

Overseas Filipino Worker (OFW) Employment as a Career Pathway Among Senior High School Students: Perceptions from Urban Economies

Kevin John A. Maddela^{1*}, Jhon Mark M. Rosales¹, Candice Chelsea F. de Castro¹,
Sarah Bless C. Sanchez-Maddela²

¹De La Salle University, Philippines

²National University, Philippines

*Corresponding author's email: kevin.maddela@dlsu.edu.ph

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the perceptions of senior high school students in urban economies towards Overseas Filipino Worker (OFW) employment as a modern career pathway, considering the perceived conflicts between institutional messaging and documented migration risks. A quantitative correlational survey was conducted in two schools in Metro Manila migration hub cities selected through multi-stage cluster sampling, analyzing relationships in the domains of student perceptions, curricular, and reconciliation narratives involving risk acceptance. The results reveal that students have a strong agreement that OFW work is both a proactive career choice ($m = 3.58$) and an economic necessity ($m = 3.84$). A strong correlation was revealed between school messaging, “heroism” framing, and global skills curricula ($r = .58-.68$). However, the agreement significantly declines when personal costs arise, involving contract risks, family strain, and underemployment ($m = 2.77$). Further analysis revealed that conditional endorsement is manifested in the normalization of migration, albeit accepted hesitantly. The study recommends integrating Critical Migration Literacy into career guidance, as revealed by the Multiple Streams Framework (MSF). The Department of Education (DepEd) is positioned to be the policy entrepreneur to facilitate the bridging of ambivalence gaps without weakening OFW narratives. From here, a Cognitive Information Processing (CIP) theory-based career program is further proposed that covers five modules involving discussions of self-awareness, options (including both OFW benefits and risks), and CASVE-cycle decision-making, culminating in a career portfolio for individual counselling among students. Lastly, replication with larger urban-based samples is also recommended to validate and extend the conclusion.

Keywords: *career guidance, migration risks, Overseas Filipino Workers, student perceptions, urban economies*

INTRODUCTION

The advancement of urbanization creates a differing perspective on many social phenomena. For instance, emerging and differing perspectives have confronted traditional and classic views of migration as either a social or economic concern in the Philippines. People in urban economies will provide a differing standpoint on how changing perceptions of migration will impact the changing career trajectories of Filipinos. In understanding further, the context of urban schools, the studies of

Martin (2015) and Ortiga (2017) typically view Overseas Filipino Worker (OFW) employment as a probable and common career choice for students. The schooling is narratively framed to provide better opportunities for OFW employment. Ethnographic and institutional studies portray schooling, including vocational programs that enhance blue-collar jobs, as linked to migration economies, which redefine the employment landscape by showing that working abroad is integral to the choices of students today. An additional

layer to this narrative would be the emerging perception of seeing the migration phenomenon as a common or ordinary career option and not an exceptional pathway (Martin, 2015), as compared to the classical and rural views of seeing it as an exceptional pathway or a trajectory to resolve poverty (Garcia et al., 2022). As for the former, this trend is evident in the famously institutionalized narrative of OFWs as heroes, as such a pathway has proven to uplift their economic status in life, regardless of whether they perceive it as a job mismatch, contingency, or choice (Garcia, 2004). Additionally, tertiary programs in the Philippines design programs to meet foreign demand and advance export-oriented training that prepares students for overseas work rather than patronizing local jobs (Sannadan & Lang-ay, 2021; Ortiga, 2017). A view that designs Philippine education after global competition. In relation to this, Philippine education increases migration likelihood as backed by empirical evidence of having additional years of schooling to raise the probability of working abroad by several percentage points, which further indicates the country's education is a channel to international employment (Masuda & Sakai, 2018).

Numerous Filipino youth—specifically students—in urban economies choose to perceive Overseas Filipino Worker (OFW) employment as a viable or even preferred career option, reflecting wider regional and global trends in youth migration aspirations. Research indicates that young individuals often react to insufficient or unappealing local employment prospects by expressing a desire to migrate internationally, thereby framing migration not only because of economic exclusion but also as an external factor influencing youth behavior and future planning (Baba et al., 2026). Urban settings intensify these aspirations, as population density, perceived opportunity

structures, and spatial inequalities significantly impact youths' ambitions for economic integration and their ensuing educational and career decisions (Cazzuffi et al., 2020). While there is a higher earning potential, for global exposure and expanded career opportunities, there are other prevailing cons. While many OFWs enjoy several advantages working abroad, some encounter challenges related to working conditions and rights. There are cases of exposure to harsh conditions, like having unfair treatment, contract violations, and abuse being reported among several OFWs. The Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) and the Philippine Overseas Employment Administration (POEA) are two government agencies that work to protect the rights and interests of overseas Filipino workers (OFWs).

However, it is important to be aware of the risks that come with this kind of work, especially when choosing a good employer or agency (Kenneth & Co., 2023). Several studies of Filipino families also show that many young people who are left behind see their parents' migration to face risks, hardships, and structural inequalities that come with working abroad (Bernardo et al., 2025).

Problem Statement

The Philippine education system has long been known for getting students ready for jobs abroad, both directly and indirectly, especially in big cities. This means that moving to another country for work is a normal and smart way to get ahead in your career, not something strange. But this story is institutionalized, even though Overseas Filipino Workers (OFWs) have complicated lives and often have high hopes but also face problems with working conditions, contract violations, and job mismatches. This scenario creates a very important question: Do urban schools think that working abroad is a good way to get

ahead in your career, or do they think it's a backup plan in case there aren't any good jobs in your area? Knowing this distinction is necessary to comprehend how upcoming Filipino generations are being taught about their role in the global labor market. Students' opinions of foreign employment as a feasible and alluring path for career advancement and economic advancement may be influenced by the increasing frequency of labor migration in densely populated urban areas. In this situation, labor migration might be viewed as a typical part of career planning rather than as an exceptional alternative. However, Overseas Filipino Workers (OFWs) face other perspectives as well. They also must deal with poor working conditions, contract infractions, and inadequate job skills. This raises a significant concern regarding the perceptions of urban senior high school students—who are now encountering career pathways—toward overseas employment, whether they view it as a legitimate career opportunity, an economic imperative, or a socially accepted norm. It is how students balance the promise of working abroad with their knowledge of the risks involved. To figure out how young Filipinos are being prepared for their role in the global economy and job market, a further attempt at understanding should be in place.

Research Questions

1. How do senior high school students in urban schools perceive overseas employment as:
 - a. career option
 - b. an economic necessity
 - c. a normalized aspect of Filipino professional identity
2. What dominant curricular narratives and career guidance messages within these schools propagate the idea of overseas employment?
3. How do students reconcile the institutional promotion of overseas work with their awareness of the potential risks and challenges associated with OFW employment?

METHODS

Pedagogical Setting & Participants

This study was conducted in selected senior high schools in Pasay and Las Piñas, two urban centers in Metro Manila. These cities were intentionally selected to demonstrate the diverse patterns of migration within the National Capital Region, a significant area of human movement.

Table 1. City Migration Profile

City	Migration Profile
Pasay	It has major transportation hubs like an airport and bus terminals, a large number of temporary migrants, and a lot of overseas Filipino worker (OFW) families and migrant workers in the service and entertainment industries.
Las Piñas	The city is mostly residential, with a growing number of settled migrant families; a mix of middle-class and informal settler communities; serves as a destination city for families looking to settle down permanently after moving there.

This geographic diversity allows the study to capture how migration exposure manifests differently across urban

contexts—from the transportation gateway (Pasay) to the residential destination (Las Piñas).

The study employed a multistage cluster sampling technique to ensure representativeness within the chosen urban

settings. There were four steps in the sampling process:

Table 2. Population Selection and Sampling Process

Level	Unit	Selection	Quantity
Stage 1	Cities	Purposive selection based on migration profiles	2 cities
Stage 2	Schools	Purposive or random selection within each city	1 school per city
Stage 3	Sections	Random selection within each school	1 section per school
Stage 4	Students	Random selection or complete enumeration within each section	Varies by class size

Total sample: Approximately 45 students (depending on class sizes)

Sampling Strategy: Four-Stage Cluster

Participants were chosen using a four-stage cluster sampling technique. This approach uses random selection at levels where it makes sense and is feasible while utilizing the natural hierarchy of the educational system (cities → schools → sections → students).

Stage 1: Choosing Cities on Purpose. Las Piñas and Pasay were specifically selected due to their distinct migratory trends within Metro Manila. Instead of utilizing a random selection that can inadvertently include three cities with identical migration patterns, this deliberate strategy ensures that the sample appropriately reflects the various migration exposure circumstances in the area.

Stage 2: Selection of Schools Within Each City. Within each city, one private secondary school was selected. The selection criteria included:

- Location in a neighborhood that is typical of the city's migration pattern
- Willingness of school administration and/or students to participate
- Having a diverse student body that reflects the city's population

makeup.

Step 3: Choosing a random section from each school. A simple random sampling method was used to choose one section from each chosen school. The sampling frame covered all the school's normal classes, which were usually for students in grades 11 to 12. Each portion got a distinct number, and a random number generator was used to pick one section from each school. This random choice guaranteed that every area of each school had the same probability of being picked, which got rid of selection bias at the classroom level.

Step 4: Choosing Students from Each Section. All randomly selected students were requested to participate in the study within each portion. Each section's complete student list was provided to us. Every student received a number, and the students for each segment were selected using a random number generator.

Table 3. Sample Size and Composition

City	School	Section	Students per Section	Total
Pasay	School A	Grade 12	25	25
Las Piñas	School B	Grade 11	20	20
TOTAL				45

Justifying the Multistage Design

Understanding the diversity within the Migration Hub is important. Migration experiences vary greatly between cities. As earlier mentioned, Las Piñas is a residential neighborhood with a growing number of settled migrant families. While Pasay is a transportation hub. Housing patterns include varying numbers of single-family dwellings, condo buildings, and informal settler families. This approach illustrates how migration exposure differs between places by sampling from two cities with distinct migration patterns—a feature that would be missed if just one city was studied. This enhances the findings' external validity by providing insights that might be applicable to urban migration situations outside of the locations under study.

Design of the Study

The study uses a structured questionnaire using 4-domain Likert-scale with items determining student perceptions into three thematic areas mentioned.

Spearman's rho correlation is also used to look at the connections between ranked variables. This method works well with ordinal data and non-parametric distributions. The design looks for one-way relationships, such as the link between agreeing more with "OFW as economic necessity" and accepting migration as a normal part of life.

The researchers' use of quantitative approaches allowed them to test data statistically and measure things in a

methodical manner. This indicates that using Spearman's correlation to examine data without speculating about its parameters was a useful method.

Data Collection & Analysis

The researchers collected data by giving a structured questionnaire survey to senior high school students in Pasay and Las Piñas. The instrument was created to put into action the three areas of research:

- **Perceptions of migration** (career option, necessity, normalized identity)
- **Curricular narratives** (school messaging, guidance, heroic framing)
- **Reconciliation of promotion and risk** (willingness to accept trade-offs, contract risks, family strain)

A 4-point Likert measure was used in the poll (strongly disagree, disagree, agree, and strongly agree) to get ordinal data that could be analysed without using parameters. To make sure consistency and keep outside effects to a minimum, administration took place in classrooms. The study uses a multistage sampling method that groups towns, schools, sections, and students from a variety of migration backgrounds. There were about 45 kids in all.

We were able to measure views in a methodical way with this structured approach, which gave us a good set of data for correlation analysis.

RESULTS

The following findings summary reports agreement across all three research domains. The strongest cluster mean appears in the perception domain ($M = 3.40$), followed by curricular narratives ($M = 2.94$), and then reconciliation of

promotion and risk ($M = 2.77$). The pattern suggests that students most readily accept the broad legitimacy of migration and become more tentative as the statements become more personally costly.

Table 4. Cluster Means Interpretation

Inquiry Domain	Mean	Decision	Summary Interpretation
Perception of Migration	3.40	Agree	Students see migration as both a choice and a necessity
Curricular Narratives	2.94	Agree	School messaging moderately supports overseas work as a primary or noble path
Reconciliation of Promotion and Risk	2.77	Agree	Students accept risks and trade-offs, but with lower agreement

At item level, the same structure appears more clearly. Students strongly agree that OFW work is a proactive choice for career advancement (Q1, $M = 3.58$, 84% agreement) and strongly agree that Filipinos are often pushed abroad because there are not enough good local jobs (Q2, $M = 3.84$, 96% agreement). They also agree that OFW work is normal and expected for Filipinos (Q3, $M = 3.07$, 71% agreement) and that urban students are more likely than rural students to regard OFW work as common (Q5, $M = 3.33$, 84% agreement). In the school-messaging domain, students agree that skills taught are designed for the global market (Q7, $M = 3.09$, 73% agreement), that education prepares them more for abroad than for the local economy (Q10, $M = 2.96$, 69% agreement), that school promotes overseas jobs as a primary option (Q6, $M = 2.82$, 64% agreement), and that the “Bagong Bayani” framing reinforces leaving the country for work (Q9, $M = 3.04$, 71% agreement). In the third cluster, the means are lower but still positive: willingness to accept underemployment abroad if pay is higher (Q13, $M = 2.89$, 69% agreement), willingness to pursue OFW work despite contract risks (Q12, $M = 2.73$, 58% agreement), and willingness to put economic need ahead of personal career

choice (Q15, $M = 2.67$, 60% agreement).

Analysis of Associations (Spearman Correlation)

This study primarily investigates the perceptions of labor migration visibility among young Filipinos at the developmental stage of career goals, rather than the visibility itself. In an educational context increasingly focused on employment, competition, and mobility, working abroad is perceived as a viable, commendable, or even normative option. However, this path is laden with acknowledged risks for workers and their families, confounding the justification for student endorsement of labor export (Ortiga & Galam, 2025; Dominguez & Hall, 2022; Hall et al., 2019; Chen et al., 2022). The results below are based on a more precise set of questions: *What do senior high school students who go to urban schools think about working overseas in this confusing situation? Do they perceive it mostly as a plan, as pressure, or as something that happens all the time? How much do schools agree with these ideas? And when students agree with pro-OFW stories, do they also agree with the sacrifices those stories say they should make?*

Table 5. Correlation Analysis on Strong Associations ($r \geq .50$)

Item Pair	Description	R
Q6–Q10	School promotes OFW ↔ Education for abroad	.68
Q9–Q10	"Bagong Bayani" (heroic framing) ↔ Education for abroad	.62
Q12–Q13	Pursue OFW despite risks ↔ Accept underemployment	.61
Q7–Q10	Global-skills framing ↔ Education for abroad	.60
Q6–Q9	School promotion of OFW ↔ Heroic framing ("Bagong Bayani")	.58
Q13–Q14	Accept underemployment ↔ Family-strain justification	.55
Q3–Q4	Normalizing OFW ↔ Benefits outweigh risks	.53
Q1–Q3	Proactive choice ↔ Normalizing OFW	.51

Discussion

The first major pattern in the dataset is the coexistence of agency and necessity. Students strongly think that working as an OFW can be a good way to advance up in your career, and they also firmly agree that Filipinos are encouraged to work overseas since the job market in the Philippines is weak. Migration theory presently views this coexistence as analytically normative rather than contradictory. Aspirations are shaped by possibilities, constraints, social comparison, and envisioned futures, enabling respondents to endorse both aspiration and pressure without feeling obligated to choose between them (de Haas, 2021; Boccagni, 2017; Rodríguez-Peña, 2024). Research on youth aspirations and student mobility reveals a similar pattern: young individuals' future plans are often influenced at the intersection of educational trajectories, anticipated careers, and structural ambiguity, rather than through a singular, stable motivation (Doumas & Avery, 2024; Addeo et al., 2023; Böhme, 2015). Interpreted in the context of existing literature, the current findings suggest not misunderstanding but a nuanced migration imagination.

The second pattern has to do with the school setting itself. The school-messaging group is the component of the correlation matrix that makes the most sense. That's not easy. Philippine literature has increasingly contended that migration regulation functions not alone through state deployment mechanisms but also through

educational and vocational infrastructures that direct students towards external job markets. Historical research indicates that this relationship has profound origins, whereas contemporary studies illustrate how institutions, recruiters, and skill development systems persist in influencing migration patterns in systematic manners rather than merely reacting to existing demand (Maca, 2018; Sakai & Masuda, 2020; Debonneville, 2021; Ortiga & Galam, 2025). The current poll does not show that schools make students want to move, but it does show that students see schools as having a pro-mobility framework that puts getting a job abroad first. The "Bagong Bayani" item is a good example because it shows that getting a job abroad is not just about getting a job. Heroic framing is closely linked to the idea that education prepares students for international work. This pairing is important because it shows that moral discourse and labor-market discourse are supporting each other. Research on OFW discourse has consistently posited that concepts of sacrifice, heroism, and national service contribute to the normalization of labor export by framing it as ethically commendable rather than solely economically advantageous (Bautista, 2015). In the current dataset, that symbolic layer seems to be institutionally clear to students, not just leftover or inadvertent.

However, the findings do not substantiate an assessment of students as consistently pro-migration at any cost. When things go from being a generic

impression to a personal concession, agreement goes down. The literature regarding left-behind children and transnational families elucidates the reasons. Studies in the Philippines and throughout Southeast Asia consistently demonstrate that migration can coexist with financial benefits and familial resilience, alongside emotional distress, alterations in caregiving arrangements, renegotiation of roles, and disparate health outcomes (Graham & Jordan, 2011; Hoang et al., 2015; Lam & Yeoh, 2019a, 2019b; Deng et al., 2022). Philippine evaluations and recent family research corroborate the same assertion: migration frequently bolsters homes economically while exacerbating relationships, authority dynamics, and daily parenting responsibilities (Dominguez & Hall, 2022; Antia et al., 2020; Aguilar & Perez, 2025; Domingo, 2025, 2026). In contrast to that literature, the lower means in the third cluster appear to reflect constrained endorsement rather than indecision. Students can appreciate or normalize migration while yet being unsure about its more expensive effects.

Discussion of Policy Integration

The ensuing discussions shall delve into the policy design based on the initial findings of this exploratory research, which emphasize the need for further knowledge understanding integration of migration literacy to address varying perceptions of migration opportunities risks in urban settings and provide opportunity for educational institutions like Department of Education (DepEd) to become the policy lead in advancing the idea of adding risk awareness to the existing career guidance curriculum.

The Development of an OFW-Ready but Risk-Aware Education Model through Multiple Streams Framework (MSF).

With the above narrative, the objective of Multiple Streams Framework (MSF), developed and enhanced by Kingdon (2011), is to explain how specific

issues rise to the top of the political agenda and get adopted as policy. It argues that policy changes occur when three independent streams—problems, policies, and politics—converge, allowing policy entrepreneurs to couple them during a temporary "policy window" (Béland & Michael Howlett, 2016).

1. Problem Stream: What needs fixing?

The core issue lies in the normalization of the ambivalence gap. This is manifested among students who have strong concurrence that Overseas Filipino Work (OFW) is perceived to be normal and a proactive choice but changes their concurrence when personal costs are measured. As for the former, it is a newly perceived perception of migration trends where it debunks the classic view of migration and OFW trend is for the "jobless", for those having a "mismatch" jobs that lies on the opportunity under contingency options (at least for the urban economic settings revealed in this study). To support this, there is also a strong correlation shown through the "heroic framing" and global skills messaging that are closely related to "education abroad". Yet agreement fades contract risks and leaving family is a stake (as revealed through weakest correlation results, Q2-Q15, $r=.09$). This leads to the *policy problem* of the issue where there is a need for schools, under DepEd supervision, to systematically promote OFW opportunities (while so far successful) without compromising the preparation of students to face real world risks abroad *e.g. contract violations, family strain, and underemployment*.

2. Policy Stream: Most effective solution

This section proposes the most doable and practical solution on the possibility of immediately addressing the issue. Through the development of Critical Migration Literacy, this can be the most effective as it 1) directly addresses the praxis of heroic

framing and student hesitation on risks gap, 2) can be possibly included among current Career Guidance and Values Education interventions and institutional initiatives, and 3) can be a possibly low cost solution only requiring teacher training and the supplement of curricular modules, which does not necessarily require a need for the establishment of a new agency. As per module content, it can possibly delve deeper the issues of:

- a. Contract vulnerability ($r=.61$, the link between risks acceptance and underemployment)
- b. Family strain caused by emotional distance ($r=.55$, underemployment lining to family strain)
- c. Working abroad is the new normal and becomes good outweighing the risks ($r=.53$, normalizing OFW linked as over-optimism).

3. Politics Stream: *What makes it currently feasible*

With the current gap, the public would still glorify OFW as modern heroes while media and research continue to unveil issues of contract violations and abuse while the potential population of these OFWs continue to leave amidst children struggles (Dominguez & Hall, 2022; Bernardo et al., 2025). This leads to a political opportunity without undermining the heroic "narratives" - an opportunity to be further studied even by the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE), Philippine Overseas Employment Administration (POEA) as contributors to the discussion and the OFW families. These agencies could act as a powerful, independent driver(s) of policy change, encompassing the "political environment" or defined by Maor (2024) as the "national mood" that determines which issues gain government attention.

4. Policy Entrepreneur: *The Department of Education (DepEd)*

The first question to ask is, why DepEd? This educational agency can 1) possibly take control of the curriculum and career guidance programs (the core domain that promotes the OFW work opportunities), 2) issue DepEd Memorandum without the need of a new legislation and 3) coordinate with DOLE and POEA on further collaboration, additional workforce which can expand the critical literacy as a springboard for further interventions that can be further accommodated by the latter agencies e.g. *DOLE on contract risks*. The DepEd can possibly position itself with the research evidence unveiled for entrepreneurial actions (pre-positioned) by highlighting the following:

1. Framing the "incomplete career preparedness" as a problem but not against OFW.
2. Utilize the strong correlation results of the study as evidence in promoting an aligned narrative of education for abroad with full awareness of risks.
3. Place the Critical Migration Literacy module in a pilot process in the same urban schools setting, this time possibly including more generated data.

5. Policy Window: *When to act*

The likeliness is to act now due to the foreseen social perceptions on the immediacy of the issue - justified by the continuous and growing trend of migration and overseas work preference. It is foreseen as a public demand of accountability where something needs to be done immediately. This is the window of opportunity for DepEd to place something on issues of critical migration literacy in the growing, changing and emerging senior high school curriculum highlighting futures of OFW on leaving the country with more preparations and socio-political awareness.

Visual Summary

Below is the visualization of the whole model.

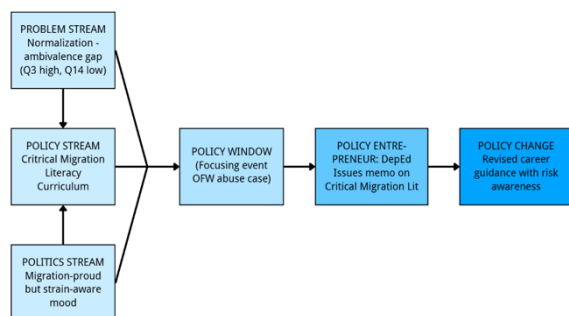


Fig 1. Determining the Political Agenda through MSF Analysis

Discussion of Career Program Development

From the above findings, the following details cover the proposed career development program that would address the gaps unveiled in this study.

Objectives:

- Help students make a career decision;
- Increase Awareness on the OFW Pathway as a career option
- Benefits of OFW as a career pathway
- Identify possible risks associated with working overseas
- Present government programs and support available to possibly mitigate the risks of the OFW career pathway.

Module I: Knowing Myself

- Self-awareness
- Identifying skills and abilities

Module II: Knowing My Options

- Higher Education (Local & International)
- Employment (Local & International)

c. Entrepreneurship

d. Middle Level Skills Development

Module III: Expanding and Narrowing My Options

- Aligning my skills and abilities with my chosen options

Module IV: Prioritizing My Options

- Listing my top choices in career

Module V: Making A Choice, Knowing I Made a Good Choice

- Implementation of my choices
- Evaluating the choice that I made

Wrap-up: Career Counseling based on Career Portfolio

The Cognitive Information Processing (CIP) Theory is a cognitive-based approach that aims to teach individuals to be effective career problem solvers and decision makers (Sharf, 2012). It focuses on providing individuals with information that they can use to improve their problem-solving and decision making-skills (Sampson, et al., 2020). The theory highlights the importance of being aware of one's thoughts, feelings, and behaviors in making a career decision; that on top of knowing about themselves and the world of work, individuals must also have knowledge about how they make career decisions; that the knowledge about oneself and the world of work is constantly evolving; and that career decision-making and problem solving are skills that can be learned and improved upon (Sharf, 2012; Sampson, et al., 2020).

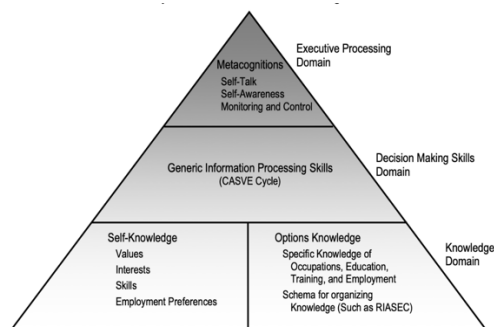


Figure 2. The Pyramid of Information Processing Domains Adapted from Sampson, J. P., Osborn, D. S., Bullock-Yowell, E., Lenz, J. G., Peterson, G. W., Reardon, R. C., ... & Saunders, D. E. (2020). *Introduction to cognitive information processing theory, research, and practice*. Florida State Libraries.

As seen in Figure 2, CIP Theory introduces three main components involved in a career choice, known as the Pyramid of Information Processing: (1) Knowledge Domain, (2) Decision-Making Skills Domain, and (3) Executive Processing Domain. The Knowledge Domain comprises two aspects: (1) Self-knowledge, which involves knowledge about oneself such as skills, values, interests, and employment preferences; and (2) Options Knowledge, which involves information about the world of work. The Executive Processing Domain involves higher order functions involved in decision making such as self-talk, self-awareness, monitoring and control (Sharf, 2012).

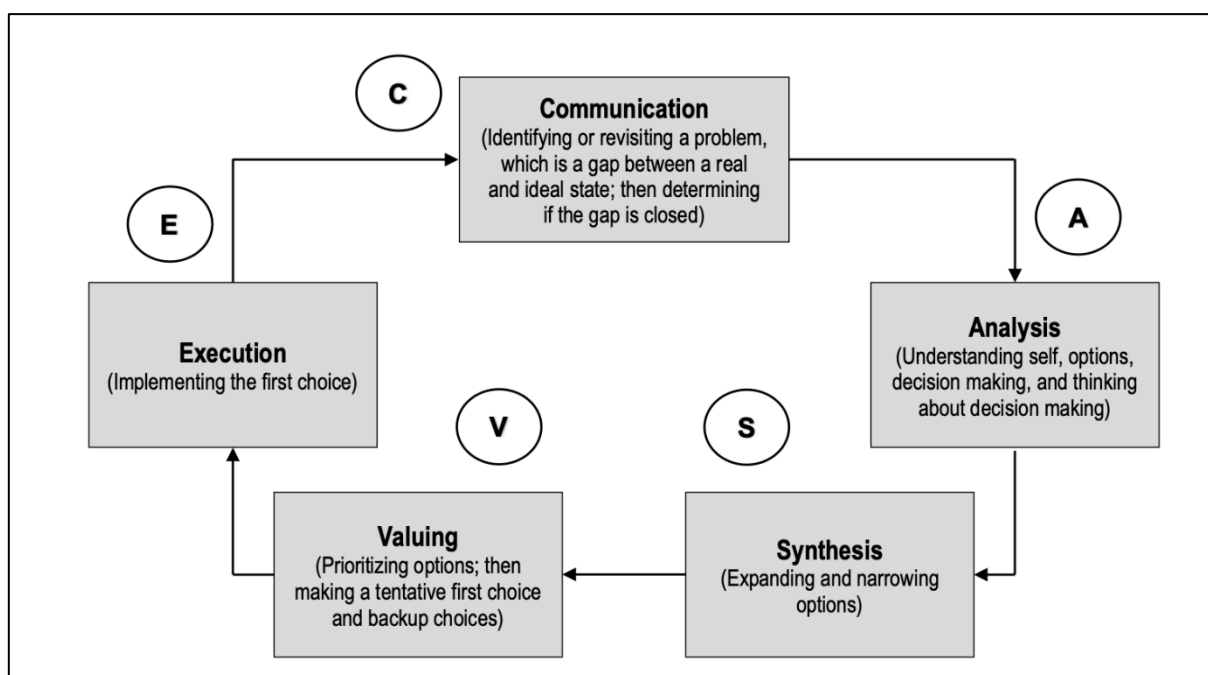


Figure 3. The CASVE Cycle. Adapted from Sampson, J. P., Osborn, D. S., Bullock-Yowell, E., Lenz, J. G., Peterson, G. W., Reardon, R. C., ... & Saunders, D. E. (2020). *Introduction to cognitive information processing theory, research, and practice*. Florida State Libraries.

Figure 3, on the other hand, talks about the skills that allow an individual to process information about themselves and their options, which can be described through the CASVE Cycle. The first phase, *Communication*, talks about identifying a gap in where the individual is at the moment and in where he/she desires to be, which signals the beginning of the career decision-making process. The *Analysis* phase involves examining oneself and the existing knowledge he/she has about the world of work, together with the factors they consider in making a career decision. The next phase, *Synthesis*, talks about expanding the options being considered, and eliminating options that are inappropriate, while the *Valuing* phase highlights the evaluation of the costs and benefits of his/her top alternatives and having backup choices. The last phase, *Execution*, talks about creating and committing to a plan to implement the topmost choice. Once the individual makes a career decision, an individual can gain feedback through checking if the gap identified has been resolved or not.

This career guidance program is recommended to help address the gaps identified in the study. As senior high school students learn more about themselves, providing them with information on career decision-making is also of utmost importance. The program's main objective is to help students make a career decision. On top of providing information on the traditional career pathways, this program also aims to highlight students' literacy regarding the OFW pathway. It aims to help students learn about the risks and benefits of working abroad and identify programs and support provided by the Philippine government. Utilizing the Cognitive Information Processing (CIP) Theory, the program highlights the Knowledge Domain and Decision-Making Skills Domain.

The first module of the program

focuses on knowing oneself, increasing self-awareness, and identifying skills and abilities. Several activities can be facilitated to help students gain insights on these areas, which are essential for career decision-making. The second module focuses on the other half of the Knowledge Domain, exploring one's options. This module will highlight the four career exits: higher education, employment, entrepreneurship, and middle-level skills development (*The Strengthened Senior High School Program Shaping Paper CONTENTS*, n.d.). This module will also highlight the OFW pathway, particularly its benefits and risks, as well as the programs provided by the government in support of the OFWs. Through this particular emphasis, the gaps identified from the results of this study can be addressed.

The third module focuses on the *Synthesis* stage of the career decision-making cycle, which highlights the exploration of the available choices and aligning it with their skills, values, interests, and abilities. Following this, the fourth module would then focus on prioritizing certain choices over another. The next module will provide participants with information on implementing their career choice and evaluating the choice they made.

After going through all the modules, students will be asked to create a career portfolio which includes their reflections from the different modules. This can be a guide for individual career counselling, a service that can be offered by the school's guidance office to these

CONCLUSION

The following narrative presents the key empirical patterns observed in the data. It is organized into discrete findings, followed by cautious generalizations that remain bound to the sampled urban school contexts. Together, these findings illuminate how students in urban settings

normalize—yet conditionally hesitate toward—overseas employment as a career pathway.

On career pathway recognition. In the chosen urban school settings, respondents view OFW employment as a valid and acknowledged professional route rather than as a last resort. Most people who answered the survey saw working abroad as a good way to move up in their careers and a good way to deal with the lack of good job possibilities in their area. This indicates that, in comparable metropolitan environments, migration may already be included into the conventional career aspirations of students, regarded as a viable option among several pathways for Filipino adolescents initiating their consideration of future employment and economic advancement.

On institutional and cultural shaping. Respondents' comprehension of OFW employment is influenced not only by economic considerations but also by institutional and cultural contexts. Schools seem to help normalize things by giving employment advice, teaching skills, and sending messages that connect education to job needs around the world. Respondents view OFW employment not merely as a personal choice but as a journey bolstered by overarching social institutions, including education, familial expectations, and public discourse that portrays foreign workers as commendable, responsible, or successful. In cities where migration stories are more common, students may regard working abroad as both socially acceptable and a good career move.

On limitation of normalization and conditional endorsement. Although most people think that OFW jobs are good or important, respondents' agreement dropped regularly when poll questions brought up personal sacrifice, underemployment, contract hazards, and stress on family connections. This means that normalizing OFW work doesn't mean that everyone

agrees with all its effects. What can be generalized is not uncritical support for migration but a more complex understanding: foreign employment is perceived as a viable and accepted professional option in metropolitan environments, however, is regarded with caution as its human and relational consequences become more apparent.

Safest discussion-based generalization. Respondents to the study saw OFW work as a career path in urban economies when they saw it as economically sensible, socially familiar, and institutionally supported, but not always welcomed. Respondents agree that working abroad is a reasonable option for Filipinos planning their careers, especially in cities. However, they are still wary of the risks and sacrifices that come with it. That is, giving up something important to you is harder to accept. Students are less likely to support movement if it is seen as leaving family behind or giving up personal freedoms. They generally respect OFW work, but they are hesitant to do it themselves because of the costs.

On Policy Integration. The Department of Education (DepEd) can be characterized as the policy entrepreneur who can introduce change - addressing the gap between students and their OFW mindset under double edge orientation. As a form of solution, the introduction of critical migration literacy is highlighted to be possibly included in school curriculum and/or career guidance institutional roadmap(s) which would empower students to view trends of migration in a more realistic manner, including the possible risks other than the financial gains among others.

On Career Program Development. Supported by the Cognitive Information Processing (CIP) Theory and the CASVE cycle, this contextually developed career guidance program aims provides senior high school students (contextualized in

urban settings) with a systematized roadmap in making informed career decisions, which includes the often-disregarded OFW choice. With the inclusion of self-awareness, the exploration of both local and international opportunities, and systematized decision-making skills, the program capacitates students to weigh both the benefits and risks of working abroad while utilizing government support mechanisms. In the end, the creation of a career portfolio with follow-up counselling shall help students to commit to a well-informed choice, bridge the gap between their current situation and career ambitions, which shall continuously enhance their decision-making and problem-solving skills for lifelong career management.

Data Limitations. Several limitations should remain explicit: the study's sample is small, clustered, and self-reported. Hence, the findings should be treated as exploratory and context-bound rather than broadly generalizable. Further research is recommended to explore more definite data, extend samples within schools of urban economies to further support the merging trend of migration, OFW career pathways, and its associated perceptions.

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Biodata

- **Kevin John A. Maddela**, LPT, MA, MPA, is currently serving as a full-time faculty member of De La Salle University – The Academy (Philippines). He is a PhD Candidate in Development Studies at the same university with research interests in Public Policy, International Relations, and Social Science Education.
- **Jhon Mark M. Rosales**, LPT is a faculty member and Service-Learning Mentor at De La Salle University – The Academy (Philippines), with teaching experience in social sciences, values education, and service-learning. His research interests include International Relations, Service-Learning, and Political Science, reflecting his commitment to integrative and transformative education.
- **Candice Chelsea F. de Castro**, Rpm, RGC, is a Counselor of De La Salle University (Philippines) for Senior High School. In line with her research interests, she specializes in using evidence-based approaches in helping adolescents with mental health concerns such as emotion regulation, burnout, anxiety, academic motivation, and depression.
- **Sarah Bless C. Sanchez-Maddela**, Rpm, RGC, currently serves as the Guidance Senior Supervisor at National University-MOA (Philippines). She is currently pursuing a PhD in Clinical Psychology at Far Eastern University with research interests in counselling and psychotherapy. She is currently affiliated with PGCA, PAP, and ECPA Inc.