

Paper 94 – Education

ISSUES AND CHALLENGES FACED BY INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS IN THE PHILIPPINES

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ABSTRACT

Inbound international student mobility (ISM), the inflow of students to the host country, has been a lucrative income generator or economic driver for many countries such as the US, the UK, Australia, and Malaysia. However, the Philippines is lagging behind in terms of ISM and little is known about it, thus this qualitative case study was conducted to find out the issues and challenges facing the international students, undergraduate and graduate, studying in the Philippines. Data were gathered through three focus group interviews from 20 international students from 17 countries studying in Baguio and Cavite. The stay of the participants in the Philippines ranges from 1-6 years. The data were transcribed and analyzed thematically. In the findings, three main themes emerged: problematic visa processing largely caused by corruption in the immigration office, lack of communication and information dissemination, and culture shock with eight sub-themes: pollution and momma (chewed betel nut spat with red saliva), racial discrimination, taking advantage of foreigners, language barrier, use of left hand in giving or receiving something, queuing, gays acting like female, and respect to younger ones even those lower in rank. The participants consider the visa processing as the most frustrating issue they have been facing. On the other hand, they reported that queuing in the bus and jeepney stations, in the supermarkets, etc. was a culture shock to them but has taught them to be patient and to follow order. Culture orientation is recommended to address racial discrimination and taking advantage of foreigners.

Keywords: Internationalization, International Student Mobility, Economic Driver

