraduate degrees in ECEd in the Philippines and were presently employed as ECEd teachers in Singapore.

The study participants were selected using purposive sampling, which involved deliberately choosing individuals who met specific criteria. The inclusion criteria for the study participants were as follows: (1) they must have completed their undergraduate ECEd programme in the Philippines; (2) they must have had at least three years of teaching experience at the ECEd level in the Philippines; and (3) they must have been currently based in Singapore as ECEd teachers for three or more years. The inclusion criteria were chosen to ensure that the study participants had a certain level of experience and expertise in ECEd teaching in both the Philippines and Singapore. This allowed the researchers to gather insights and perspectives from a group of individuals with a shared background and could provide relevant and valuable information about the research topic.

The main tool used in the study was a focus group discussion (FGD) guide, which was validated by experts. The FGD sessions were conducted for 1.5 to 2 hours each. The guide included questions such as: How would you characterise your ECEd training

in the Philippines? Why did you choose to teach professionally overseas? What were the obstacles you encountered as a Filipino teacher abroad? According to Merriam and Tisdell (2016), the use of focus group discussions in qualitative research provides a platform for participants to share their experiences, opinions, and perspectives in a group setting. This allows for a more in-depth exploration of the topic and can lead to the discovery of shared meanings among the participants. Moreover, the validation of the FGD guide by experts adds to the rigour of the study by ensuring that the questions are appropriate and relevant to the research objectives.

The data for the study was collected using focus group discussions (FGDs), which were conducted online through either the Zoom or Google Meet platforms. The FGDs were organised into separate groups to accommodate participants' varying schedules and availability. The data collected from the study underwent a coding process to identify important statements. Descriptive codes were utilised to analyse and examine the data set. This align with the qualitative research approach used in the study, as described by Miles and Huberman (1994), wherein data coding is an important step in identifying patterns, themes and concepts that emerge from the data. Using descriptive codes allows for a more systematic and organised analysis of the data, as it helps break down the information into manageable units for interpretation and analysis.

The researchers of the study committed to ensuring that biases were avoided in every aspect of the research, including data collection, analysis, and interpretation. It is crucial for researchers to maintain the integrity of their findings regardless of their personal beliefs, values, or personalities. The anonymity of the participants was observed during the data collection process and no personally identifiable information such as names, addresses, or emails was solicited. The participants' individual responses were not linked to their identities. Before the study, an agreement was made

between the researchers and the participants regarding identifiable personal information. The informed consent clearly stated how the information would be handled and managed. Participation in the study was voluntary and the participants were provided full information about their participation and consent to participate before the data gathering.

Results and Discussion

This section presents the findings of the study. The table below presents the themes generated from the data analysis.

Table 1: Emerging themes of the study

Perceived impact on training	Preparedness for the field of education Confidence in professional career Practical and engaging training top of form Holistic preparation for challenges in the field Relevance and significance of pre-service ECED training
Perceived impact on employment	Pre-service training as a preparation for employment top of form Pre-service training as an advantage in job applications
Reasons for pursuing professional practice abroad.	Competitive compensation Peer influence Socio-political pressure Opportunity for advancement
Translating learning to practice abroad.	Instructional competence Leadership and advocacy competence Cultural and global competence Research and evidence-based practice
Challenges faced by Filipino ECED practitioners abroad	Experiencing discrimination Adapting to new culture and work environment
Key trends and directions that could be introduced to Philippine ECED pre-service training.	Emphasis on routines Advanced language training Enhancement of programme course content and training Stress management training

Perceived Impact on Professional Training and Employment on Training

Based on the participants' appreciation of their ECED pre-service training, they related how it equipped them with the following: (1) preparedness for the field of education; (2) confidence in their professional careers; (3) practical and engaging training; (3) holistic preparation for challenges in the field; and (4)

the relevance and significance of pre-service ECED training.

Preparedness for the Field of Education.

Pre-service training is an important aspect of preparing for a career in education, as Teacher 1 stated in her quote:

“The department wants us to be ready, and I understood why. There is no way you could prepare for anything, but the experiences and situations they brought during the pre-service training gave us a glimpse of what to expect in the field.”

In the Philippines, pre-service training is highly valued in preparing future educators for their roles in the field of education. As mandated by the Commission on Higher Education (CHED), a minimum of 18 units of Early Childhood Education (ECE) courses are required for those who aspire to instruct preschool children (CHED, 2018). This pre-service training aims to provide future educators with the essential skills and knowledge to deliver quality education to young children. Several studies have emphasised the impact of pre-service training on the preparedness of future educators for their professional careers. Arnedo and Morada's (2017) research revealed that pre-service training positively impacted the pedagogical knowledge and skills of future educators, as well as their attitudes towards instructing young children. The study also found that pre-service training provided opportunities for practical experiences and exposure to real-life teaching situations, which helped future educators become more confident in their abilities to manage challenges in the field. Similarly, Sarmiento's (2015) study showed that pre-service training was vital in developing future educators' critical thinking and problem-solving skills, which are crucial for effective teaching. Furthermore, pre-service training contributed to the development of the communication and interpersonal skills of future educators, which are essential for building positive relationships with students, colleagues and parents.

Overall, the literature supports the importance of pre-service training in preparing future educators in the field of education, as it provides practical experiences and situations that help develop the necessary skills and knowledge to succeed in their professional careers.

Confidence in Professional Career

This training provides future educators with the necessary knowledge and skills to succeed in the field. Teacher 2's quote reinforces this sentiment, noting that pre-service training gave her confidence in her abilities as a professional:

“The learning experiences during my undergraduate years gave me valuable skills and knowledge which made me confident as I move forward in my professional career. The programme for pre-service ECEd teachers is thorough and extensive which allowed me to digest every information and learning activity for each course.”

The literature suggests that pre-service training effectively increases the confidence and self-efficacy of future educators in their professional careers. Asghar and Ahmed (2012) found that pre-service training programmes in Pakistan positively impacted the self-efficacy of teacher trainees, while Rahmatullah and Qureshi (2015) found that such programmes helped enhance future teachers' professional competencies, leading to increased confidence levels. These studies highlight the importance of acquiring knowledge and skills through pre-service training, as it can prepare future educators to manage the challenges they may face in the field of education and develop a greater sense of self-efficacy.

Practical and Engaging Training

The programme plays a crucial role in providing practical and engaging training for future educators, as Teacher 3 highlighted in her quote:

“Through the ECEd pre-service trainings, I was able to physically, mentally, socially, and emotionally prepared myself at some point to face different kinds of people and challenges like for example dealing with colleagues, parents, preparing weekly plans and resources for the children. ECEd in general is very timely especially that we have the K-12 curriculum in the Philippines where in studying ECEd teachers will have

more opportunities for employment. I was able to apply the things that I've learnt from academics to hands-on experiences like for example dealing with children, creating visual aids, usage of various classroom strategies and more."

The training provided by these instructors helps to develop teaching skills that can be applied in real-world scenarios.

Several studies support the importance of practical and engaging pre-service training for future educators in the Philippines. For example, a study by Cañete and colleagues (2017) emphasised the need for pre-service teachers to have practical experiences during their training to develop the necessary skills to succeed in the field of education. The study also highlighted the importance of using various teaching strategies and techniques, such as role-playing and simulations, to engage pre-service teachers in the learning process. Another study by Capa and colleagues (2019) found that pre-service teachers who received hands-on training and were exposed to real-life teaching situations were more confident in their abilities to handle challenges in the field. The study also emphasised the importance of providing pre-service teachers opportunities to practice their teaching skills in a supportive environment.

The literature confirms that practical and engaging pre-service training is crucial for developing future educators in the Philippines. The training provided by instructors helps to bridge the gap between theory and practice and prepares pre-service teachers for the realities of teaching in the field.

Holistic Preparation for Challenges in the Field

Pre-service training also offers a holistic preparation for the challenges that educators may face in the field, as highlighted in the quote from Teacher 4:

"A direct approach was used throughout the training. The knowledge and skills thought to us were straightforward and practical. The instructors taught us things

that really matter in the field of education. There was an engaging and a collaborative environment that help us develop a set of teaching skills that help us apply the theoretical strategies that we have learned into practice."

This preparation includes not only the development of teaching skills but also the ability to navigate interpersonal relationships with colleagues and parents.

Studies by Florian and Black-Hawkins (2011), Brown *et al.* (2016), and Green *et al.* (2017) all support the notion that pre-service training provides comprehensive preparation for educators to tackle the challenges they may face in the field of education. Florian and Black-Hawkins (2011) argue that pre-service training plays a crucial role in preparing teachers to work with diverse student populations, while Brown *et al.* (2016) suggest that effective pre-service training programmes should focus on developing an understanding of the needs of diverse learners and collaboration skills. Green *et al.* (2017) agree adding that pre-service teachers should be taught to be reflective practitioners and collaborate with colleagues, families, and other professionals. These studies highlight the importance of pre-service training in developing a comprehensive approach to education.

Relevance and Significance of Pre-Service ECED Training

Finally, Teacher 5's quote emphasises the relevance and significance of pre-service ECED training in preparing teachers for the realities of working in a preschool classroom:

"Relevant, Significant, Beneficial: The pre-service ECED training helps me a lot to be more aware of what a "real preschool classroom" scenario is and be more equipped in my teaching career."

Swadener and Li (2013) argue that pre-service ECED training is crucial in providing teachers with the necessary knowledge, skills, and dispositions to work with young children effectively. They suggest that pre-service

training programmes should focus on providing opportunities for pre-service teachers to engage in reflective practice, develop an understanding of child development, and learning and build strong relationships with families. Similarly, Wang and colleagues (2019) emphasise the importance of developing teachers' knowledge and skills in child development and learning, inclusive education practices, cultural competence, and the ability to build positive relationships with families and communities. Overall, pre-service ECED training is highly relevant and significant in preparing teachers to work in preschool classrooms by equipping them with the skills and dispositions necessary for their teaching careers.

In general, pre-service training is essential aspect of preparing for a career in education in the Philippines. It helps future educators become prepared for the field of education, develop confidence in their professional careers, provide practical and engaging training and provide holistic preparation for challenges in the field. The training offered by instructors helps to bridge the gap between theory and practice and prepares pre-service teachers for the realities of teaching in the field. The literature supports the importance of pre-service training in developing the necessary skills and knowledge to succeed in a professional career.

On Employment

The impact of pre-service training on employment is an important consideration for individuals seeking a career in a specific field. In the field of education, pre-service training has been identified as a significant factor in preparing teachers for their future careers. The quotes provided by M, EK, and Dee highlight the positive impact of pre-service training in education, specifically in early childhood education (ECED). This discussion will explore two major themes that emerged from the quotes, namely, the role of pre-service training in preparing educators for employment and its influence on job applications.

Pre-Service Training as a Preparation for Employment

The first theme that emerged from the quotes is the idea that pre-service training plays a vital role in preparing educators for employment. The quotes from M and EK emphasise the importance of pre-service training, particularly in the field of early childhood education. M highlights the role of pre-service training in demonstrating in an instructive way how educators can become globally competitive individuals. This suggests that pre-service training not only prepares individuals for employment in their local context but also enables them to compete in the global job market. M also highlights how pre-service training prepares individuals for different scenarios they may face in their teaching careers. This suggests that pre-service training provides individuals with the necessary skills and knowledge to navigate the complexities of their chosen profession. The quote from Teacher 2 further supports this idea, stating that the pre-service training provided is proven and evaluated as top-of-the-line throughout the years. This suggests that institutions offering pre-service training institutions have developed programmes that effectively prepare individuals for employment.

"It has prepared its learners on the different scenarios that one may face during their teaching careers" (Teacher 6).

"Training of pre-service ECED teachers is proven and tested as top of the line throughout the years" (Teacher 10).

"The ECED programme has demonstrated an instructive way on how an educator can be a globally competitive individual" (Teacher 8).

In a nutshell, the first theme suggests that pre-service training plays a crucial role in preparing individuals for employment, particularly in the field of education. Pre-service training provides individuals with the necessary skills and knowledge to become globally competitive educators and prepares them for the different

scenarios they may encounter in their teaching careers. Top of Form

Pre-Service Training as an Advantage in Job Applications

The second theme that emerges from the quotes is the advantage that pre-service training provides in job applications. Teacher 12 shares that even before graduation, their educational background gave them an edge over other candidates at the same entry level. Similarly, Teacher 5 highlights that the pre-service training provided has paved the way for graduates to have good standing when applying for jobs. This suggests that having completed a reputable pre-service training programme can be an asset when applying for jobs in a competitive job market. Teacher 8's quote also emphasises the significance of pre-service training in their current employment, suggesting that the skills and knowledge gained through the training have been beneficial in their professional lives.

"My educational background gave me an edge over other candidates on the same entry-level" (Teacher 5).

"It also paved way for us to have a good standing when applying for jobs" (Teacher 4).

"The pre-service training, I had experienced helped a lot in my current employment" (Teacher 1).

Overall, these quotes highlight how pre-service training can provide graduates with a competitive advantage when seeking employment and can be a significant factor in their success in the job market.

Reasons for Pursuing Professional Practice Abroad

There are numerous reasons why teachers decide to fly to another part of the world to teach in front of a diverse group of students who may speak different languages including, (1) competitive compensation, (2) peer influence, (3) socio-political pressure and (4) opportunity for advancement.

Competitive Compensation

One of the major themes identified in the given passage is competitive compensation, an important factor that drives teachers to pursue professional practice abroad. Teacher 11's story is a clear example of this. She had to work long hours and take on additional tutorial gigs just to make ends meet while teaching in the Philippines. However, when a friend invited her to apply for a teaching position abroad, Teacher 9 weighed the pros and cons of teaching abroad, including the offered salary and working hours, and decided that the compensation was better than what she earned back home.

"I would admit that one of the factors would be the salary difference. Comparing the salary difference and financial obligations of working abroad has helped me a lot. Before teaching abroad, I had the opportunity to teach in the Philippines for 3 years. With aging parents and another sibling to support, the salary was not enough to make ends meet. I would often take on tutorial gigs to cover expenses. I would get to work by 8:00 AM and go back home by 11:00 PM for six (6) days in a row. On some weeks, I still do tutorials until Sunday if it is the exam period. It was a very tiring routine, and the salary was just enough to cover everything. When a friend invited me to apply for a teaching position, I weighed the pros and cons of teaching abroad. The offered salary and working hours have won me over" (Teacher 9).

This quote highlights the financial pressures many teachers face, especially in countries where the pay for teachers is low. Teacher 9's experience shows that competitive compensation is a powerful motivator for teachers to seek opportunities abroad, where they can earn a better salary and live a more comfortable life. This, in turn, can improve their job satisfaction and enable them to provide for their families more effectively.

On the other hand, Teacher 2's motivation for teaching abroad was not solely driven by the

desire for a higher salary but rather by the desire to support non-government organisations in the Philippines financially. This also shows that competitive compensation can have an impact beyond just an individual's financial situation but can also contribute to making a difference in the lives of others.

"It was not a part of my plan on teaching abroad, but I wanted to help more (financially) in my non-government organizations in the Philippines, which I was able to fulfill and continue to do up to this date" (Teacher 2).

The pursuit of professional practise abroad by teachers is often motivated by the desire for competitive compensation, as seen in the experiences of Teacher 9 and Teacher 2. The financial pressures faced by teachers in countries with low pay can lead them to seek opportunities abroad where they can earn better salaries, leading to improved job satisfaction and the ability to provide for their families more effectively. While competitive compensation is an important factor, as seen in Teacher 2's case, it can motivate teachers to support non-government organisations in their home country financially. Employers must recognise the importance of offering competitive compensation packages to attract and retain talented teachers, thereby contributing to the economic growth and development of the countries where they operate.

Peer Influence

Another important reason teachers decide to fly to another part of the world is peer pressure as shown by the quotes from Teacher 7 and Teacher 12:

"I did not have the mindset to work abroad. It is just that something happened in my first workplace. And coincidentally, my friends invited me to come to Singapore. That is just the trigger for it. And it so happened that I successfully landed a job" (Teacher 7).

"I did not plan to work abroad; it just happened that my friends invited me to come here to Singapore to find a job. So, I tried, and it happened that I successfully and easily got a job. Peers may have a direct or indirect impact on professionals' decisions as they look for the best place to work. This research has significant implications for professionals who want to maintain the comfort of their peer to their advantage when making decisions about working abroad. Through their physical presence and spiritual support, peers boost confidence. Singapore was a completely foreign country for them, as the participants shared, but having a friend to confide in lessens their apprehensions in personal and professional levels respectively" (Teacher 12).

Peer influence is a significant theme in the decision-making process of professionals pursuing professional practice abroad. As mentioned in the study by Natividad and Mirano (2018), the influence of peers can either be direct or indirect in impacting the decisions of professionals who are seeking the best place to work. Peers can help professionals feel more comfortable and supported in their decision to work abroad, which can enhance their confidence in facing personal and professional challenges.

Additionally, a study by Xiang, Chao, and Kwan (2009) on Chinese international students in the United States found that peer influence can impact the decision-making process of students pursuing higher education abroad. The study found that the student's peers, particularly those from their home country, can provide them with practical and emotional support as they adjust to the academic and cultural differences in the host country.

Moreover, a study by Cheng and Cheung (2012) on the role of social networks in the decision-making process of Hong Kong expatriates in Mainland China found that peers' support and advice can impact the decision-making process significantly. The study found that social networks provide professionals with

practical support, such as job referrals and recommendations, as well as emotional support in dealing with cultural differences and personal challenges.

In summary, peer influence plays a significant role in professionals' decision-making process to pursue professional practice abroad. Peers can provide practical and emotional support, boost confidence and lessen apprehensions in the face of personal and professional challenges. Therefore, professionals should maintain their connections with peers, particularly those with similar professional backgrounds, to take advantage of their support and advice when considering working abroad.

Socio-Political Pressure

One factor that can influence a teacher's decision to pursue professional teaching practice abroad is socio-political pressure. This pressure can come in the form of the challenges and difficulties teachers face in their home country's education system. According to Teacher 5, a teacher who shared their experience in an interview, the workload, stress, and negative experiences of other teachers in the public school system in their home country were significant factors that drove them to seek opportunities abroad.

"After a year of teaching in a private school, I thought I was ready to apply for a position in the public school system. However, the amount of workload, stress, and "toxic" stories of experiences from teachers in the public school frightened me. Also, I thought I was too young to be bound as a government employee. I am aware that once I accept a position at a public school, it will be difficult for me to explore other options. Thus, I decided to work overseas to broaden my horizons and experience life as a young adult."

A study by Liu, L. and Bragg, D. D. (2017) found that the socio-political context in a teacher's home country can influence their decision to work abroad. The study suggests that

teachers may seek better opportunities, better pay, and better working conditions in countries with a more supportive and favourable socio-political climate for education professionals. In Teacher 5's case, they wanted to broaden their horizons and experience life as a young adult and working overseas was the best option for them.

Opportunity for Advancement

According to a study by Song (2018), opportunities for professional advancement can be one of the driving factors for teachers to pursue teaching practice abroad. The study found that many teachers see working abroad as a chance to broaden their horizons and gain new skills and experiences that they can apply in their future careers. The study also revealed that some teachers believe that working abroad can lead to better career opportunities and higher salaries. These findings are consistent with the experiences shared by Teacher 6 and Teacher 8, who both mentioned the higher salary and the chance to apply what they learned abroad in their future careers as motivating factors in their decision to pursue teaching practice abroad.

"Before graduating from college, my friends and I already received offers in Singapore. Aside from the higher salary, I believed that practicing my profession outside the Philippines would bring out the best in me as I went out of my comfort zone. I envision myself being able to apply the things that I have learned here in my future endeavors when I go back home" (Teacher 6).

"It was not planned; an offer came, and I decided to grab the opportunity. My initial plan after graduation and securing my teaching license was to teach in a public school" (Teacher 8).

Translating BECED Learning to ECED Practice Abroad

The succeeding discussion highlights the importance of high-quality teacher training programmes in producing competent and effective educators. The bachelor's in early

childhood education (BECed) programme, as mentioned, is designed to promote (1) instructional competence, (2) leadership and advocacy competence, (3) cultural and global competence, and (4) research and evidence-based practice.

Instructional Competence

Several participants in the discussion provided examples of how the BECed programme has prepared them for their careers as early childhood educators. For instance, Teacher 2 mentioned how they were able to apply the teaching strategies gained from the programme and Teacher 3 discussed how they were able to remember and apply hands-on practices from the programme in their current profession. Teachers 4 and 5 also mentioned how they were able to utilise the instructional materials and classroom management strategies learned in the programme.

"I am doing lesson planning with differentiation and setting up learning corners: language and literacy, numeracy, library, dramatics, etc. I got to use classroom management strategies and utilized a bit of knowledge in handling children with special needs (at least to get them flagged or not to panic when they have episodes of meltdowns). I also get to discuss these learnings with colleagues to do an exchange and improve our practices" (Teacher 2).

"If there are things that my center abroad asked or expected me to do as a preschool teacher, I tried to remember the things that I have learned in our BECed programmes, like how during our undergraduate we designed bulletin boards. Initially, I did not think it would be as beneficial to me as it is now. I always try to go back to the hands-on practices that we had and apply them in my current profession, such as lesson planning, creating visual aids, and event organizing" (Teacher 3).

"I did a lot of instructional materials, and I was so grateful my college professors encouraged us to be innovative and

creative in planning, designing, and doing such materials. As I gained more and more experience" (Teacher 4).

"I am doing lesson plans, setting up learning corners, creating instructional materials, and applying the classroom management strategies that I learned during my undergraduate school" (Teacher 5).

Instructional competence is a critical aspect of early childhood education that helps educators create effective learning experiences for young children. The BECed programme has been successfully prepared early childhood educators for their careers, as mentioned by several participants in a study by Abasolo *et al.* (2020). Participants reported applying teaching strategies gained from the program, remembering and applying hands-on practices, utilising instructional materials, and classroom management strategies in their current professions. The programme's emphasis on innovative and creative planning and design of instructional materials has also been beneficial in developing participants' instructional competence. These findings highlight the importance of a robust and effective pre-service programme in preparing early childhood educators for their roles in providing quality education to young children.

Leadership and Advocacy Competence

Meanwhile, the programme also emphasises leadership and advocacy competence, as mentioned by Teacher 6, who shared how they were able to share their best practices with colleagues. Teacher 8 also highlighted how they initiated professional sharing among their co-level teachers, which allowed them to address issues and problems encountered in their work.

"Through the BECed programme, I was able to think and act creatively. from the instructional materials before to creating my whole dramatic corner and setting up a classroom environment with various learning corners and able to share these best practices to my colleagues" (Teacher 6).

"I initiate professional sharing in our center particularly to my co-level teachers. Everyone was given the opportunity to

express issues and problems we encounter with children and their families. Everyone is also free to make suggestions based on sound judgment” (Teacher 8).

The importance of leadership and advocacy competence in early childhood education is supported by research. According to Joubert *et al.* (2021), early childhood leaders should be able to advocate for the rights of children and families, communicate effectively and foster a positive organisational culture. Similarly, Gruenewald *et al.* (2016) emphasised the need for early childhood educators to develop leadership skills that would allow them to advocate for high-quality, equitable and inclusive early childhood education. This includes promoting professional development opportunities, building relationships with families and community partners, and engaging in policy advocacy. Thus, the BECED programme’s emphasis on leadership and advocacy competence can help prepare early childhood educators to become effective advocates for children and families in their communities.

Cultural and Global Competence

The programme also focuses on developing cultural and global competence, as discussed by several participants. For instance, participant one mentioned how the programme helped them cater to different children with different needs and plan lessons that would enable children to learn holistically. Teacher 4 also discussed how they became more confident in communicating with parents despite language barriers, while Teacher 10 shared how the programme taught them to adapt to various situations and environments.

“Learnings gained have helped me cater to different children with different needs. It has also helped me in planning lessons that would enable the children to learn holistically” (Teacher 1).

“I became more confident in communicating with the parents and addressing both our concerns. During my practicum, I got a lot of opportunities to collaborate with parent

volunteers, and I realized that even though there is a language barrier when working overseas, it shouldn’t be a hindrance in forming cordial relationships with the parents” (Teacher 4).

“It was incredibly difficult to teach in a foreign country. I was a little reserved in the beginning, but I was able to draw courage from the way the University had shaped me. We were taught to be adaptable to various situations and environments” (Teacher 10).

Cultural and global competence is a vital aspect of early childhood education that supports the holistic learning and development of children from diverse backgrounds. Several participants in a study by Abasolo *et al.* (2020) discussed how a programme helped them develop cultural and global competence. Participants mentioned that the programme taught them to cater to different children’s needs, plan holistic lessons, and be adaptable to various situations and environments. The programme also helped participants become more confident in communicating with parents, even with language barriers, which is critical for forming cordial relationships with families. Developing cultural and global competence is essential for early childhood educators to support children’s learning and development in a multicultural and globalised world.

Research and Evidence-based Practice

Finally, the BECED programme also emphasises research and evidence-based practice, as mentioned by Teacher 9, who seeks feedback and observations from families and caregivers to improve how they deal with children and plan effective learning experiences. Teacher 11 also highlighted how they inform parents about their child’s progress or status, while Teacher 12 mentioned how they aid and supplemental materials to children needing help and read relevant articles to improve their teaching practices.

“Over and above the assessment activities that I perform with children, I seek other feedback and observations from families

and caregivers to establish holistic evaluation about each child in my class. The results help me improve how I deal with children and plan more effective learning experiences” (Teacher 9).

“I often inform the parents about my observations of their children’s behavior and performance. I know I must do it so that parents will be aware of their child’s progress or status” (Teacher 11).

“I aid and supplemental materials to the children needing help. I read from relevant articles from the internet or from books so that I can benchmark from them or get some ideas and modify them according to the needs of the children in my class. This worked well with me and my class. I also wish to enroll to a masteral programme soon” (Teacher 12).

Research and evidence-based practice play critical roles in effective teaching and learning in early childhood education. The importance of incorporating evidence-based strategies to improve teaching practices is highlighted in several studies. Campbell *et al.* (2018) found that high-quality early childhood education programmes significantly improved children’s cognitive skills, language development and social-emotional competencies, as well as parental involvement and communication with teachers. Fidler *et al.* (2017) also demonstrated the effectiveness of an evidence-based literacy intervention programme in improving preschool-aged children’s reading skills. Additionally, Rojas-Drummond *et al.* (2019) highlighted the key elements of effective early childhood education programmes, including a stimulating and supportive learning environment, evidence-based teaching strategies, parental involvement and continuous assessment and adaptation of teaching practises to meet individual children’s needs. Thus, educators must prioritise research and evidence-based practice to provide high-quality learning experiences that support children’s development and success.

Overall, the foregoing discussions highlight the positive effects of the BECED programme

in preparing early childhood educators to be competent and effective in their profession. The programme’s emphasis on instructional competence, leadership, and advocacy competence, cultural and global competence, and research and evidence-based practice appears to have contributed significantly to the participants’ success in their careers.

Challenges Faced by Filipino ECED Practitioners Abroad

Filipino early childhood education (ECED) practitioners face various challenges when working abroad, including discrimination, and adapting to new cultures and work environments. Some practitioners have reported being mistreated or having fewer opportunities for promotion because they are foreigners. Additionally, language barriers and cultural differences can make communication and teaching difficult. To overcome these challenges, practitioners can maintain a positive attitude, hold on to their values and self-worth, seek colleague support and be willing to learn new practices. Providing training, professional development opportunities and a supportive work environment can help practitioners navigate these challenges. More research is needed to explore these challenges and develop effective strategies to support Filipino ECE practitioners working abroad.

Experiencing Discrimination

Experiencing discrimination is never easy, especially when it is based on factors beyond one’s control, such as race, ethnicity, or nationality. As illustrated in the story above, discrimination can occur in many forms, from being subjected to longer hours or lower pay to being denied opportunities for growth and advancement. While it is not always easy to overcome discrimination, having a positive attitude, a strong work ethic and colleague support can make all the difference in thriving and succeeding in a foreign country. The following are examples of how discrimination was experienced by Teachers 1 and 3.

“I had a bad but unforgettable experience with my previous principal. She would often give me longer hours and closing shifts just because I am a foreigner. I later knew about her unwritten rule that all foreigners would get a different treatment from her. My principal would often make remarks on my accent saying that I am not native English speaker hence I am not capable in teaching N2 – K2. Despite the poor treatments I still did my best to prove her wrong and I am an effective educator. All my colleagues gave me high praises to what I can do and what I can offer. I also scored a higher rating than the requirement in my IELTS exam. When all has been said and done, my efforts were not enough for her to see my worth. I later transferred to another center. I showed my new principal the different things that I can do and proved to her that I am more than what my previous principal has pictured me to be. My new principal saw that I am capable of a lot of things, and she has given me opportunities to gain experience” (Teacher 1).

“Working abroad does not give you lots of opportunities to get promoted because we are foreigners. Although there are still centers that give you that opportunity if you can prove yourself in everything that you do, I have overcome these challenges by doing everything that I can, with pride that I have done my best. Being Filipino is also something we can be proud of. I always hear comments from locals saying how much they like us because we work well and are hardworking, too” (Teacher 3).

Due to their desire to work abroad and get higher pay, teachers may experience environment and responsibility adjustments throughout their careers. These changes sometimes take place differently than they anticipate them to. Given that some participants revealed experiencing racial discrimination, some situations did not proceed as planned when they adjusted to a new workplace. However, one can thrive and succeed in a foreign country despite stereotypical

challenges by having a positive attitude towards work and other people, keeping values and self-worth intact, and having empathy and support from colleagues.

Discrimination based on race, ethnicity, or nationality can negatively affect an individual's career growth and opportunities. A study by Nguyen and Nguyen (2019) found that racial discrimination can lead to lower job satisfaction, decreased organisational commitment and increased turnover intentions. However, individuals can overcome discrimination by maintaining a positive attitude a strong work ethic and receiving social and cultural support from colleagues, as noted by Rienties *et al.* (2012). To create a more inclusive workplace, organisations should implement diversity and inclusion training programmes and have policies and procedures in place to address discrimination and support those who have experienced it, as Arreola-Risa (2019) recommended.

Adapting to New Culture and Work Environment

Some participants identified language barriers and cultural differences as their primary challenges while working abroad. In Singapore, ECE teachers are required to acknowledge and appreciate diversity in the classroom due to its cosmopolitan nature. This presented a significant challenge as the teacher had to be considerate in planning, implementing, and assessing children who came from diverse backgrounds and spoke different languages. Communication with non-English-speaking teachers also posed difficulties. To comprehend their messages, teachers had to use translation apps or rely on a child who spoke both languages to translate for them.

“Since Singapore is a multi-lingual country, there are times that it is difficult to communicate with others (like local colleagues, parents, and children). Sometimes, there will be misunderstandings because of the language that we use and the kind of English that we have because we use American English in the Philippines,

and they use British English. So, we must be mindful of our words and, at the same time, learn their language if possible” (Teacher 6).

“Singapore uses British English, and the Philippines uses American English, so there are some words that I must remember to use properly. And then they have what they call Singlish (Singapore English), plus the Chinese teacher or the assistant teacher assigned to you who is not English-speaking. But eventually, I was able to get used to it through daily interaction. I also picked out some simple Chinese and Malay words” (Teacher 7).

Several studies have highlighted the challenges faced by Filipino ECE practitioners working abroad, particularly in terms of adapting to new cultures and work environments. Baclig *et al.* (2018) found that Filipino ECE teachers in Dubai encountered cultural and linguistic differences as well as issues related to work conditions. Similarly, Tan *et al.* (2020) identified challenges related to adapting to a new culture, language barriers, and differences in teaching practices among Filipino ECE teachers working in Singapore.

To overcome these challenges, both studies recommend training on local language and culture, opportunities for professional development and creating a supportive work environment that promotes collaboration, and cultural understanding among colleagues. These findings suggest that addressing the challenges faced by Filipino ECE practitioners working abroad requires a multi-faceted approach that considers the complex nature of the challenges they face.

In brief, the challenges faced by Filipino ECE practitioners working abroad can be significant, including experiencing discrimination and adapting to a new culture and work environment. However, with a positive attitude towards work and other people, values, and self-worth intact, empathy and support from colleagues, and a willingness to learn new

practices, these challenges can be overcome. Moreover, providing adequate support and resources to Filipino ECE practitioners working abroad can help them better navigate the challenges they may encounter and promote their success and well-being in their host countries. Further research can be conducted to explore these challenges and develop effective strategies to support Filipino ECE practitioners working abroad.

New Practices Learned Outside of Preservice Training in the Philippines Emphasis on Routines

The participants highlighted the importance of routine care in Singapore ECE centers, particularly for children aged two and below. They had to learn how to perform caregiving practices such as feeding, bathing, changing diapers, administering medicines, and putting children to sleep. First aid training is also a requirement for all teachers and they must be prepared to manage medical emergencies that may arise in the classroom.

“I am usually assigned to teach older classes that are more independent. But when I volunteered to help the younger classes (18 months to 3 years old), I realized I was not capable of preparing milk bottles, changing diapers, showering, toilet training, and so on. And I learned slowly through observation and the guidance of well-trained toddler teachers. It was a good experience” (Teacher 7).

“It is part of the routine care part of childcare services. In my first-class assignment, I must prepare milk, change diapers, shower a toddler, feed the kids, and put them to sleep. I was shocked by the amount of work I had to do, and I was inexperienced too. I had to ask my colleague for confirmation and assurance that I am providing the correct routine care” (Teacher 4).

Immersion Education in the Early Years

The participants noted that practical life skills, fine and gross motor skills, and outdoor

experiences are emphasised in Singapore ECE centers. They mentioned that the younger age group (18 months to 3 years) has more opportunities to apply these skills, which will help them develop their pre-writing skills. Field trips are also planned to extend learning, and teachers are required to undergo first aid training and renew their licenses every two to three years. Additionally, writing incident reports is a job requirement and teachers must be prepared to handle parental involvement and concerns.

“In my experience, the younger age group (18 months to 3 years) has more opportunities to apply practical life skills like scooping, zippering, threading, and more. Likewise, this age group focuses on children’s fine and gross motor skills that are beneficial to them as they grow older. These fine motor skills and practical life skills activities will help to develop their pre-writing skills” (Teacher 8).

“Fieldtrips are usually planned every term (before the pandemic). These fieldtrips are related to the core lessons, which are an extension of learning” (Teacher 6).

Early childhood education programmes that incorporating immersion can cover a broad range of topics, including the essential concepts of the ECE system and the practical implementation environment. For early childhood educators to effectively adapt to ECE pedagogical techniques and provide young children with the best possible learning experiences, they must undergo training in immersion methodology. As early years immersion programmes are designed to meet the needs of young children, diverse provisions must also be considered. Participants expressed the need for more proactive and hands-on training, which could be achieved through immersion in the real world of young children. This would involve designing appropriate environments, teaching motor and life skills, engaging in outdoor activities, handling parent-teacher conferences and authoring reports to prepare them for teaching better.

Key Trends and Directions that Could be Introduced to Philippine ECED Pre-Service Training

There are several key trends and directions that could be introduced to Philippine preservice ECED training to help address the demands of working abroad, including (1) the inclusion of advanced language training, (2) the enhancement of programme course content and training and (3) stress management training.

Advanced Language Training

Many countries, including Singapore, require foreign teachers to have a certain level of English proficiency. Therefore, an advanced English training programme could be beneficial to help educators improve their language skills and meet the requirements for teaching abroad. Additionally, some countries may have other languages that are commonly spoken, so offering foreign language classes as an option could also be helpful.

“Since inclusive education is highly practiced in Singapore, an in-depth understanding of special education would be a great help. Teaching strategies for children with special needs should be included in the programme to prepare teachers in the mainstream education setup” (Teacher 1).

“Having a foreign language class of their choice (giving them two options will do)” (Teacher 6).

A study by Montemayor and Quijano (2018) found that English proficiency is critical factor in employability and career advancement for Filipino teachers. In addition, a report by the Philippine News Agency (2018) noted that Singapore requires foreign teachers to have a minimum IELTS score of 6.5. Therefore, offering advanced English training and foreign language classes can help Filipino teachers meet the language requirements for teaching abroad.

Enhancement of Programme Course Content and Training

Enhancing programme course content and training is crucial to improving the quality of early childhood education (ECEd) services in the Philippines. The implementation of practises such as the Abecedarian approach and infant care and the promotion of community partnership can contribute to the development of a solid foundation for young learners. Additionally, introducing courses or subjects that cover services for young learners as young as three months old and teaching childcare routines can prepare teachers for the responsibilities that come with the job.

“Some practices they have implemented here are the Abecedarian approach and infant care. Maybe work on community partnership, too” (Teacher 2).

“It is not only in Singapore that preschool centers offer childcare where almost half of the time spent with the children compromises routine care. It is also important to somehow introduce it in the Philippines so that teachers who want to teach abroad will not feel culture shock when they go to the field” (Teacher 3).

These suggestions are supported by research, such as the study by Dizon, Concepcion and Lumabi (2016) and the report by UNESCO (2015). Enhancement of programme course content and training are also important. A study by Dizon, Concepcion and Lumabi (2016) highlighted the need to improve the quality of ECEd programmes in the Philippines by updating the curriculum, improving teacher training, and promoting research and development. In addition, a report by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO, 2015) emphasised the importance of providing high-quality ECEd services, including infant care and special education, to ensure that young children receive a solid foundation for learning and development.

Stress Management Trainings

Teacher 7 suggested the inclusion of stress management training. By prioritising stress management training in ECEd programmes, the Philippines can better support the well-being of its teachers and improve the quality of ECEd services for young children.

“In my perspective, I guess it will focus more on classroom behavioral management and dealing with different demands from parents. But most importantly, teachers should learn how to de-stress from the overwhelming demand of the teaching world. However, different countries have different expectations when it comes to early childhood education, and one must first understand the culture of their target country” (Teacher 7).

Stress management training is important, as teaching can be a highly stressful profession. A study by Serrano (2019) found that Filipino teachers experience high levels of stress and burnout, which can negatively affect on their health and well-being. Therefore, providing stress management training can help teachers cope with the demands of their profession and improve their overall quality of life.

Overall, introducing the (1) inclusion of advanced language training, (2) enhancement of programme course content and training and (3) stress management training to Philippine ECEd pre-service training may help address the demands of teaching abroad and improve the quality of ECEd services in the Philippines.

General Recommendations

Finally, the participants were questioned on their suggestions for improving the pre-service early childhood education programme. The results indicated several recurring themes, including the need to promote inclusive education, enhance professional development and cultivate the ability to adapt to different cultural environments.

Inclusive Education

The idea is that special education should be integrated into general education programmes to provide a more comprehensive approach to education. This can be achieved through the inclusion of special education courses in a general education programme or through the creation of a dual degree or inclusive degree programme that focuses on both early childhood and special education.

According to the Department of Education in the Philippines (2013), inclusive education is a key component of the country's education system. Inclusive education aims to provide equal educational opportunities for students with disabilities or special needs by integrating them into regular classes. The Department of Education emphasises the importance of providing support and accommodations to help these students succeed in a general education programme. In a study by Cruz (2017), it was found that pre-service teachers in the Philippines lacked knowledge and skills for teaching students with special needs. The author suggested that integrating special education courses into a general education programme can help bridge this gap and provide teachers with the necessary knowledge and skills to effectively instruct all students, including those with disabilities or special needs. Moreover, in a study by Fernando (2019), the author suggested the creation of a dual degree or inclusive degree programme that focuses on early childhood and special education. This programme can provide a more comprehensive approach to education that considers the needs of all students, including those with disabilities or special needs. The author argued that such a programme could equip teachers with the knowledge and skills to provide quality education to all students, regardless of their abilities or needs. The foregoing supports the idea that special education should be integrated into general education programmes to provide a more comprehensive approach to education. This can be achieved through the inclusion of special education courses in a general education

programme or through the creation of a dual degree or inclusive degree programme that focuses on both early childhood and special education. Such integration can help ensure all students receive equal educational opportunities and support.

Professional Development

The need for pre-service teacher education programmes to provide opportunities for teacher candidates to gain practical experience in communicating with parents and delivering messages and concerns in a professional manner.

In a study conducted by Borlongan and Bato (2017), they found that pre-service teachers in the Philippines lacked training in communicating with parents and often struggled to deliver messages and concerns in a professional manner. They argued that pre-service teacher education programmes should provide opportunities for teacher candidates to develop their communication skills with parents to prepare them for the demands of the profession. Similarly, a study by Almero and Tumalak (2019) explored the communication skills of pre-service teachers in the Philippines and found that they lacked confidence and competence in communicating with parents. The authors recommended that pre-service teacher education programmes should provide practical opportunities for teacher candidates to engage with parents and families to develop their communication skills. Moreover, a study by Dayagbil and Dela Cruz (2020) highlighted the importance of pre-service teacher education programmes in preparing teacher candidates for their roles as educators and communicators. They recommended that pre-service teacher education programmes should provide opportunities for teacher candidates to develop their communication skills, including communicating with parents, through experiential learning, internships, and mentorship programmes.

Overall, the literature from the Philippines supports the idea that pre-service teacher education programmes should provide opportunities for teacher candidates to gain

practical experience in communicating with parents and delivering messages and concerns in a professional manner. Such opportunities can help pre-service teachers develop their communication skills and prepare them for the demands of the teaching profession.

Cultural Adjustment

Adapting to different teaching and learning environments and routines, particularly when working overseas is important. This can be facilitated through training and coaching by senior faculty members.

According to Zhang and Goodson (2011), cultural adjustment is essential to teacher's professional development, especially when working in a different cultural context. The authors suggested that teachers need to adapt to different teaching and learning environments and routines to effectively fulfill their responsibilities. They also emphasised the importance of providing adequate training and coaching to support teachers in their cultural adjustment process. In a study by Nolasco and Gagni (2018), the authors explored the experiences of Filipino teachers who were working in international schools in the United Arab Emirates (UAE). The study found that cultural adjustment was a significant challenge for these teachers, particularly in terms of adapting to the different cultural norms and expectations in the UAE. The authors suggested that cultural orientation programmes and support networks can help teachers overcome these challenges and adjust to the new cultural context. Similarly, in a study by Orlanda and Jimenez (2020), the authors emphasised the importance of cultural adjustment in the context of international student teaching. The study found that international student teachers experienced challenges related to language, culture and teaching practices when working in a different country. The authors suggested that mentorship programmes and cultural orientation activities can help support international student teachers in their cultural adjustment process.

In conclusion, cultural adjustment is essential when working overseas, particularly in terms of adapting to different teaching and learning environments and routines. Senior faculty members can play a critical role in facilitating this adjustment process through training and coaching. Providing adequate support and cultural orientation programmes can also help teachers adjust to new cultural contexts and effectively fulfill their responsibilities.

Conclusions

Early childhood education plays a crucial role in shaping the future of young children, and the quality of education they receive depends on the knowledge and skills of their educators. In this context, pre-service early childhood education (ECEd) training is essential in preparing future educators for their roles in the field of education. This training provides practical experiences and situations that help develop necessary skills and knowledge, increase confidence, and provide holistic preparation for challenges in the field. This study presents seven conclusions that focus on different aspects of ECEd training and practice:

1. Pre-service Early Childhood Education (ECEd) training is crucial in preparing future educators for their roles in the field of education. It provides practical experiences and situations that help develop necessary skills and knowledge, increase confidence, and provide holistic preparation for challenges in the field.
2. Teachers pursue professional practice abroad for several reasons, including competitive compensation, peer influence, socio-political pressure, and advancement opportunities. Employers should offer competitive compensation packages, and professionals should consider the impact of their peers and social networks in their decision-making process.
3. The Bachelor's in Early Childhood Education (BECED) programme is successfully prepares early childhood

educators to become competent and effective in their roles. The programme emphasises instructional competence, leadership and advocacy competence, and cultural and global competence.

4. Filipino early childhood education (ECEd) practitioners working abroad face challenges such as discrimination and adapting to new cultures and work environments. Providing training, professional development opportunities, and a supportive work environment can help practitioners navigate these challenges.
5. Ongoing professional development and training are essential for early childhood educators to provide high-quality care and education for young children. Immersion in the real world of young children is necessary to prepare teachers for teaching better.
6. Introducing the inclusion of advanced language training, enhancement of programme course content and training, and stress management training in Philippine ECEd pre-service training may help address the demands of teaching abroad and improve the quality of ECEd services in the Philippines.
7. Pre-service early childhood education programmes need to promote inclusive education, enhance professional development, and cultivate the ability to adapt to different cultural environments. Inclusive education can be achieved by integrating special education courses, and practical experience in communicating with parents and delivering messages and concerns in a professional manner is essential. Cultural adjustment is vital for teachers who work in a different cultural context, and training and coaching by senior faculty members can help them overcome the challenges.

These conclusions provide insights into the challenges faced by ECEd practitioners working abroad, the importance of ongoing professional development, the need for inclusive education,

and the role of pre-service training programmes in addressing these challenges.

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