

*Problems and Advantages of Children with Filipino Parents in Their School Lives in the Philippines and in Japan: Through Their Experiences in both Countries*

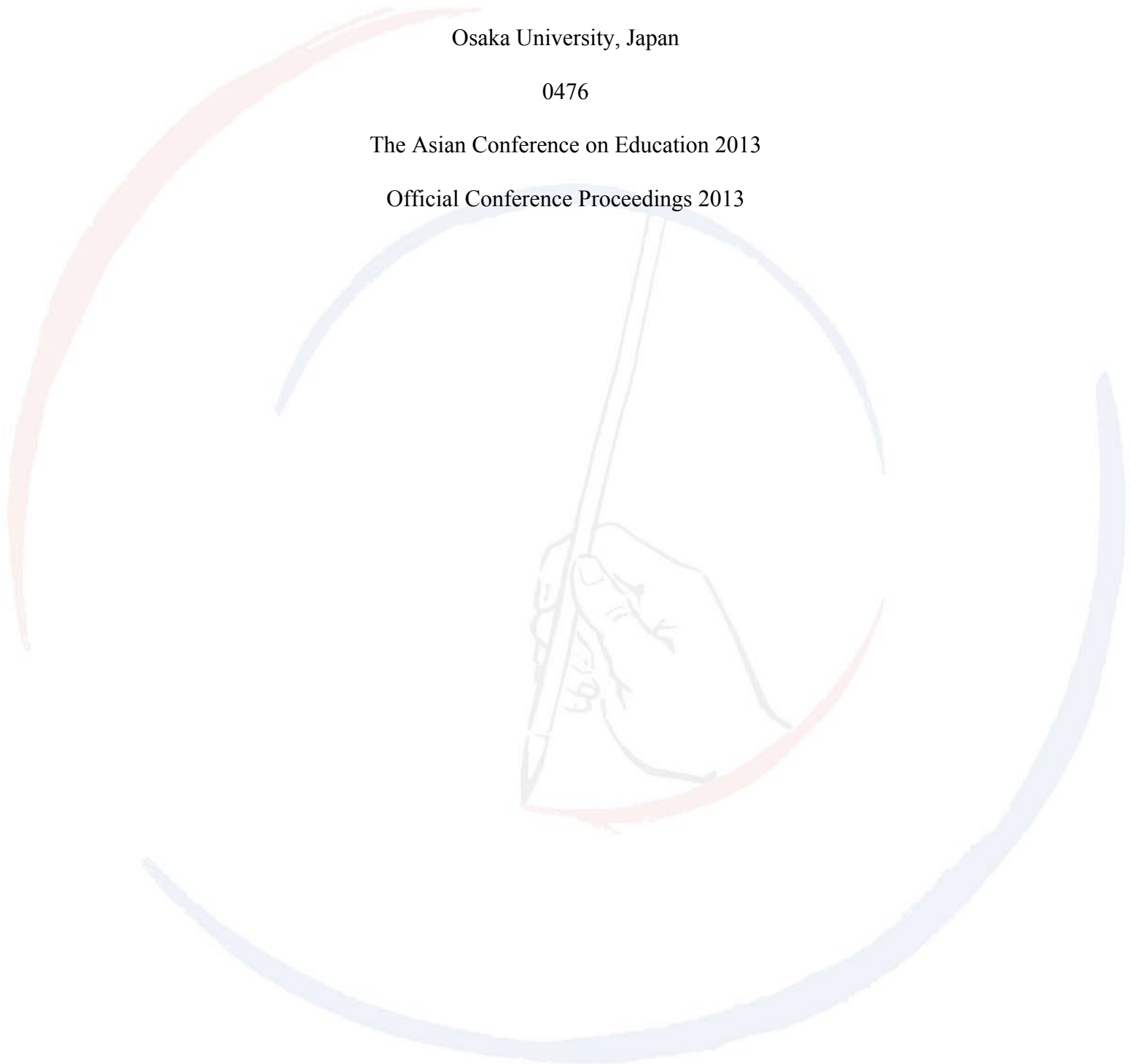
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The Asian Conference on Education 2013

Official Conference Proceedings 2013

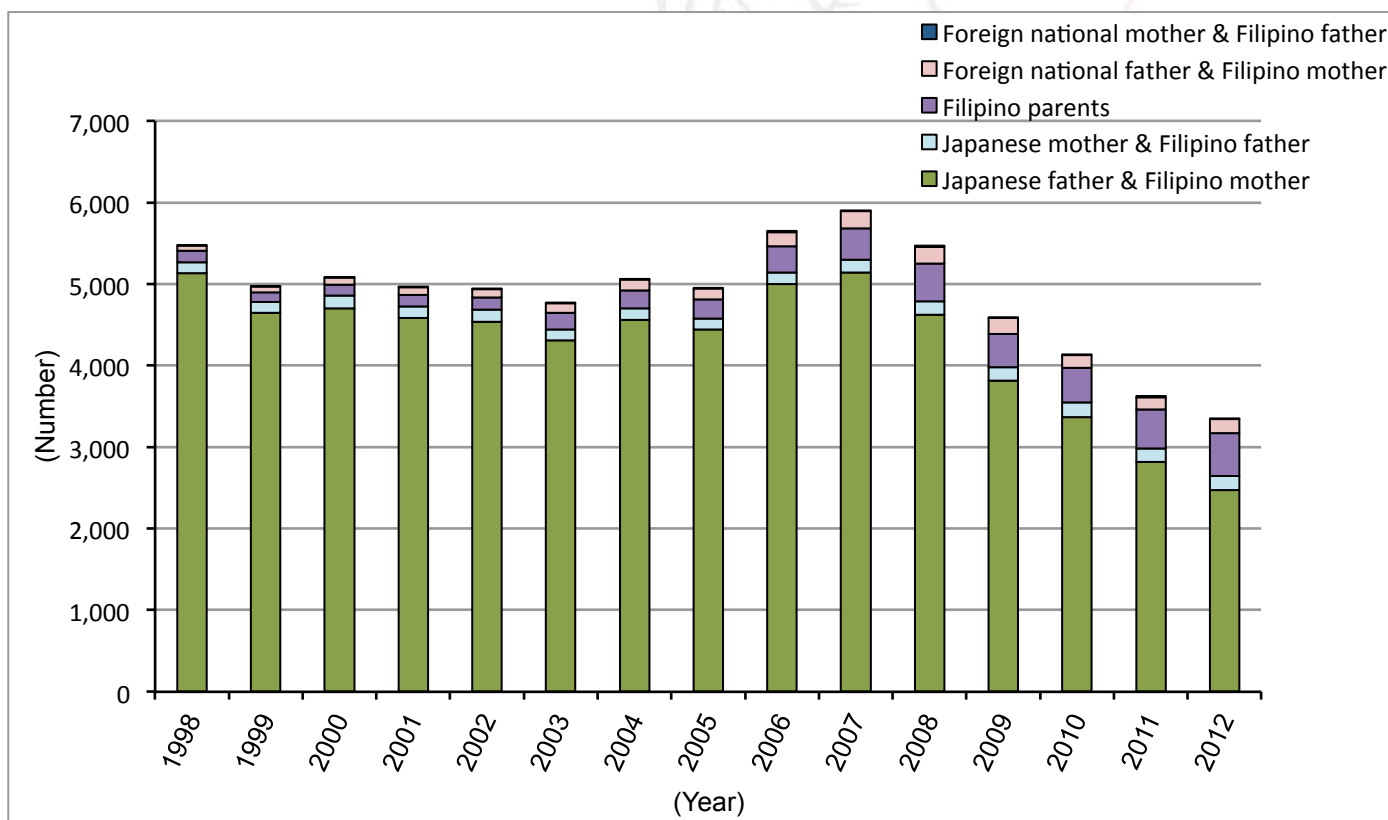


## 1. Background and Objective

Nowadays not only people called “oldcomers” who have lived in Japan as a result of Japanese colonial policies, mainly Koreans and their descendants, but also many foreign people and their children called “newcomers” who have arrived in Japan relatively in recent years since the late 1970s live in Japan.

According to statistics, there were 2,033,656 foreign nationals in Japan as of December 31, 2012 (Ministry of Justice 2013a). 202,974 were Filipino nationals and 27,496 among them were under the age of 20. Moreover, 62,009 stayed in Japan unregistered as of January 1, 2013. Of the unregistered foreigners, 5,722 were Filipino nationals (Ministry of Justice 2012b), some of whom were presumably children under the age of 20.

There are also many children who were born to one or both of whom were foreign nationals. The number of babies born in Japan in 2012 to parents one or both of whom were foreign nationals was 31,748. This is approximately three percent of the total number of babies born in Japan. The number of babies born in Japan in 2012 to parents one of whom is a foreign national was 20,536. Among them, 2,474 had Filipino mothers while 169 had Filipino fathers (MHLW 2013b). On the other hand, the number of babies born in Japan in 2012 to parents both of whom were foreign nationals was 11,212. Among them, 529 had both Filipino mothers and fathers, 171 had Filipino fathers and mothers of another foreign nationality, and nine had Filipino mothers and fathers of another foreign nationality (MHLW 2013a). The number of babies born to parents one or both of whom were Filipino was 72,939 in fifteen years from 1998 to 2012 (Figure 1).



Many newcomer children came to Japan because of their parents' international marriage or because of their parents' job also attend school. The number of school-age children, especially those born to Filipino parents who attend public schools has been increasing yearly.

According to the 2012 statistics (MEXT 2013), 27,013 foreign national students who needed Japanese instruction were enrolled in Japanese public school system at different levels: elementary, junior high, senior high, secondary<sup>i</sup>, and schools for children with special needs<sup>ii</sup>. 4,495 or more than sixteen percent of the total speak Filipino<sup>iii</sup> as their native language. The number of Filipino speakers has increased almost sevenfold in the past fifteen years (Figure 2), and now, Filipino is the third most common foreign language after Portuguese and Chinese. The number of Japanese national students who needed Japanese instruction by native language is undisclosed but it is presumed that many children of Japanese nationality who speak Filipino as their native language are also enrolled in public schools.

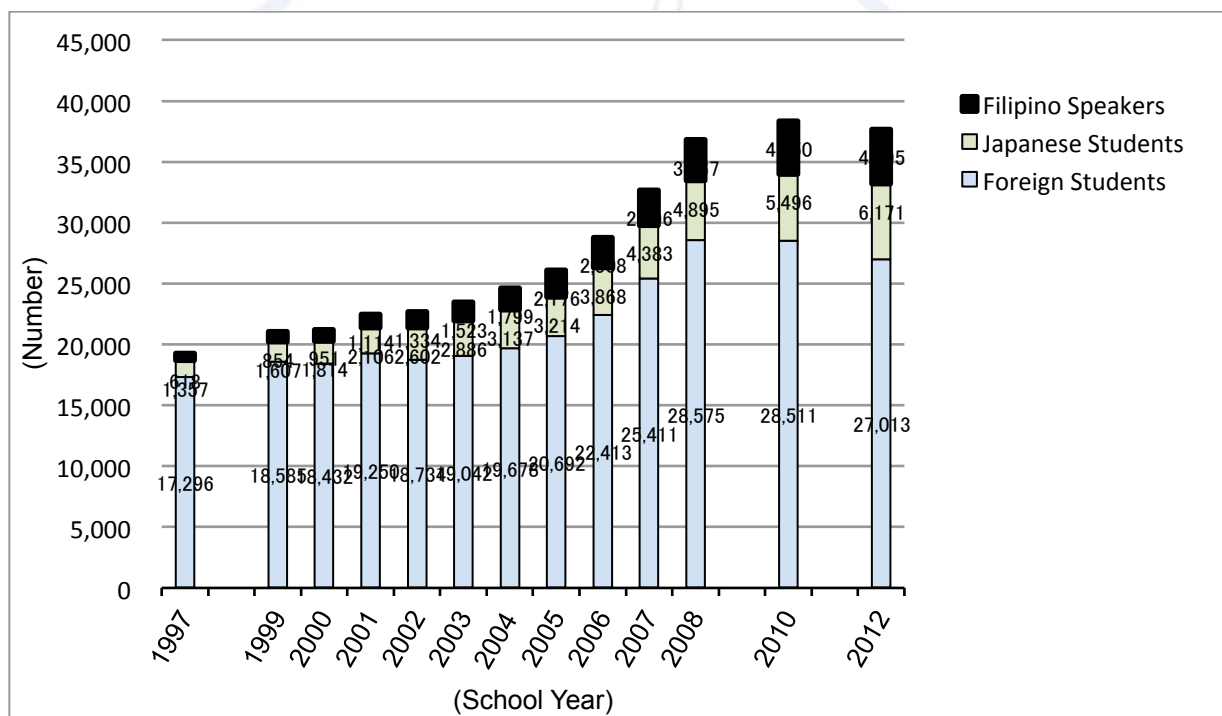


Figure 2: Number of Students in Public School Who Need Japanese Language Instruction (Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology [MEXT] 1997, 1999 to 2008, 2010, 2012)

Many foreign students encounter the following problems: 1) adapting to schools and to society; 2) language issues, like learning Japanese and preserving their native language; 3) academic achievement and future course; and, 4) ethnic identities (Shimizu & Shimizu 2001, p.15). In 1989 the Japanese government started to adopt measures regarding the education of new-comer foreign children. Various policies have been carried out mainly by local governments for the education of foreign children. ‘The assimilation policies regarded foreign children only as temporary residents and were formulated based on Japanese school and education’ (Sato 2010, p.136). Such measures include the development of Japanese language textbooks and curriculum for teaching Japanese language, the production and distribution of

teachers' manuals and materials for teaching foreign students, and the publication of a guidebook for starting school (translated in several languages), the placement of additional teachers, the dispatch of personnel with the ability to use the mother tongues of foreign students to schools to work with teachers, etc. One new development is a policy established by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT) aimed at revising the School Education Act in fiscal year 2013 to include the teaching of the Japanese language to foreign students in the formal curriculum from academic year 2014.

In addition to the issues mentioned above, children with Filipino parents also face a number of other challenges such as transnational moves (e.g., actual cross-national moves), family issues, nationality or residential status, and identity struggles. The patterns of their move vary, and the choice of move and career also vary. At home, some have difficulties in building relations with their mothers who had lived separately for many years and with their fathers-in-law and siblings in-law.

It is important to recognize their problems and to seek solutions. At the same time it is also possible to shed light on where the children feel happiness and what they regard as advantages of studying in each country to consider what is needed and how education can support them. It is also necessary to consider education not only from the perspective of children who settle or will settle in Japan but also children who move to and from a different country.

The objective of this study is to point out the areas where children feel difficulties and happiness in their school lives and studies in the Philippines and in Japan, what they regard as advantages of studying in either country and what they desire and what kind of support they need in Japanese school education system through interviews with the children who are now experiencing or have experienced going to school both in the Philippines and in Japan. I obtained some feedback on my presentation similar in objective of study to this paper at The 18th Annual Young Scholars' Conference on Philippine Studies in Japan at Kobe College in Hyogo, Japan on July 6, 2013. Some parts of this study will be published in the Bulletin of Global Human Studies (2013) by the Graduate School of Human Sciences, Osaka University.

In this paper, the term "children with Filipino parents" is defined as children where one or both parents are Filipino nationals or citizens who come from the Philippines. The backgrounds of these children vary. Among these, the author deal with those who are getting or had gotten primary or/and secondary education in Japanese public or private schools.

## 2. Review of Related Literature

### (1) Problems in the Education of Foreign Children and Newcomer Children in Japanese Schools

With regards to their school attendance, problems arise in connection with the obligation to send children to school, the appropriate school level for children, and attendance or non-attendance problems of unregistered foreign children. There are also children who do not attend schools for the ff. reasons: they are unregistered foreigners, their parents are not obliged to send them to school as they are foreigners,

or the level of difficulty of the lessons and the lack of friends at school (Ota 2000; Sato 2010).

Language is also regarded as one of the major issues. Miyajima (2002, p.132) points out that 'the problem is not the Japanese language used in daily social life [snip] but Japanese language that is used inside the classroom (language used in subjects)'. It is necessary to support the children with their Japanese language proficiency which is difficult to acquire but is necessary to understand the lessons. On the other hand, it is also important to maintain and to improve their mother tongue or first language because it plays an important role in developing their cognitive abilities and forming their identities. Ota (2002, p.303) mentions that not only learning one's mother tongue but also learning using it should be made a reality.

Teachers try to make the children adjust in schools along with the teaching of the Japanese language. Ota (2000, p.297) mentions that 'the children's reactions to this kind of process vary but it is true that different conflicts and problems arise'. In recent years, the children's future courses have been recognized as one of the important issues (Sato 2010; Shimizu 2001).

Children with Filipino parents also deal with these problems. In order to determine the necessary educational support that should be given to these children, we should not look at the problems they encounter but also the things that they enjoy in their school lives as well as what they regard as advantages of studying in Japan. Many of the existing studies focus on children who reside or will reside permanently in Japan. Since some children living in Japan move between Japan and other countries or will move to another country in their future, it is also necessary to consider education from the perspective of these children.

## (2) Problems in the Education of Children with Filipino Parents in Japan

Some of the previous studies concerning education of children with Filipino parents in Japan are: studies on the children's school experience and difficulties at school (Umezawa & Tsuchiya 2003; Yano 2011; Takahata 2011a; Takahata 2011b), studies on the education of children without foreign resident registration (Iwamoto 2005), studies on the influence of the parents' educational consciousness and family relationships on the children's education (Nishiguchi 2005; Tokunaga 2008; Tsunogae, Iegami & Shimizu, 2011; Nukaga 2012; Miura 2013; Shikita 2013).

In the literature mentioned above, it is found that a new system and a new type of practice are needed for the education of children with Filipino parents. These should be implemented by respecting cultural differences and the diversity of identities, and by considering the children's career options. Where the children encounter difficulties and happiness in their school lives and studies in Japan, and what they regard as advantages of studying in each country have not yet discussed much. It is important to think what is needed in educational support for the children with Filipino parents based on their points of view.

## 3. Target and Survey Methodology

The author selected fourteen interviewees who have Filipino parents and have

attended school both in the Philippines and in Japan. Interviews were held from December 2012 to March 2013. The interviewees' age is equivalent to a junior high school student or over, they have stayed or stay in Japan more than six months and have studied or are studying at schools in Japan. The researcher has known some of the interviewees for some time and the other interviewees were introduced to the researcher by her acquaintances<sup>iv</sup>.

The researcher conducted semi-structured interviews with them. Although the questions were arranged in an orderly fashion, the interviewer did not follow its order strictly and asked the questions following the flow of conversation to let the interviewees feel at ease in responding. Therefore, some parts of the interviews were more unstructured. Interviews were done face-to-face and one-on-one except for some interviews with two siblings and together with the child's family at the same time. Four of the interviews were done with one more Japanese graduate student. Each interview took an hour to two hours. One interview was conducted twice and the rest of the interviews were done only once. The language that was used in the interview is one or a mix of Filipino, Japanese, and/or English.

The profiles (age, sex, nationality, country of residence, area of residence in the Philippines and in Japan, and occupation) are shown in table 1.

Table 1: Interviewee Profile

	Age	Sex	Nationality	Country of Residence	Area of Residence (Prefecture) in Japan	Area of Residence (Province) in the Philippines	Occupation
A	20	M	Filipino	Japan	Osaka	Metro Manila / Cavite / Negros Occidental	Senior High School Student
B	17	F	Japanese / Filipino	Japan	Osaka	Negros Occidental	Senior High School Student
C	17	M	Japanese / Filipino	Philippines	Osaka	Negros Occidental	High School Student
D	17	F	Filipino	Japan	Osaka	Negros Occidental	Senior High School Student
E	19	M	Japanese	Japan	Hyogo	Metro Manila	In Preparation for Studying Abroad
F	27	M	Filipino	Philippines	Shizuoka	Metro Manila	Own Business
G	17	F	Filipino	Philippines	Osaka	Zambales / Metro Manila	College Student
H	19	F	Japanese / Filipino	Philippines	Osaka	Metro Manila	In Preparation for Entering College
I	19	M	Japanese	Philippines	Osaka	Metro Manila	College Student
J	20	F	Filipino	Philippines	Nagasaki	Metro Manila	College Student
K	18	F	Filipino	Philippines	Hyogo	Metro Manila	College Student
L	13	M	Japanese	Philippines	Fukuoka	Laguna	Elementary School Student
M	20	F	Filipino	Philippines	Aichi / Hyogo	Metro Manila	College Student
N	30	M	Filipino	Philippines	Aichi / Hyogo	Metro Manila	Freelance

Of the fourteen, seven are males and seven others are females with ages ranging from thirteen to 30. Eight are Filipino nationals, three are Japanese nationals and three have dual nationality. Only one of them is married. Interviewee B and C are twins and M and N are siblings. Ten live in the Philippines and four live in Japan when they were interviewed.

In Japan, seven of the interviewees live or had lived in Osaka, two in Hyogo, one each in Shizuoka, Nagasaki and Fukuoka. The remaining two have moved inside Japan and one of them had lived in Aichi and Hyogo, and the other had lived in Aichi and Tokyo. In the Philippines, on the other hand, eight of them live or had lived in Metro Manila, three in Negros Occidental, one in Laguna. The remaining two have moved inside the Philippines and one of them had lived in Metro Manila, Cavite and Negros Occidental, and the other in Zambales and Metro Manila. All interviewees reside or had resided in urban areas both in Japan and in the Philippines.

The percentage of non-Japanese residents in the cities where they live or had lived in Japan except for interviewee J and L is the 2.0% to 3.0% and it is above the national average 1.6% (Ministry of Justice 2013a). On the other hand, in the cities where interviewee J and L lived before, the percentage of non-Japanese residents is below 1.0%.

Table 2 shows the interviewees' country of birth, the move between the Philippines and Japan and their age when they moved, reasons to move, and experience of school education.

Table 2: Move between the Philippines and Japan and Experience of School Education

	Country of Birth	Move between the Philippines and Japan	Reason to Move	Experience of School Education
A	P	From the Philippines to Japan at the age of 15 (Temporarily stayed in Japan for about 6 months at the age of 11 and in the Philippines at the age of 20)	To live with family	[P] Private E.S.→Another private E.S.→Private H.S.→[J] Night J.H.S.→Public S.H.S.
B	P	From the Philippines to Japan at the age of 14 (Temporarily stayed in Japan for about 2 months at the age of 13 and in the Philippines once at the age of 15 and twice at the age of 16)	To live with mother	[P] Private E.S.→Private H.S.→[J] Public J.H.S.→Public S.H.S.
C	P	From the Philippines to Japan at the age of 14 From Japan to the Philippines at the age of 16 (Temporarily stayed in the Philippines at the age of 16 and in Japan at the age of 17)	To live with mother For schooling	[P] Private E.S.→Private H.S.→Public H.S.→[J] Public J.H.S.→Public S.H.S.→[P] H.S.
D	P	From the Philippines to Japan at the age of 13	To live with mother	[P] Private E.S. (transferred several times)→Private H.S.→[J] Japanese Language School→Public J.H.S.→Private S.H.S.
E	P	From the Philippines to Japan at the age of 11 (Temporarily stayed in the Philippines once a year while living in Japan)	Because of father's job	[P] Private E.S.→Another private E.S.→[J] Public E.S.→Public S.S.→Private College (quitted)
F	P	From the Philippines to Japan at the age of 10 From Japan to the Philippines at the age of 19 From the Philippines to Japan at the age of 21 From Japan to the Philippines at the age of 27	To live with mother To study drawing To work in Japan To work in the Philippines	[P] Public E.S.→[J] Public E.S.→Public J.H.S. (graduated)
G	P	From the Philippines to Japan at the age of 10	To live with mother	[P] Private E.S.→[J] Public

		From Japan to the Philippines at the age of 12	For schooling	E.S.→[P] Private H.S.→Private College
H	P	From the Philippines to Japan at the age of 6 From Japan to the Philippines at the age of 19 (Temporarily stayed in the Philippines once a year while living in Japan when studying in elementary school and at the age of 16)	Judge of parents (better to live in Japan) For schooling	[J] Public E.S.→Another Public E.S.→Public J.H.S.→Vocational School (graduated)
I	J	From Japan to the Philippines at the age of 6 From the Philippines to Japan at the age of 14 From Japan to the Philippines at the age of 18 (Temporarily stayed in the Philippines about twice while living in Japan)	Due to family matter Due to family matter For schooling For schooling	[J] Public E.S.→[P] Private E.S.→[J] Public J.H.S.→Public S.H.S.→[P] Private College
J	J	From the Philippines to Japan at the age of 7 From Japan to the Philippines at the age of 9 From the Philippines to Japan at the age of 15 From Japan to the Philippines at the age of 16 (Temporarily stayed in Japan once a year while living in the Philippines)	Because of father's job For schooling For schooling For schooling	[P] Private E.S.→[J] Private E.S.→[P] Private E.S.→Private H.S.→[J] Private J.H.S.→[P] Private H.S.→Private College
K	P	From the Philippines to Japan at the age of 9 From Japan to the Philippines at the age of 13 (Temporarily stayed in Japan once a year while living in the Philippines)	To live with mother Due to family matter	[P] Private E.S.→Another private E.S.→Public E.S.→[J] Public E.S.→Public S.S.→[P] Public H.S.→Private H.S.→Private College→Another Private College
L	P	From the Philippines to Japan at the age of 7 From Japan to the Philippines at the age of 9	Because of father's job Because of father's job	[P] Private E.S.→[J] Public E.S.→[P] Private E.S.
M	J	From Japan to the Philippines at the age of 13 (Temporarily stayed in the Philippines once a year while living in Japan)	Because of father's job	[J] Public E.S.→Another public E.S.→Public S.S.→[P] Private H.S.→Private College
N	P	From the Philippines to Japan at the age of 9 From Japan to the Philippines at the age of 11 From the Philippines to Japan at the age of 12 From Japan to the Philippines after graduating college (Temporarily stayed in the Philippines once a year while living in Japan)	Because of father's job For schooling For schooling For getting job	[P] Private E.S.→[J] Public E.S.→[P] Private E.S.→[J] Private J.H.S.→Private S.H.S.→National College (graduated)

Only two of the interviewees were born in Japan and the remaining twelve were born in the Philippines. The age when they moved between the Philippines and Japan varies. Five of them moved only once and the other nine moved some times. Ten of them had stayed temporarily in the Philippines or in Japan when they had lived in the other country and some come and go at regular intervals for temporary stay.

The main reasons why they moved from the Philippines to Japan before they became 20 years old are to join their family, especially to live with their mothers who had been staying in Japan. The mothers left their children in the care of their relatives in the Philippines then they brought them to Japan after some years. Some moved to Japan because of their fathers' jobs. In this case fathers also moved to Japan before their children and wives did.

With regards to transfer of residence from Japan to the Philippines, most of the reasons are school-related. They themselves chose or had no other choice to study in the Philippines when they were in elementary or junior high school, or before they went on to senior high school or college. Others moved to the Philippines with their family because their fathers lost the opportunity to work in Japan.



All of them experienced transferring from schools in the Philippines to schools in Japan or vice versa in their primary or secondary education. Two of them transferred from schools in the Philippines to schools in Japan then moved again to schools in the Philippines during their grade-school years. Some of them transferred to another school inside the Philippines even though they did not change their address.

#### 4. Results of Survey

In this paper, the author will present: 1) Difficulties in school life, 2) Happiness in school life, and 3) What they regard as advantages of studying in each country, among what they mentioned with regards to their school lives in the interviews.

##### (1) Difficulties in School Life

###### (a) Difficulties Related to the Language Differences

They had difficulties related to the language differences when they moved from the Philippines to Japan and vice versa. All interviewees except three knew only basic expressions or none when they moved to Japan. Regarding the interviewees' Japanese language proficiency at the time of the interviews, six were at or nearly N1 level of the Japanese-Language Proficiency Test<sup>v</sup>, six were nearly N3 level or answered that they did not have problems in daily conversation but had difficulties in reading, writing and kanji (Chinese characters), and two answered that they can understand Japanese a little. The interviewees who receive or had received regular Japanese language instruction or who are or were encouraged to take the Japanese-Language Proficiency Test at school acquired relatively high proficiency.

The interviewees who had little knowledge about Japanese language when they entered Japanese schools had a hard time communicating with the others, building relations with their friends and studying. Even when they became able to communicate to some extent, they had difficulties in studying.

“The only word I knew when I came to Japan was ‘Thank you’. I became able to speak a little after studying at Japanese language school for six months. I couldn't make friends because I wasn't able to speak Japanese well. They answered when I talked to them but I couldn't make conversation. [snip] I was frustrated and tried hard to talk fluently at senior high school then I could make it.” (Interviewee D)

“It was hard to study in Japanese and I couldn't understand lessons. I can study much better in the Philippines.” (Interviewee G)

Aside from the difficulties in communicating and studying, some interviewees mentioned that they had something to give up because of the lack of Japanese competence. Interviewee I could not help but give up the school club activity because he had to study Japanese after school when he was in junior high school, and he had trouble with his teacher in senior high school because the teacher told him to study Japanese after school even though he wanted to join the club activity.

“In senior high school, Japanese language teacher taught us after school once a week and I studied with Korean and Chinese students. I had wanted to join the club but I

had to study after school so I had a little trouble with my teacher. [snip] I joined basketball club in junior high school. As our school team was strong, we had practices until seven at night. As the teacher in charge was also strict, I left the club then used time to study Japanese and kanji.” (Interviewee I)

Interviewee J wished to go to university because her father still had to work in Japan for a couple of years. However she had no choice but give it up because of her lack of Japanese competence so she went back to the Philippines with her mother.

“I wanted to go to college in Japan but it was difficult to go to senior high school because of my Japanese. My junior high school teacher recommended me to go to international school if I continued to live in Japan. But international school costs much so I came back to the Philippines with my mother.” (Interviewee J)

Both Filipino and English<sup>vi</sup> are used as the medium of instruction in the Philippines. If they could not maintain or develop the competence in Filipino and English during their stay in Japan, they also had difficulties in communicating and studying in the Philippines. Some find it difficult to handle both languages.

“When I came back to the Philippines, English, history and math were difficult because the terms used in subjects were completely different.” (Interviewee G)

“After coming back to the Philippines, I entered the first year high school. They didn’t give me special consideration. I didn’t want to go to school. About Filipino language class, I attended a class with different curriculum only when I was in the first year. When I turned the third year, I could speak and understand Filipino.” (Interviewee M)

#### (b) Difficulties Related to Bullying and Prejudice

Some of the interviewees were not bullied at all and half of them mentioned of bullying and prejudice. Those who were bullied or was not accepted by the others wish that all bullying would stop.

“It was hard to be bullied. I hope schools in Japan prevent all bullying. Some commit suicide because they are bullied. I cannot challenge bullying.” (Interviewee B)

“I was bullied by boys. They didn’t bully specific students but attacked other girls and even teachers verbally and with violence. They even turned desks inside out. They also told me ‘Why are you Filipino here’. The boys didn’t listen to the teacher. [snip] I hope all bullying can be prevented because bullying has traumatic effect on the one who was bullied.” (Interviewee G)

Interviewee C entered senior high school where many other Filipino students in the similar situation also study and some of them also bully her. Interviewee F mentioned that he had been bullied both in the Philippines and in Japan.

“In senior high school (in Japan), I was bullied also by other Filipinos.” (Interviewee C)

“Both in Japan and in the Philippines I was bullied by teasing and violence.”

(Interviewee F)

In the Philippines, interviewee K had trouble with people who approach her for her money because people in the Philippines believe that Japanese have money. She mentioned that it was difficult for her to judge whom she can trust and she cannot make much friends.

“I don’t tell I am Japanese. I don’t make friends much because I don’t want the others approach me for money.” (Interviewee K)

Interviewee H boasted about her Filipino mother when she was in Japan but she felt that the image of the Philippines in Japan was not good. Even though she answered when her friends asked her about the Philippines, she did not like to be asked.

“I was not bullied but the image of the Philippines in Japan wasn’t good so I didn’t like to be asked ‘How is it in the Philippines?’” (Interviewee H)

(2) Happiness in School Life

The relationship with friends has a great influence on whether they are able to enjoy their school life. Interviewee E could learn Japanese naturally as his friends in Japan were nice to him. Interviewee G mentioned that her female friends had been kind and she often had played with them even though she had been bullied by boys.

Some of the interviewees who had a chance to get together with the other Filipino students or who were able to go to a school where there are also a number of Filipino students mentioned that spending time with Filipino friends was enjoyable. Many of them felt grateful that their teachers were kind.

“Mother tongue class was fun. Being with Filipinos is enjoyable.” (Interviewee B)

“It is usual that I have Filipino friends around. I have fun at school as there are many Filipinos and teachers are also easy to approach and kind.” (Interviewee A)

In Japan, interviewee E and M studied at the school where students with various nationalities studied together. They mentioned that it was good to experience different cultures and to find interest in the Philippines which they had not been interested in before.

“It was good to feel various cultures close to me. For example, I had a Muslim friend. There are also Muslims in the Philippines but I didn’t have relationship with them.” (Interviewee E)

“Japanese students also had chance to know about the Philippines and it was good. I wasn’t interested in the Philippines when I lived in Japan but became interested in it from then.” (Interviewee M)

### (3) What They Regard as Advantages of Studying in Each Country

With regards to the advantages of studying in Japan, many positive comments were made about systems, facilities and disciplines. The interviewees mentioned that they could acquire basic academic skills and experience various kinds of activities.

“I think teachers’ way to teach and small size of the class are good in Japan. Japanese schools also have disciplines like duties. It was good to experience various kinds of sports and I could build my physical strength in P.E. [snip] Japanese school is more advanced in math and it was good.” (Interviewee K)

“Japanese school gets organized, is strict and well-grounded in each subject. The basic is firm and the way of teaching is well organized. [snip] It is good that students can experience various activities.” (Interviewee M)

“In Japan the lessons except for English were good. [snip] I learned sports and club activities in Japan. It was interesting to know there are many sports other than basketball. [snip] Students can absorb (various things). Teachers can tell all they know to their students. It is good that students can be disciplined as entrance exam system is well-organized.” (Interviewee I)

“When I came back to the Philippines, the learning contents in math class were easy.” (Interviewer N)

Some of the interviewees mentioned that they had chances to know Japanese language and culture.

“It was good to know the language and culture. On the other hand, the interruption of studying each subject was a disadvantage.” (Interviewee G)

Interviewee I found English classes in Japan distressing because his English skill was much higher than that of his teachers’ and classmates’ but also recognized the positive aspect of language situations in Japan.

“It cannot be helped with English (in Japan). If they made too many efforts (on English) and Japanese were influenced by English, national language will be unconfirmed like in the Philippines. The Philippines depends on the culture of US etc. [snip] I think Japan maintains its culture and language well. The way of thinking is influenced by language, right? [snip] So my thinking power improved when I acquired Japanese.” (Interviewee I)

To them, the biggest advantage of studying in the Philippines is that they are able to acquire English.

“Studying in college in the Philippines is better. [snip] English is a determining factor after all. Filipinos’ pronunciation is good.” (Interviewee H)

“I thought before I should have taken entrance exam in Japan. [snip] It would have been better if I could study in the system of Japanese universities but it should be here (the Philippines) to improve English skills.” (Interviewee I)

## 5. Discussion

All interviewees have moved between the Philippines and Japan and also have transferred to another school in the other country. They do not live and study in one location but their experiences are in a fluid situation. Even though they have difficulties in school life in both countries, they appreciate and give importance on their experiences and advantages.

It became clear that the children are faced with language-related problems if they enter Japanese schools with little knowledge about Japanese language which is the same as the other foreign national children and newcomer children. They have difficulties in acquiring especially terms in each subject and because of it they cannot choose the career options they want. It is reasonable that doing more study support for those who wish to access to higher education or to obtain employment to help them in their school subjects is necessary. On the other hand, some of the interviewees try to choose their career options not only in Japan like going to high school and college in the Philippines or in the other countries. Some also chose not to go to college but to learn skills or to get jobs. It is necessary to support them to choose the career options which they want and depending on circumstances.

With regards to bullying, some faced serious bullying and some were not bullied at all. Whether they experienced bullying or not may have a negative impact in their school life. It is also important not only let them spend enjoyable school life with Japanese friends but also give them the chance to experience various cultures close to them and to have relationship with the children who are in a similar situation.

It also revealed that many of the interviewees have positive opinions regarding Japanese school system and disciplines. The interviewees also pointed out that some of the advantages of studying in Japanese schools were acquisition of basic academic skills and various kinds of experience. More effective educational support can be provided not only by introducing new systems or new types of practice which are mentioned as necessary measures but also by making use of what they regard as advantages of studying in Japanese schools such as teachers' teaching and guidance, basic academic skills, and other various activities.

The interviewees in this research live in relatively large urban areas and many of them have gotten some support from school especially by Japanese language teachers and people who can speak their native language. The author will interview the others whose schools are/were in non-urban areas and without support systems. Further research needs to be done on the difference of their difficulties and happiness depending on the nationality of the children and their parents', whether they get some support from school or not, and whether there are other foreign students in their schools or not.

<Reference>

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Secondary school is a kind of school defined by the revised School Education Law in 1998. Secondary schools provide a six-year integrated program with a prior three-year course (equivalent to junior high school) and a latter three-year course (equivalent to senior high school). There are 50 secondary schools throughout the nation in school year 2013 (MEXT 2013).

<sup>ii</sup> Mandatory education is nine years in total, six years in elementary school and three years in junior high school.

<sup>iii</sup> Filipino refers to Filipino, the official national language of the Philippines, and Tagalog, one of the languages. Distinction will be done only when necessary.

<sup>iv</sup> I would like to extend my gratitude to the fourteen interviewees who willingly participated in this research amidst their busy schedules. I also thank my friend who proofread my English texts and gave me some feedback, and the Doctoral Program for Multicultural Innovation, Osaka University in providing grant funding for graduate students to research in the Philippines in March, 2013.

<sup>v</sup> The Japanese-Language Proficiency Test is held “to evaluate and certify proficiency in Japanese of non-native speakers” and has five levels N1 to N5 (N1 is the most difficult). (Japan Foundation and Japan Educational Exchanges and Services 2013)

<sup>vi</sup> The other languages together with Filipino are also used as the medium of instruction in the areas where Filipino is not the dominant language. Only English is used as the medium of instruction in some schools.



