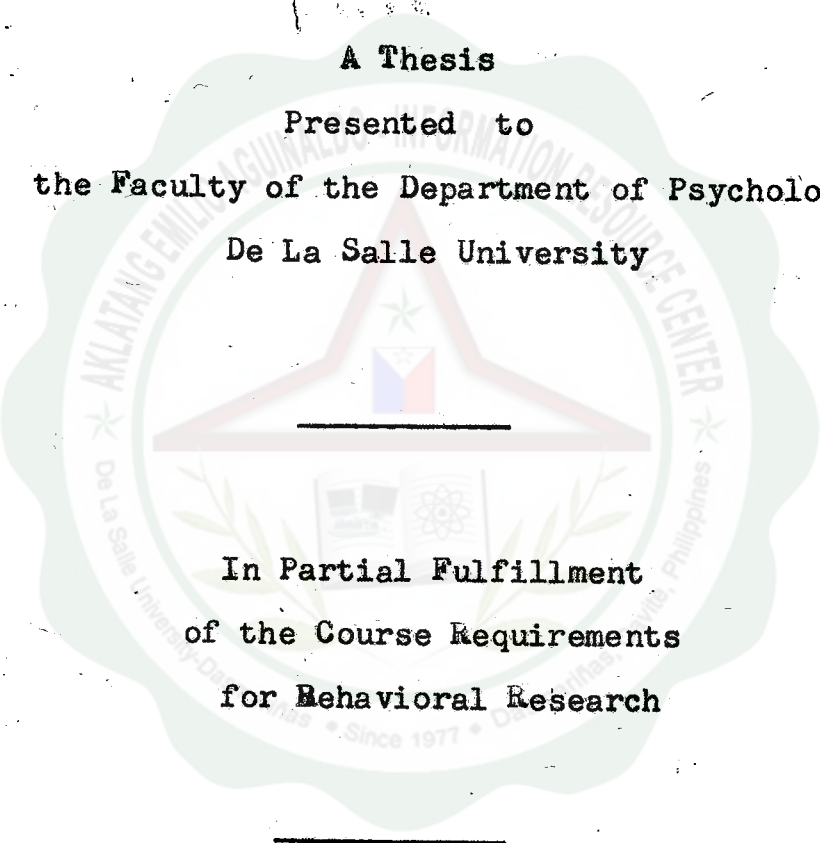


WORKING CONDITIONS OF SELECTED FILIPINO WORKERS IN THE
MIDDLE EAST: REPORTS FROM RETURNING MIGRANTS

A Thesis

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the Faculty of the Department of Psychology
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ABSTRACT

A group that is ever increasing in number is the Filipino migrant worker. Is there a Filipino today without a member or relative gainfully employed in some far flung corner of the world? There is no better gauge of the Filipino compulsion to expatriate to other countries especially America, than the long lines seen everyday in the American Embassy and some recruitment offices. Lately, however, Filipino workers have been attracted to employment offers in the Middle East.

It is generally expected that working abroad brings with it relatively more generous material benefits. Rising unemployment will even keep the stream of Filipino migrant workers at flood levels in the foreseeable future. On the other hand, there are reports saying that Filipino workers are actually "chasing rainbows abroad" (Lu, 1974). Further, it has been observed that the workers' expectations before they left were generally met.

The study seeks to find out how the migrants are affected by their working abroad, away from their families. It tries to answer the following questions:

1. What is the profile of husbands who leave for abroad?



2. What are their reasons for leaving?
3. What problems did they encounter there?
4. How did their being away from their families affect them in terms of the following aspects: spiritual, physical, social, psychological, economical and emotional.

Methodology

Forty respondents comprise the sample that was surveyed. They were selected from offices recruiting workers abroad on the basis of certain criteria which included the following: must be between 20 and 30 years old, male, married at the time they left the Philippines, from the lower and middle classes, stayed abroad for at least a year, and have been back in the Philippines for not more than six months since they arrived.

Individual interviews were conducted using an interview guide that was appropriately constructed and pretested. Data are reported in frequencies and percentages.

Results

It was found that migrant husbands are affected by their being away from their families and hometown. These effects may be considered as both positive and negative. In some way, their being away made them more matured and



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responsible human beings. Their spiritual life and their health improved. Most became more religious than they previously were. Majority said they gained weight and became healthier. The negative effects can be seen in both the psychological and emotional aspects as well as in their social life. This effects consisted of frustrations, anxiety, stress clash, emotional deprivation, isolation, alienation and maladjustment. On the social aspect is their inability to express themselves to others due to their not knowing the language spoken there, inability to go out often because of their being strangers to the place as well as their being unfamiliar with the place.

Most of them were able to accomplish their aim which was to achieve a higher standard of living for himself as well as for his family. They all agreed in saying that if given a chance to go back again, they would and if they were to recommend this experience to others they would highly recommend it especially to their friends.

