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Osaka University

## Achievements and Challenges on the Participation of Japanese Students in Remote Classes of Universities Abroad

### 海外の大学が提供する遠隔授業への 日本人学生の参加に関する成果と課題

YAMOTO, Kimi and RUIZ, Frieda Joy Angelica Olay

#### Abstract

This paper is a report on the online student exchange program between Osaka University and University of Hawai'i at Mānoa in the USA, and Osaka University and Ateneo de Manila University in the Philippines. Specifically, it focuses on the achievements and challenges on the participation of the Osaka University students enrolled in the said online student exchange program. Evaluation of the exchange program is based on questionnaires submitted by the students, final presentation containing narratives of students about the program, and experiences of professors involved. The OU students expressed that the program mainly helped in the following points: it let them have an opportunity to exchange with the students in other countries and have a wider view on things, and it helped and motivated them to study English, Filipino and the other classes in OU. The program showed accomplishment and results not only in the learning of the students but also the significance and benefits of international exchange between the faculty members of Ateneo de Manila University, University of Hawai'i at Mānoa and Osaka University.

#### 要約

本稿は大阪大学と、フィリピン共和国のアテネオ・デ・マニラ大学およびアメリカ合衆国のハワイ大学マノア校との間で実施されたオンライン交流プログラムについて報告したものである。具体的には、大阪大学の学生の参加に関する成果と課題に焦点を当て、アンケートへの学生の回答、プログラムの体験談を含む学生の最終報告、プログラムに携わった教員らの経験に基づいて評価を実施した。本プログラムが役立ったと学生が考えている主な点は、他国の学生と交流する機会が得られ、視野を広げられたこと、および、大阪大学における英語やフィリピン語、その他の授業の学習の動機付けとなったことである。学生の学習に関する成果や効果のみならず、アテネオ・デ・マニラ大学およびハワイ大学マノア校と大阪大学の教員間交流に関する意義や有益性も明らかとなった。

**Keywords:** international online exchange program, cross-cultural understanding, COVID-19 pandemic  
キーワード：オンライン交流プログラム、異文化理解、新型コロナウイルス感染症

## 1. Introduction

In early 2020, the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) escalated to a pandemic that resulted in the hindrance of movement of people. Countries all over the world such as the Philippines and the UK had strict lockdowns, most could not go out of their houses for weeks for fear of contacting the deadly disease (Republic of the Philippines Inter-Agency Task Force for the Management of Infectious Disease (IATF) 2020, GOV.UK 2020). Countries, including Japan and Australia, closed its borders for travel (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan (MOFA) 2020, Parliament of Australia 2021). While the Japanese government did not impose strict lockdowns as the rest of the world did where passes were needed before being able to go out of one's houses, measures were implemented by the Japan government to stop the spread of the virus (Nagata et.al 2021).

According to the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT) of Japan (2020), universities postponed the opening of the Spring and Summer Term in April 2020 and gradually opened in July 2020. In the university level, classes were limited to online classes in 2020-2021. Additionally, according to the MEXT, due to the spread of COVID-19, some students are having a hard time continuing their studies at universities and other institutions because of heavily reduced household incomes as well as less income from part-time jobs. On top of this, professors and students had to find ways to quickly adjust to the situation to resume and continue with the classes. The challenge of holding classes was answered by online platforms such as Zoom, ロイロノート・スクール (LoiLo Note School), and other learning management systems (LMS).

For programs that acknowledge the importance of actual visits to the country one majors in to understand culture and society better, the situation brought about by COVID-19 is more challenging. In the Filipino Department of the School of Foreign Studies of Osaka University, there were many 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> year students who have never been to the Philippines. Some of these students had plans of going to the Philippines in 2020 or 2021 but had to cancel their trips due to the pandemic. This situation became a cause of concern because at this level, the students should already be deciding what topics to research for their graduation thesis. It is with this context that the online student exchange program was conceived of by faculty members of the Filipino Department. Upon completion of the program, a student earns units under the 海外フィールドスタディ C (Field Study Program C) class. The program can be enlisted not only by students under the School of Foreign Studies, but also by students from other schools in the university.

This paper is a report on the online student exchange program between Osaka University (hereafter, OU) and University of Hawai'i at Mānoa (hereafter, UHM) in the United States of America, and OU and Ateneo de Manila University (hereafter, ADMU) in the Philippines. Specifically, it focuses on the achievements and challenges on the participation of the OU students enrolled in the said online student exchange program. Furthermore, this paper is

written to give tribute to the faculty members of partner universities for agreeing to do a student exchange program with the OU Filipino Department. Given that the exchange was neither official nor formal, the exchange program still commenced. It is through experiences such as these that the importance of maintaining networks and ties with partner universities abroad cannot be emphasized even more. This report is to encourage colleagues and the teachers/staff involved in educational affairs that student exchange is possible and doable under such circumstances. Evaluation of the exchange program is based on questionnaires submitted by the students, final presentation containing narratives of students about the program, and experiences of professors involved.

This paper has five parts. The introduction gives context to the situation which led to the decision to hold an online student exchange program between OU and UHM, and OU and ADMU in 2021. The paper's objective and what data is used in the post-program evaluation is enumerated in this section. In the second section, exchange programs that have been conducted in other institutions during the COVID-19 pandemic are cited. How the institutions conducted their online exchange programs and what they did for their program to be successful is described. The third part of this paper contains the description of the Filipino Department online international student exchange program. It describes the undertakings during the planning stage, the courses offered in the host institutions, and information about the participants. The evaluation of the program is presented in part four which is followed by the conclusion.

## **2. Online Exchange Programs During the COVID-19 Pandemic**

According to "Education in Japan beyond the Crisis of COVID-19: Leave No One Behind," a report by the MEXT that was released in September 2020, around 90% of universities in Japan postponed the start of their spring semester which is usually held during April. As of July 1, 2020, all universities in Japan have resumed their spring classes. Of this number, 83.8% of the universities that are offering spring classes are conducting distance learning. The MEXT report also cites that international student exchanges have been significantly impacted by the pandemic. The report reveals that no new international students scheduled to come to Japan in the spring semester have arrived in Japan and some students who have completed and graduated from their academic courses are unable to return to their home countries. There were also no opportunities for Japanese students to study abroad because the Japan government suspended sending out new students with government scholarships. Furthermore, the government also requested students to cancel or postpone privately financed overseas study. Due to this state of international student exchange, several online exchange programs began to be offered in various universities in Japan.

Ritsumeikan University (2021) reports that they launched online exchange programs with partner schools in the United States of America immediately after the pandemic began in 2020. Ritsumeikan University claims that their online exchange programs have proven effective,

and they were able to provide students with valuable experiences. The five main findings of Ritsumeikan University's research on online exchanges are that: a) The biggest advantage of online exchange is the reduced cost; b) Real-time classes are key to the online experience; c) Even online, students can build relationships with overseas faculty and students; d) Students can "study abroad" while searching for a job in Japan; and e) Online exchange is creating new forms of learning.

Even medical and allied science institutions have conducted international student exchange programs under the pandemic. From 2015 to 2018, students in Ibaraki Prefectural University of Health Sciences (IPUHS) and Kaohsiung Medical University (KMU) in Taiwan regularly conducted exchanges (Ibaraki Prefectural University of Health Sciences 2021). The exchange program was interrupted because of COVID-19 from 2019 to 2020. In 2021, IPUHS and KMU started a new collaborative program using the internet. The goal of the project is to make an assistive device for elderly or disabled people. In a report presented by IPUHS (2021), the following points led to the success of their collaboration: a) Setting collaborative tasks like group activities. Aside from class participation, it is also important to do projects by group; b) Support for students. The students should be guided and not be left on their own. The staff should support students in communication, techniques, knowledge, networking skills, software skills, and the like; c) Follow students' progress. There should be constant communication between the IPUHS and KMU faculty. The faculty should report students' progress and discuss the problem that the students face; d) The KMU and IPUHS students present their devices (final output) in the online meeting; and, e) The KMU and IPUHS teachers give feedback.

In March 2022, an online program was spearheaded by the MOFA to promote understanding of Japan (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, n.d.). The participants were university students (undergraduate and graduate students) and working adults from Japan, Latin America, and the Caribbean. Lectures given by a variety of Japanese experts and interactions among participants were held online. Specifically, the activities conducted were exchange events for participants, theme-related lectures, virtual home stay experience in Fukushima, Japan and Peru, Japanese Culture Experiences (Bon Dance, Radio Calisthenics, Zazen), and a Final Report Session. The program received good feedback from the participants and each of them shared their plans of doing future activities that utilize the experience and knowledge they gained.

A study conducted by Suehiro (2022) on the difference between virtual learning and in-person courses in terms of learning improvement suggests that virtual learning might not be substandard to face-to-face learning, at least from the perspective of temporary intensive learning of a language and if there is no time difference concerned, virtual learning is cost-effective since there is no need to pay travel costs to the location. Despite these reported positive outcomes of international online exchanges, there are still issues and concerns regarding online exchanges according to Nakasato and Kayashima (2021). Their study suggests that even as universities

attempt to define the meaning and purpose of online programs in international learning, the students' view on the value of studying abroad should not be ignored. The previous examples on online learning show that online learning has indeed allowed education to continue regardless of the location of the student or instructor and has enabled domestic and international knowledge sharing and collaboration. However, according to one respondent in Nakasato and Kayashima's study, the dilemma for many universities in Japan will be how to define the purpose and meaning of online education both domestically and in the global context. Furthermore, there is clamor among students to resume the international exchange programs to how it was during the pre-pandemic times. Additionally, the issue about expanding online course offerings was raised because it was thought that this will put Japanese universities in direct competition with other universities at the global level. There were also concerns raised on language barriers and tensions between "traditional" teaching styles and international expectations.

### **3. The OU-UHM and OU-ADMU Online Student Exchange Program**

As the exchange program is the first of its kind between the OU Filipino Department and its partner institutions, careful planning and ironing out of issues and concerns were necessary. Under the supervision of the whole 海外フィールドスタディ C (Field Study Program C) by Dr. Gyo Miyabara, one of the authors Kimi Yamoto took charge of communication and coordination between OU and ADMU/UHM, and facilitation of the OU students. The other author, Frieda Joy Angelica Olay Ruiz assisted in coordination and facilitation, gave advice to the OU students, and evaluated their output and performance during the program.

The first email correspondence by the Filipino Department to one partner university stated that the student exchange program is intended for regular students (both undergraduate and graduate students) of OU and students of the partner university. Together, the students will do fieldwork to learn about culture, societal issues, and the like, in both locations. The students will consult with professors of the two universities involved. The students will be paired with a student from the partner university and as a pair, they will be deciding on a topic and planning on the details for the execution of the study. The student from OU will be in-charge of fieldwork in Japan based on what the student in the partner university wants to know or study about Japan. In exchange, the student in the Philippines or Hawai'i will be in-charge of fieldwork in the Philippines or Hawai'i based on what the student in OU wants to know or study about the Philippines or Hawai'i. After fieldwork, the student pair will be exchanging results and will be writing a joint report.

The objective of the program was that: 1) through "online coupling fieldwork," the students will be able to explain the cultural differences and similarities between the Philippines/US and Japan; 2) the students will be able to explain the origin and characteristics of societal issues in the Philippines/US and Japan; 3) the students will be able to understand and respect the differences in culture; and, 4) the students will be able to do a project through collaboration in a

“coupling fieldwork.”

There were changes in the initial contents and objectives set by the department to be more realistic with what can be achieved in a short planning period. Importantly, the conditions of partner universities had to be considered such as differences in the academic calendar, time zones, and lockdown rules. The academic calendar of OU and its partner universities are different<sup>1)</sup>, therefore is important to decide quickly when the program will commence. The time difference between the locations had to be considered, especially with that of Hawai’i which is 19 hours behind Japan. In the case of ADMU, the Philippine government has imposed a strict lockdown in Metro Manila and in provinces with high COVID-19 cases. Individuals were not allowed to go out of their houses unless necessary. During this period only going to drugstores, supermarkets, and medical facilities were basically allowed. There were checkpoints manned by military personnel and individual passes in which the purpose of going out are clearly written and shown to the military before being allowed to pass through (IATF 2020).

### **3.1 Planning**

As the initiator to the exchange program, the Filipino Department first sent email correspondence to four institutions where OU has existing memorandum of agreement (MOA) with in April 2021. The UHM and ADMU responded to the email. The initial email was a call for faculty members in the partner university who might be interested in the proposed exchange program of the department. The student exchange program was initially named “Online Coupling Fieldwork.” The summary and objectives of the program were explained in the correspondence.

After ADMU and UHM responded and stated interest to the program, online meetings were set separately with them. Series of meetings were conducted from May to August 2021 in preparation for the fall semester of UHM and the 1<sup>st</sup> semester of ADMU. Dr. Pia Arboleda, a former Visiting Professor in the OU Filipino Department for four and a half years and current Director of the Center for Philippine Studies and Professor and Chair in the Department of Indo-Pacific Languages and Literatures at UHM at the time of writing was the point person for UHM. Dr. Arboleda invited her colleagues to the Zoom meeting. The UHM faculty members were agreeable to the program and willing to host the OU students in their classes. The two concerns that were raised during the initial planning were the time difference between Hawai’i and Osaka, and the level of Filipino language proficiency of the OU students. Dr. Arboleda and her colleagues offered suggestions that the OU students can choose to join whichever classes they were managing, then the OU faculty members in-charge will choose the final two that the OU students can join based on the suitable time zone in Japan and the students’ level of Filipino proficiency.

In ADMU, the department contacted Dr. Benjamin San Jose, the program director of the

Japanese Studies Program at that time. Dr. San Jose is known to some faculty members of the department because his academic background and research interests tackle Japan-Philippines relations. As a former MEXT scholar, there have been many occasions and fellowship programs where Dr. San Jose and some faculty members of the department have met. Dr. San Jose showed interest in the exchange program and although going on sabbatical leave soon, he supported the endeavor and contacted a colleague who could host the students during his absence. While on leave, Dr. San Jose continued to be in communication and ensured that the student exchange was going smoothly. It was made known to the department that the ADMU students are more comfortable in English and that their classes are conducted in English. This point was important to be made clear in case there would be OU students who expect to hone their Filipino skills during the exchange. It was also explained that while the OU students will be able to join in the online classes, the students will not be able to access the learning management system because they are not officially registered. Mr. Rodolfo Narciso, the instructor of Japanese Business Management and Labor and current Program Director of the Japanese Studies Program at the time of writing, kindly offered to send the handouts and presentations to be used in the class to the professors handling the exchange program prior to the Zoom sessions so that the OU students can read them before the lessons. We were reminded not to distribute the materials to individuals who are not related to the class. Mr. Narciso also cautioned of the possibility of encountering technical issues like poor internet connectivity.

After a series of meetings and discussion with the partner universities, necessary changes in the initial plan about the online student exchange program ensued. It was decided that only the OU students will be joining the classes at UHM and ADMU due to the differences in the academic calendar and time zones. Because the contacted faculty members at UHM and ADMU were creating and preparing their own online modules and class management, it was not realistic to create new programs, such as the proposed coupling fieldwork. The initial plan of “coupling” or pairing of students between universities was found to be not feasible because there were more students enrolled in the classes of partner universities. Instead, the OU students were delegated to be in groups made up of five to six members. Lastly, field observation became limited to the engagements during the synchronous sessions, off-class Zoom project meetings, and personal conversations because those in the Philippines were not allowed to go out of their houses freely.

In terms of grades and individual output, solely the professors in-charge of the exchange program in the OU side are responsible for evaluation of the OU students. The students who are joining the UHM classes are required to submit reports every lesson through Google Forms to their OU instructors about what they learned. On the other hand, such reports are not required for students joining the ADMU class because the OU instructors are able to join the students in the synchronous sessions. The Filipino Department is grateful to the professors at UHM and ADMU because the clarifications and concerns were easily resolved, they allowed the OU students in their classes, and that joining the classes did not incur any additional cost on the



students' end.

For a program to be successful, it must be beneficial to all parties concerned. The online student exchange program also benefits partner institutions, not just OU. According to UHM and ADMU, they saw importance in the program in that it fosters ties between the universities. One faculty member stated to being glad of the invitation as the program may open future projects between their university and OU in the future, such as the continuity of students exchange in a face-to-face setting when COVID-19 eases.

### **3.2 The UHM and ADMU classes**

There were two classes available in UHM and one class in ADMU. The two classes in UHM are Philippine Food, Music, and Ritual, and Philippine Travelogue: People, Places, and Practices. The course title of the class in ADMU is Japanese Business Management and Labor.

#### **3.2.1 Philippine Food, Music, and Ritual (UHM)**

The Philippine Food, Music, and Ritual class offered by UHM was handled by Mr. Agaton Pasion, Jr. The class was held every Friday from 15:00 to 17:30 HST (Saturday from 10:00 to 12:30 JST). The school term when the classes were offered, and when the OU students joined were from August 23 to December 17, 2021. According to the syllabus provided the course description is: "In the context of Philippine history, this course will provide an introduction to Philippine food, music, and rituals. Although these aspects of culture are discussed separately, they are also interrelated. As such, the course will show the integration of these various elements in Philippine life. Emphasis will be on the diverse rather than the homogeneous nature of Philippine culture through time (history), place (geography), and social situations. The course begins with a brief historical background on the Philippines, its diverse ethnic groups and their worldview. Then, through videos and other audiovisual materials, it will present and discuss Philippine cultural forms, and current Philippine issues situated in the global context. It is hoped that students experience these aspects of Philippine culture and not just read about them. Thus, it is recommended that students try out Filipino food, listen to Philippine music and participate in Philippine rituals albeit in the context of modern times... I encourage you to use all your linguistic skills in this course." (Pasion, Jr. 2021).

#### **3.2.2 Philippine Travelogue: People, Places, and Practices (UHM)**

Philippine Travelogue: People, Places, and Practices at UHM was held every Tuesday from 15:00 to 17:30 HST (Wednesday from 10:00 to 12:30 JST). Dr. Jayson Parba was in-charge of the class. The school term when the class was offered, and when the OU students joined were from August 23 to December 17, 2021. The course description of the class is: "This course takes you on a journey to the 7,107 islands of the Philippines where you will encounter the country's diverse ethnolinguistic groups and the rich multicultural heritage of its people. Go on a guided and informative tour from the northernmost islands of Batanes, the Cordillera highlands, the

central plains of Luzon, the bustling national capital region, the beaches of Boracay, the Queen City of the south, the seven volcanoes of Camiguin island, the unfamiliar lands of the Lumad, to the crystal-clear waters of Sulu. Through texts and digital resources, you will witness the unique practices and lifeways of the peoples of the Philippines, develop a critical perspective on their worldview, and find its connection to other cultures.” (Parba 2021).

### **3.2.3 Japanese Business Management and Labor (ADMU)**

Mr. Rodolfo Narciso teaches Japanese Business Management and Labor at ADMU. The class is conducted synchronously and asynchronously. Synchronous classes are held through Zoom every other Thursday from 9:30 to 11:00 PST (Thursday from 10:30 to 12:00 JST). The school term when the classes were offered, and when the OU students joined were from August 26 to December 18, 2021. The course description of the Japanese Business Management and Labor class is: “A study of the Japanese business environment. An analysis of the various aspects of Japanese corporations – organization; production and quality control; marketing; information technology; finance; and human resource management.” (Narciso 2021).

### **3.3 The Student Participants**

The OU faculty members had a hybrid explanatory meeting in July 2021 for the students who were thinking of joining the program. The main contents of the meeting were the objectives of the program, what classes they can join, and the requirements needed. After that, a total of 19 students enrolled in the class: one each from School of Economics, School of Letters and School of Science, and one Chinese Major and 14 Filipino Majors from School of Foreign Studies. The students were in the 2<sup>nd</sup> to 4<sup>th</sup> level. Among the 19, five chose Japanese Business Management and Labor (ADMU), 11 chose Philippine Travelogue: People, Places, and Practices (UHM), and seven students chose Philippine Food, Music, and Ritual (UHM). They attended a lecture regarding cultural understanding and orientation on August 23, 2021 before the classes began.

The reasons why the students decided to join the program can be categorized into four: 1) Improvement in language skills; 2) Interest and concern in the contents of classes; 3) Acquisition or training of the attitudes for cross-cultural understanding; and 4) Situations affected by COVID-19 pandemic. Regarding the improvement in language skills, many of them wished to have more opportunities to speak English, understand and discuss in English and improve their English and Filipino skills. As most of the students belonged to the Filipino Department, they were interested in the contents of the classes. This was echoed by the students who belonged to another major and other schools who also shared that they had interest in the contents of the classes. They expected to learn about Philippine culture, people and regions to deepen their interest, knowledge and understanding in them. The students who joined the ADMU class were also interested on how Filipinos are viewing Japanese companies and how Japanese companies are expanding business in the Philippines. Some students also mentioned that they would like to communicate actively with the ADMU and UHM students. Specifically, to share and exchange

their thoughts and ideas to become more proactive because these are necessary in a globalized world and in an international community. One student was happy to join a class in an university abroad because she had no choice but to give up studying abroad due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

One student chose all three classes but withdrew from all at an early stage due to an undisclosed reason. Two students chose both classes by UHM. However, one of them withdrew from the class after participating in the first session because of the difficulties in small group discussions and English proficiency. In total, the number of students who withdrew in the online student exchange program were six. Besides the reason of the withdrawal of the abovementioned two students, another one also felt difficulties in English and the other three withdrew without stating any reason. Additionally, there were four students in the Philippine Food, Music, and Ritual class who had more than five absences. 13 students presented their reports about what they have learned in the classes that they attended. Their final presentation was held online on December 17, 2021. In the end, the number of the students who made it through the end was three in the ADMU class, two in the Philippine Travelogue: People, Places, and Practices class and nine in the Philippine Food, Music, and Ritual class.

#### **4. Results: Achievements and Challenges of the Program**

During the program, the OU students faced some struggles. The biggest one is regarding their English proficiency. They had difficulties in understanding lectures, preparing for the classes, and participating in discussions and group activities. In the questionnaire after the program, four out of nine respondents cited these as their difficulties. Lack in English language proficiency was also the reason why some students withdrew during the early stage or after some sessions. Even though the sessions were synchronous, the OU students who completed the program revealed that it was difficult for the OU students to ask clarifications and questions to the instructors and the students of ADMU and UHM because the classes were online. The OU students could not also ask casually among each other because each of them joined the classes at home or one by one on-campus. After admitting that English proficiency was one of their problems, they also sought and were offered some solutions. One OU student answered that one of the ADMU students assisted her when the student noticed that she was experiencing difficulties during the final group activity. Additionally, many of the OU students experienced consideration from the ADMU and UHM students who slowly explained class-related matters in English to them.

In addition to language barrier, some students faced miscommunication and misunderstanding. In the ADMU class, the instructor explained that the OU students were also members of groups and should participate in the group activities. However, the students in one of the groups misunderstood that the OU student in their group was only an observer, so they continued their discussions without her. The OU faculty members in-charge advised the

student to explain to her groupmates that she was also a part of the group once again, and kindly requested the ADMU instructor to remind the ADMU students that the OU students are in the class not only as observers. Additionally, some of the OU students who joined the ADMU class often visited the OU faculty members in-charge soon after each of the sessions to ask questions about the contents and consult for advice on assignments and group activities. One of them answered in the questionnaire that it was good that she consulted the OU faculty members and fellow OU students for advice.

The other difficulties reported were the lack of expertise in the field of economics and marketing, the lack of IT skills needed for group activities, systemic issues (inaccessible to or inexperience of LMS) and situational constraints as non-regular students at the ADMU and UHM classes. As the OU students are not regular students of ADMU and UHM, it was natural to have some systemic issues and situational constraints, but the OU faculty members should have taken these into consideration and assisted them more. Cooperation between ADMU and UHM led them to be able to have outputs such as discussion with each other and making video projects that were submitted and accomplished in both ADMU and UHM, and OU.

As a culminating activity to the program, the students had to make an individual final presentation in Japanese online on December 18, 2021. The topic of the presentation for the students who joined the ADMU class was cultural differences in marketing approaches between the Philippines and Japan. They were tasked to report on what they learned from the lectures and group activities. For the students who joined the UHM classes, the final presentation should be on the topic of culture change. They chose one Philippine tradition or practice that was mentioned in class that they found interesting and presented on the following: 1) Brief introduction on the chosen topic; 2) How the tradition or practice is described officially; 3) How the tradition or practice is done in Hawai'i; 4) Similarities or differences, if there is a gap, between official descriptions and how it is actually practiced in Hawai'i; 5) What they think are possible reasons for the gap, if any. The length of the report of each student lasted approximately 10 minutes, more or less, with 10 or less presentation slides.

The students learned a lot not only about the contents like Philippine history, food, music, traditions, business management and the like, but also about how teachers guide the students, and how students of ADMU and UHM discuss and deal with tasks. As mentioned earlier, there are some students who mentioned that their lack of English proficiency became an obstacle to let them understand the lectures and communicate with their classmates but thanks to the consideration and cooperation of the instructors and students, they did not give up and they expressed appreciation to this.

Many of the OU students were impressed by the proactive and independent attitude of the ADMU and UHM students as they often asked questions and made statements voluntarily.

They also admired the fairly high English proficiency of the ADMU and UHM students. The OU students also noticed that the ADMU and UHM students were communicative with each other even online like reacting by using chat function of Zoom frequently in the classes, and that the various backgrounds of the instructors and the students let the whole class learn different cultures. The presentation videos made by the ADMU and UHM students were creative, ingenious, and elaborate which are not common in Japan, as mentioned by some OU students. There are also some OU students who observed that the ADMU and UHM students were freer and more relaxed than Japanese students because they did not mind turning on the video wherever they were, not only when they were at home but also in the parlor, outside the building, and even during car travel.

The OU students also realized the differences of the style on how the instructors teach and guide their students. The instructors often asked questions to the students and encouraged them to express their opinions, and more discussions and presentations were introduced compared to the classes in Japan. They became surprised to know the quantity of the required assignments and reports but were also interested in the variety of the contents, such as letting them experience cooking, video making and the like. They also observed the closer relationship between teachers and students, the students were addressed by their first names, and the teachers set the mood for the classes by joking and friendly reacting to what their students had said. But on the contrary, one OU student mentioned that he felt that compared to Japanese teachers one instructor was stricter to the students who did not listen to the classes or explanations attentively.

Regarding the level of participation, the depth of comprehension and the feeling of accomplishment in the questionnaire was apparent. All respondents answered that they attempted to understand the contents of the classes even though they felt that they could not understand them well or could not join and contribute to the discussions and activities compared to their classmates in the partner universities. Despite it, their feeling of accomplishment was high as seven of them answered “high” and the other two answered “average.” It can be said that despite the difficulties, they challenged themselves proactively and understood the importance of studying seriously to have a good experience. They felt content and accomplished by overcoming the problems.

The OU students expressed that the program mainly helped in the following points: it let them have an opportunity to exchange with the students in other countries and have a wider view on things, and it helped and motivated them to study English, Filipino and the other classes in OU. Many of the respondents in questionnaire answered “Yes” to the questions whether there were changes in their views and opinions after the program specifically in the questions, “Did your knowledge and understanding about the Philippines increase?”, “Did your views on having an exchange with Filipinos living in the Philippines or in Japan get better?”, “Did your interest to travel in the Philippines grow?” and “Did your will to improve or acquire your English and

Filipino skills grow?”.

The students appreciated the whole online international exchange program. All of the nine respondents of the questionnaire expressed contentment with the whole program of 海外フィールドスタディ C (Field Study Program C) and the contents of the ADMU and UHM classes. Most of them answered that they wanted to join another program like this without any charge or extra fees, will recommend to their friends and junior fellows about it, and wished that other OU faculties will plan another program with the other universities. Another merit of the online international exchange that six out of nine respondents mentioned is that they were able to join the classes overseas and have a relationship with the students even though they live in Japan. However, they still wish to go abroad for study and they understand the importance of studying abroad.

Here are some of the OU students' messages to the ADMU and UHM instructors. The messages are as written by the students:

*“It is treasure for me to have talked with ADMU students. They were smart and friendly. I'm not good at speaking English but the students were nice to me. I'll study hard to improve my language skills and to increase my knowledge of Philippines.”*

*“As a Japanese, it was very difficult for me to learn Japanese marketing by English in class, but it motivated me to learn English.”*

*“It is enjoyable to listen to teachers and some UHM students talking about their experience in the Philippines. I will keep on studying Filipino and about the Philippines, making the most of what I learned in your classes.”*

*“I think this class provided me with a good opportunity to think about where I would like to work.”*

*“Through this class, I was able to learn a lot about the daily life and culture of the Philippines, which I cannot usually see, and became familiar with the Philippines.”*

*“This class made me feel like traveling around the Philippines.”*

## **5. Conclusion**

The program showed some accomplishment and results not only in the learning of the students but also the significance and benefits of international exchange between the faculty members of ADMU, UHM and OU. It is important to continue the exchanges between partner universities abroad, whether online or face-to-face so that we can create a more productive relationship in the future. The faculty members of ADMU and UHM mentioned that they hoped to continue the collaborations and have programs like this again in the future.

What remains to be seen are the long-term effects of this short-term program. The OU students reflected on the experience soon after the program ended and then from the standpoint

of what they learned mainly at the micro level like language, contents of the class, presentation skills and the like. But it is more important for us to study what they learned or acquired at a more macro level such as in attitudes towards cross-cultural communication and understandings, social issues, and lifelong learning throughout one's career.

## NOTES

1) The academic calendar of Ateneo de Manila University runs from August to May and has Intersession in June and July. During Academic Year 2021 to 2022, the first semester started on August 2021 and the second semester started on January 2022 (Ateneo de Manila University, n.d.). On the other hand, the academic calendar of University of Hawai'i at Mānoa starts from August to May. The summer semester runs from May to August, the fall semester runs from August to December, and the spring semester is from January to May (University of Hawai'i at Mānoa, n.d.).

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## ADDITIONAL STATEMENT

In this report, both authors discussed the outlines together. Ruiz wrote Part 1 to Part 3.2.3 and Yamoto wrote Part 3.3 to Part 5. They discussed about the report's contents once again and polished the draft before its finalization.

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