

**The Lived Experiences of Filipino Canadians in Manitoba Who Pursued
Social Work Education in Canada**

by

Rafael Laureano

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Abstract

This thesis explores the lived experiences of Filipino Canadians in social work education in Canada, to address the limited literature on their unique experiences within a Manitoban context. This research implements anti-oppressive practice (AOP) and anti-oppressive social work research (AOSWR) as its theoretical framework and constructivist grounded theory (CGT) as its methodological framework. This research used transcripts of 12 participant interviews, analyzed through open, axial, and selective coding, supported by analytical memos in an iterative process to develop a theoretical description of their experiences, encapsulated in five core themes: family and cultural influences, pathways into social work education, mental health and self-reflection, barriers, and educational experiences. From these themes, an analysis was constructed that highlights the additional burden Filipino Canadians face, such as cultural negotiation in white spaces with few Filipino role models, limited understanding of social work within their Filipino families and communities, and internalized oppression that undermines their sense of self in their academic experiences. This research also offers recommendations, based on excerpts from participants, to address these issues for researchers, government and policymakers, social work faculty members and educators, and current and future students.

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Dedication

Dedicated first to my partner Krista W. and our two dogs, Ernie and Nyx, for their unwavering support through hospital procedures and visits, being redeployed to support forest fire evacuees, prolonged power outages, basement flooding, and everything else. You gave me the strength to complete this thesis.

Second, to my parents, Orlando and Priscilla, who left all they knew in the Philippines, sacrificed, and worked hard in Canada to give my family a good life so that one day I could complete this thesis.

Finally, to all Filipino Canadian students in social work, past, present, and future, who may have felt alone or unsure if social work is for them, I hope one day this thesis will no longer be relevant.

"If you have come to help me, you are wasting your time. But if you have come because your liberation is bound up with mine, then let us work together." - Indigenous Australian activist Lilla Watson

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Section 1: Introduction

With Canada becoming an ever more diverse society, cultural perspectives are essential for professional fields, including social work, to adapt to and serve Canada's increasingly multicultural communities. Although social work claims to promote diversity and inclusion, it continues to struggle to attract racialized populations, including Filipino Canadians, into the profession. This is illustrated in demographic data of Canadian social work students shared further in this thesis.

Statistics Canada (2023a) reports that the Philippines is the third-largest source of immigration to Canada. Filipino Canadians also make up a large part of the Canadian economy. In 2020, Filipino Canadians were mainly employed in the service and sales sector, followed by healthcare, business, finance, administration, and trades (Statistics Canada, 2023a). Furthermore, Filipino Canadians are most likely to work in the healthcare and social assistance industry (Statistics Canada, 2021). These broad categories include nurses, support workers, and community service workers, but they do not explicitly include social workers. Although Filipino Canadians are present in these sectors, this does not negate their underrepresentation in social work.

According to Coloma et al. (2012), the mainstream commentary on Filipinos in Canada tends to stereotype and minimize Filipinos, ignoring serious issues impacting this community. These perspectives, intersecting with Filipino cultural attitudes, can discourage Filipino Canadians from seeking support, creating additional barriers that shape their experiences in Canada. Studies have shown that Filipinos experience higher rates of mental health issues such as depression, suicidal thoughts, and disordered eating (Sato et al., 2022). Despite this, Filipino culture tends to discourage help-seeking for mental health problems. According to Sato et al.

(2022), "Western models and approaches to mental health often fail to consider the sociopolitical and cultural factors that shape Filipino psychological experiences and help-seeking behaviours" (p. 56). Starting from a perspective rooted in the Filipino Canadian context can help shed light on an often-under-examined set of experiences and prompt social work research to investigate and seek answers to address the inequalities affecting the Filipino Canadian population in Canada.

Section 2: Rationale and Research Context

Research Problem and Statement

Academic literature on the lived experiences of Filipino Canadians in social work education in Canada is limited. Social work education asserts that it champions diversity, but falls short of attracting racialized students, precipitating the field of social work to remain predominantly white in Canada. Interestingly, Hoselton and Walsh (2023) report minimal demographic information about Canadian social workers is available. This context is important for understanding how social work can address diversity in terms of who is included, excluded, or underserved if such data does not exist or is limited. Bejan et al. (2014) also state "[d]emographic data on Canadian social workers is extremely limited" (p. 37). However, there is information that is starting to shed light on this issue that was not available when this research study was conducted. The Social Work Census (2025), using the 2024 Social Work Workforce Survey, further supports this, reporting that 80.86% of bachelor's degrees in social work and 76.12% of master's degrees in social work were held by white registered social workers in Canada who self-reported. Furthermore, Statistics Canada (2023c) reports that among social workers who identified as visible minorities, 635 of 69,445 respondents identified as Filipino Canadian across Canada. In Manitoba, 110 of 3,255 visible minority social workers reported as Filipino Canadian (Statistics Canada, 2023c).

Spencer and Wright (2023) echo similar findings in their survey of social work leadership in Canada where their respondents identified as “90 percent female and 87 percent white, 6 percent indigenous, 1 percent black, and 6 percent other (citing Métis, African, “mixture”)” (para. 9). It is not surprising that Filipino Canadians, for example, are thus underrepresented in the profession. See-Toh (2012) asserts that although 16.3 percent of Winnipeg comprises of racialized people, only 5 percent of the social workers in Winnipeg identify as racialized individuals. While this data does not specifically mention Filipino Canadians, as the author uses racialized as a term to encapsulate all those who are not white, this still suggests Filipino Canadians are underrepresented in social work education within a Manitoban context. Given that Filipino Canadians are one of the largest minority groups in Winnipeg, the figure showing 5 percent of social workers identify as racialized, including Filipino Canadians, merits further examination. Furthermore, Statistics Canada (2025) notes that Filipino Canadians make up 10.3 percent of Winnipeg's total population, according to 2021 Census data. The researcher recently became aware of the Filipino Canadian Social Workers Social Service Workers and Community Workers Network (FCSCWN), established in 2017. FCSCWN aims to create a grassroots network to support and address Filipino Canadian issues in social work in Canada and in Filipino Canadian communities. This shows that interest is growing in the need for support for Filipino Canadians in social work. A directory is being established on the FCSCWN website, but there is limited publicly available data on the number and location of Filipino social workers in Canada.

Historically, white perspectives have dominated mainstream social work education and literature in Canada, with white perspectives and assumptions at the forefront of academic discourse dissemination and knowledge creation. Khan and Absolon (2021) emphasize, “[l]ike other mainstream postsecondary education programs rooted in colonialism and White

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dominance, social work education and practice—from their inception—have been complicit in maintaining colonial injustice” (p. 165). The authors, one Indigenous and the other a racialized settler, further express their aim to transform and ameliorate the white dominance entrenched in social work education. Tailoring social work education's understanding of these perspectives, and the needs of a specific group can help us identify and understand their unique challenges. Treating all racialized groups as singular creates further oppression and silences voices.

Therefore, this Master of Social Work thesis explores the lived experiences of Filipino Canadians who have pursued social work education in accredited social work programs at postsecondary institutions in Canada. This research project helps illuminate the diversity gap in social work education in Canada and may provide a platform for Filipino Canadians to increase their visibility and voice in social work education.

Personal Context of the Researcher



Location: Ninoy Aquino International

Airport (Manila, Philippines)

Date: April 14, 1991

I am a Filipino Canadian, a heteronormative male, in my thirties, and my pronouns are he/him. I was born in General Natividad, Nueva Ecija, Philippines. I immigrated to Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada, in 1991 with my family as a child. I am a registered social worker with the Manitoba College of Social Workers (MCSW). During my social work education, I seldom encountered other Filipino

Canadian students, instructors, or practicing social workers. This situation continued into my professional practice in Community Mental Health. Although I know other Filipino social workers in Canada exist, they are few and far between and are often disconnected from each

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other. This impression stemmed from the sparse encounters that I had with Filipino Canadian social workers before this research commenced, who shared similar sentiments to my own.

This was a challenging experience as I felt alone and as if I did not belong in social work, education, or practice. I remember walking the halls of the Inner City Social Work campus, reading the names of the graduates, looking for Filipino names, and seldom finding any, which had a profound impact on me, casting doubt in my mind about whether social work was for me. I also stood out in my classes, often being the sole Filipino, which made me feel uncomfortable. In all my undergraduate social work courses at the University of Manitoba, I could count all the Filipino students on one hand. When I met other Filipino peers, we would be surprised to see another Filipino student because it was so rare in social work education. We would share



Location: University of Manitoba -
Inner City Social Work Campus
(Winnipeg, Manitoba)
Date: June 29, 2026

sentiments, assuming we were the only Filipino students in our social work program, which highlighted how isolated and underrepresented we felt. I am sharing this not just to tell my experience, but to connect it to a broader context and together tell a story of us (Filipino Canadian students in social work education).

Even in my professional practice, I would look around the room at all-staff meetings, where workers from across the Winnipeg region would come together, and I would seldom see another Filipino in the crowd. According to the City of Winnipeg (2021), 15,070 Filipinos reside in the Inkster neighbourhood, making up 63 percent of the Inkster population and 41.7 percent of Winnipeg's total Filipino population. Despite this, within my own community office at ACCESS

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Norwest, located in the Inkster neighbourhood, there are only three other Filipino social workers I am aware of. We seldom interact as we are in different programs and work out of different satellite offices, so there are limited opportunities to collaborate or discuss issues relevant to our practice as Filipino Canadian social workers.

Research Question

This study's research question is: What are the lived experiences of Filipino Canadians in accredited social work education programs from post-secondary institutions in Canada?

Research Objectives

The research objectives for this study are:

- To understand the personal, cultural, and social factors contributing to Filipino Canadians pursuing social work education in Canada.
- To identify themes related to barriers and supports (institutional and other) that impact social work education for Filipino Canadians.
- To provide possible recommendations for Canadian social work education programs to better support Filipino Canadian students and attract them into the field.

Terminology and Definitions

Social Work - is an academic discipline and profession that draws from different social science and humanities theories (International Federation of Social Workers, n.d.). Social work is essential in addressing the health and social needs of individuals, families, and communities through education, advocacy, and social justice. Social work utilizes an ecological and strength-based approach. According to the Canadian Association of Social Workers (n.d.-a), “respect for the inherent dignity and worth of persons, the pursuit of social justice, and culturally responsive

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practice that applies an anti-oppressive lens to all areas of practice and is grounded in ethics, values, and humility, are central to social work” (para. 1).

Accredited Social Work Program - refers to a social work program that has met standards set by the Canadian Association for Social Work Education (CASWE), the accrediting body for social work education in Canada. The CASWE is the regulatory body overseeing Bachelor and Master of Social Work programs in Canada. The Commission on Accreditation (COA) conducts the accreditation process, comprised of social work educators across Canada. Furthermore, the Education Policy Committee (EPC) is responsible for standardizing the curriculum used in BSW and MSW programs across Canada (Canadian Association for Social Work Education (CASWE-ACFTS), n.d.). The researcher excluded non-accredited social work programs in Canada to maintain consistency, as these institutions adhere to different standards, which would create more variability in this research project.

Social Work Student - is defined in this research study as an individual admitted to an accredited social work program in Canada. This can be at the undergraduate or graduate level, in part-time, full-time, unregistered enrollment, or discontinued student.

Social Work Graduate - is defined in this research study as an individual who has completed an accredited social work program in Canada at either the undergraduate or graduate level. This can include a Bachelor of Social Work or Master of Social Work.

Filipino Canadian - is defined in this research project as a person who can trace their heritage to the Philippines and is legally allowed to reside and work in Canada. It has a cultural, legal, and historical context. For many Filipinos, it begins with a personal journey of leaving the Philippines and migrating to other countries for improved economic opportunities, either as newcomers to Canada or their descendants. While the experiences of newcomers and their

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descendants will differ, this study considers them together. Because there is no existing data on Filipino Canadian students in social work programs in Canada, being more inclusive with newcomers and non-newcomer experiences provides a practical and methodological means to take inventory of personal contexts before seeking out more specific research. Future research can examine and build on this research and design studies to compare and contrast these experiences. This can include people who were born in the Philippines and moved to Canada, or people who were born in Canada with at least one Filipino parent, or people who can trace their direct ancestry to parents, grandparents, or earlier generations who immigrated from the Philippines, or whose descendants immigrated to Canada. In this research study, Filipino Canadians are distinguished from Filipinos, as they primarily reside in Canada and interact with Canadian society socially, culturally, economically, and legally on an ongoing basis.

Search Strategy and Knowledge Gap

The researcher attempted to find information about the scope of Filipino Canadians in social work practice and education in terms of the number of students enrolled and in professional practice through institutions such as the Manitoba College of Social Workers (MCSW), the University of Manitoba, the Government of Manitoba, and the Government of Canada. The researcher found no publicly available information compiled on the number of Filipino Canadians enrolled in social work education or social work practice. To investigate further, the researcher completed a database search (Appendix 7: Search Strategy) to determine the scope of research on Filipino Canadians and social work education in academic literature. The researcher created a keyword table to combine search strings or terms. Each column corresponded to search terms and their variations that might yield more relevant results. For

distinct search terms, such as "social work," no variations were provided to prevent irrelevant results.

The exploratory search strategy did not identify any additional relevant articles beyond those included in the literature review. The search strategy indicated the sparse research on Filipino Canadians in social work education and on Filipino Canadians in general. The researcher found articles on Filipino Canadians in social work education in the gray literature, but these were often vignettes and did not adequately address the research question and objectives. The researcher attempted to incorporate as many relevant findings as possible, but this could not be done in a systematic way, as they did not show up in academic literature databases. After completing the search strategy, the researcher found no additional articles beyond what has been listed in the literature review of this thesis.

Literature Review

Before discussing the literature relevant to Filipino Canadians in social work education in Canada, it is important to establish an underpinning of the research strategy, constructivist grounded theory in regard to conducting the literature review. Conducting a literature review in grounded theory research is a contested matter. In the constructivist grounded theory approach, the researcher is recommended not to do an in-depth literature review but instead focus on their reflexivity and how their preconceptions can bias and influence their research (Deering and Williams, 2024). According to Ramalho et al. (2015), "[constructivist grounded theory methodology], reflexivity does not aim to eliminate the researcher's subjectivity from the resulting theory, but to allow the data to be prioritized over the researcher's assumptions and previously acquired knowledge, including any reviewed literature" (p. 6). This assertion can be confusing for novice researchers. Deering and Williams (2024) cite that some grounded theory

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researchers discourage reviewing the literature before data is collected and analyzed, so that researchers do not form preconceptions about the theory. On the other hand, the authors also mentioned that researchers need to review the literature to demonstrate that they intend to address a knowledge gap in the research and to obtain research ethics approval. This is the approach the researcher used to conduct this literature review. Constructivist grounded theory will be elaborated on further in the methodology section of this thesis.

As mentioned earlier, the researcher found no publicly available statistics of Filipino Canadians in social work education in Canada at the time of this research. A Boolean search of multiple databases found zero academic papers citing both “Filipino” *AND* “social work” (Appendix 7: Search Strategy). The researcher limited the initial search to peer-reviewed sources, so that theses and dissertations on Filipino Canadians would be out of scope, as they are not peer-reviewed and therefore do not establish a rigorous baseline. Theses and dissertation sources were used at later stages to address gaps in the peer-reviewed literature. This further demonstrates a gap in the literature. As a result, this literature review will be broad in scope, encompassing Filipinos in Canadian societal discourse, diversity issues in social work, and Filipino Canadians' attitudes toward higher education, to establish a foundation for further discussion in this thesis.

Filipino Canadians are an integral part of Canadian society. According to Statistics Canada (2026), Filipinos comprise 2.6 percent of the total Canadian population or approximately 900,000 Filipino Canadians across Canada. This concentration is greater in metropolitan areas such as Winnipeg, where approximately 10 percent of the population is Filipino (Malek, 2019). Filipino Canadians are seen in our society, but their voices and perspectives are rarely highlighted or fully heard in academic literature. Coloma et al. (2012) highlight how often social

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science research narrows Filipinos to stereotypes, but neglects to understand their marginalized experiences. Coloma et al. (2012) further note that "Filipina/o communities are put into a paradoxical position being invisible and hyper visible: invisible because numerous kinds of peoples, problems, and achievements are ignored and hyper visible because only the stereotypes are deemed relevant and significant for publication" (p. 5). This dynamic of invisibility/visibility is also reflected in social work education, where Filipino Canadians are sparsely mentioned in classroom discussions, the curriculum, or in social work literature. Their absence in these domains mirrors the broader social context mentioned earlier by Coloma et al., which describes Filipino Canadians as overlooked, except when they are reduced to narrow stereotypes. In other words, Filipino Canadians are seen, but not heard, and how they are depicted in societal discourse is largely shaped by outsiders rather than by their communities. This reality tends to oversimplify and minimize the experiences of Filipino Canadians and, therefore, is seen as insignificant and not worth investigating.

As mentioned earlier, there is limited demographic information about Filipino Canadians in social work education and practice, suggesting diversity issues in social work in Canada. One of the guiding principles in the Canadian Association of Social Workers (CASW) Code of Ethics (2024) Guidelines: Social workers respect all manner of diversity by advocating for equitable, diverse, and inclusive workplaces (1.5.4); and seeking knowledge about and demonstrating an understanding of the intersecting factors of exclusion and all forms of diversity (1.5.5). The lack of diversity in social work education and practice in Canada shows that social work has yet to attain this in practice. Addressing this issue requires a focused discussion on diversity in social work education in Canada that will be discussed further in this thesis.

In contrast, other helping professions, such as nursing, have tried to address diversity. Dubois (2023) reports that approximately 4 percent of the registered nurses in Canada come from the Philippines. According to Cornelissen (2021), "[i]n nursing and health care occupations in Canada, there is a significant overrepresentation of people from certain regions of the world, including the Philippines" (para. 2). This is in sharp contrast to social work in Canada, where there is no comparable data that exists, and Filipino Canadians remain largely underrepresented and not accounted for. This comparison highlights the need to examine how social work education understands and responds to diversity-related issues.

Filipino Canadians' attitudes and relationships to higher education are complex and multifaceted, and differ between generations and contexts. These factors can contribute to Filipino Canadians' pursuit of career pathways. Coloma et al. (2012) argue that many newcomer Filipinos to Canada have modest finances and are pressured to enter the labour market as soon as possible to pay off loans and support family members back home.

On the other hand, Camargo et al. (2024) and Statistics Canada (2023b) report that 40 percent of Filipinos had a bachelor's degree or higher in Canada, but were underrepresented in professions that require bachelor's degrees. Furthermore, Statistics Canada (2023b) notes postsecondary attainment for Filipino men decreased between the first and second generations compared to other Asian populations in Canada, which remained consistent between generations and genders.

Kelly et al. (2014) report several factors influencing Filipino Canadian youths' pursuit of higher education. These include financial challenges, the de-professionalization of first-generation Filipino Canadian parents upon immigrating to Canada, and a lack of mentorship for Filipino Canadian youth. They explain that first-generation Filipino Canadian parents often feel a

duty to finance their children's education, but tend to guide their children's career pathways based on affordability rather than their children's abilities, in addition to being averse to taking out loans to finance their children's education (Kelly et al., 2014, p. 14). The authors further note that first-generation Filipino Canadians with degrees, obtained outside of Canada, frequently find their degrees unrecognized and undergo a de-professionalization process, in which they feel required to take lower-paid jobs to support their families. The authors recommend that Filipino Canadians need more mentorship and role models in the Filipino Canadian community to help guide them to education pathways they might not have considered. They write:

[t]he Philippines' distinctive colonial history, and its legacy in economic and cultural dependency, has resulted in a national orientation towards migration as a development strategy that is perhaps unique in the world. This may seem far removed from the experiences of Filipino youth in Canada, but the racialization of Filipino identity and its association with subservient and caring labour is closely connected with this legacy. This in turn affects the place that Filipino youth see for themselves in Canadian society (p. 27).

Other contexts considered but not included in this literature review were academic articles and gray literature on other racialized social work students in Canada. Also excluded was literature featuring Filipino Canadians who were social workers in the Philippines or in another country, immigrated to Canada, and were recredentialed. This was because this process does not require them to complete their entire social work program in Canada, as reported by the Canadian Association of Social Workers (n.d.-b). This was more of a practical consideration to maintain the focus of this research study, rather than an exclusionary one, so that the research

study is a concise articulation of the lived experiences of Filipino Canadians in social work education in Canada.

Theoretical Framework

Anti-Oppressive Practice (AOP) Lens

Anti-oppressive practice (AOP) was selected as a theoretical framework for this research project because it bridges theoretical knowledge and practice. AOP is both a theory and practice, intended to function at all system levels, from individual to structural and is also a prominent social justice theory in social work education and practice (Baines, 2011; Rogers, 2012). Burke and Harrison (1998) state, “the driving force of anti-oppressive practice is the act of challenging inequalities” (p. 133). However, although AOP is a prominent social justice theory in social work education and practice, its principles are often lacking in social work research (Rogers, 2012).

Burke and Harrison (1998) highlight numerous definitions for AOP as it is dynamically defined based on our ever-changing social relations. Dominelli (1996) defines AOP in her research as:

a person-centered philosophy; an egalitarian value system concerned with reducing the deleterious effects of structural inequalities upon people’s lives; a methodology focusing on both process and outcome; and a way of structuring relationships between individuals that aims to empower users by reducing the harmful effects of social hierarchies on their interaction and the work they do together (p. 170).

Oppression is a core concept in AOP. Oppression can be externally or internally imposed and disseminated through ideologies, moral standards, and laws imposed on individuals or groups (Baines, 2011). Dominelli (2002) further defines oppression as:

...the relations that divide people into dominant or superior groups and subordinate or inferior ones. These relations of domination consist of the systematic devaluing of the attributes and contributions of those deemed inferior, and their exclusion from the resources available to those in the dominant group. (as cited by Hogewoning, 2012, p. 4)

Another core concept in AOP is transformation. According to Baines (2011), transformation addresses people's struggles while dismantling the larger social forces that create oppression. AOP, in social work, seeks transformation by addressing oppression through a social justice orientation (Baines, 2011). Burke and Harrison (1998) further state, "[a]nti-oppressive practice is a dynamic process based on the changing complex patterns of social relations" (p. 132).

Social work attempts to address oppression by challenging the existing power structure in societies. This requires an understanding of the mechanisms that create oppression in our society, such as sexism, colonialism, and racism. Campbell (2003) notes that anti-oppressive practice can trace its origins to different social movements associated with gender, class, sexual orientation, race, and disability. This is a core strength of AOP as it addresses the multidimensionality of oppression in our societies to create social change.

AOP also has several central ideas, including (1) awareness of social differences, (2) linking personal and political power, (3) historical and geographical location, and (4) reflexivity and mutual involvement (Burke and Harrison, 1998).

Social differences - refer to a power differential between two social groups that create differences that can be inherited or ascribed; people's personal experiences are connected to a larger social context. Inherited refers to traits passed down through your family or culture, such as traditions, socioeconomic status, and social expectations. Ascribe refers to traits assigned by

society, such as race, age, and biological sex. Power is a social concept that refers to the ability to shape decisions, opportunities, and outcomes, operating at the individual level through everyday interactions, at the structural level through institutions, and at the system level through policies and laws.

Historical and geographical location - refers to individual experiences and events within a time and place given meaning through social and cultural differences. This can refer to a person's or family's migration history, the neighbourhood one resides in, one's socioeconomic and cultural references, and how these interact to shape a person's meaning and perspective on the world.

Reflexivity and mutual involvement - refers to an ongoing process of self-reflection on how our values, assumptions, and social location shape our interactions with one another. Burke and Harrison (1998) note that these processes acknowledge differences in how power operates within our relationships and influence how we perceive these experiences. In other words, the differences in our personal values and our positions in society, shape our perspectives, discourse, and interactions with each other.

One of the critiques of AOP is that it creates a power differential between the social work practitioner and the service user where the practitioner's narrative prevails in developing theory and practice (Wilson and Beresford, 2000). Furthermore, while AOP promotes empowerment and consciousness raising in bringing awareness to the oppressed, it does not necessarily lead to transformative social change (Kumashiro, 2000). A post-modern critique criticizes AOP as cemented in subjectivism and essentialism, reinforcing the dominant culture's narrative (Brown, 2012). According to Strier (2007), "the quest for anti-oppressive social work has become a central theme in current social work literature, primarily in the examination of practices,

services, social work education and policy” (p. 858). In addition, power structures can manifest in research; therefore, “anti-oppressive alternatives” (Rogers, 2012, p. 868) are needed.

Campbell (2003) reiterates this by stating that “anti-oppressive theory is an effective framework for social work education that is uniquely suited to realizing the mission and potential of social work in light of current social and political realities” (p. 121). Building on this perspective can establish a framework for using anti-oppressive practice within the context of Filipino Canadians in social work education in Canada. AOP has been further criticized for under-examining race and often lumping unique experiences into broad categories. Brown (2012) states, “the multiplicity of forms of oppression within anti-oppressive theory and practice represents the desire to be everywhere, to be all inclusive” (p. 51). However, a perspective that attempts to be everywhere but ends up nowhere is flawed; one could argue this as another form of “objective detachment” and further perpetuate systems of oppression (Brown, 2012). While the underpinning of AOP exists, its objective of emancipation and liberation is still worth striving for. With any idea, there are both positive and problematic parts, but they should not be grounds for abandoning a position completely, as it can serve as a framework for deconstructing, repositioning, and moving beyond what has been articulated to find greater meaning and pathways to ameliorate these oppressive forces. While AOP tends to generalize, that does not mean it cannot be used to focus on a specific context or situation. Brown further argues that, to achieve this, the blending of approaches within anti-oppressive discourse “encourages reflexive discursive practices to resist contributing to oppression” (p. 53).

Anti-Oppressive Social Work Research (AOSWR) Lens

The researcher practiced an AOP framework guided by Strier's (2007) anti-oppressive social work research (AOSWR) approach. AOSWR is appropriate within the framing of

colonialism and racism, such that it creates barriers that limit a certain population from accessing or participating in higher education, as these are often seen as sources of oppression. Creswell and Creswell (2018) state a "[theoretical] lens becomes a transformative perspective that shapes the types of questions asked, informs how the data is collected and analyzed, and provides a call for action or change" (p. 65).

Section 3: Methodology

Research Design

The *research philosophy* - utilized in this research study is anti-oppressive (AOP) and anti-oppressive social work research (AOSWR). AOSWR challenges structural inequalities by prioritizing the voices of marginalized populations and resists research practices that create oppression. To implement these attributes of AOP/AOSWR philosophies, the researcher utilized constructivist grounded theory (CGT) as a methodological framework. CGT applies anti-oppressive principles by centering on the co-construction of research meaning between the researcher and the participant, emphasizing reflexivity, and supporting the participant's agency throughout the research process. Moreover, AOP/AOSWR resist the dominant narrative and instead centers its analysis on perspectives of participants by using their words and interpretations to guide coding and theme development. The literature demonstrates that CGT studies have been used with AOP. This is illustrated in the research study conducted by Baines and Edwards (2018), which highlights how everyday practices across different care facilities, through the CGT and AOP/AOSWR lens, revealed visible and invisible forms of oppression, challenged staff bias, and centred residential care residents' desired outcomes in culturally appropriate and ethical practice. Another study by Christmas-Krumreich (2003) used CGT to

examine how youth self-define wellness and AOP to challenge the pathology-oriented narratives often ascribed to them.

The *research type* - is inductive, working from the bottom-up approach where the researcher collects and analyzes data to develop conclusions (Creswell and Creswell, 2018). Inductive research can be beneficial when little research is available about a research topic.

The *research approach* - is qualitative. Qualitative research is interested in people's understanding and experience of their world and mainly uses open-ended questions to get an in-depth awareness of their perspective (Tenny et al., 2017). According to Creswell (2013), "[w]e conduct qualitative research when we want to empower individuals to share their stories, hear their voices and minimize the power relationship that often exists between the researcher and the participants in a study" (p. 48).

The *research strategy* - for this study is constructivist grounded theory (CGT). Sociologist Kathy Charmaz is the primary researcher credited for CGT's development (Higginbottom and Lauridsen, 2014). CGT is a contemporary approach to Glaser and Strauss's classical grounded theory. Miller (2024) states CGT is "an effective method for finding out about a phenomenon where little is known. The appeal of CGT is that unlike many other approaches, it embraces the idea of subjective reality" (p. 2). Higginbottom and Lauridsen (2014) note that CGT assumes reality is subjective and knowledge is socially constructed and, therefore, promotes the identification of the researcher's preconceptions. CGT develops theory through the shared understanding that emerges during the research process. Participants' accounts and the researcher's interpretations interact to co-construct meaning. In this approach, both the data and the researcher's perspective contribute to the co-construction of the developing theory. Higginbottom and Lauridsen (2014) further note that CGT starts with specific research questions

formulated before data collection that is informed by the literature review, where the research probes can change to explore respondents' comments more deeply. This research methodology aligned with the research question and objectives as they centered on participant experiences. Furthermore, it utilizes an open-ended approach to build a deeper description of the focus of this study.

Constructivist Grounded Theory (CGT) Procedures

In constructivist grounded theory (CGT), data collection and analysis occur concurrently, with insights from earlier interviews guiding later ones (Khoso et al., 2023). The researcher can begin the data analysis before collecting all the data because CGT is iterative and nonlinear in its approach (Tie et al., 2019). Charmaz (2015) states, “[g]rounded theory has two crucial characteristics that enhance its capability for theory construction: flexibility and focus” (p. 402). CGT also maintains many of the distinct methods of classical grounded theory, which includes coding, theoretical sampling, and memo writing (Charmaz, 2015). The researcher uses Charmaz’s CGT procedures and features outlined by Khoso et al. (2023), to guide the data analysis:

Familiarizing with the data - involves the researcher reading the transcripts and getting familiar with all the collected data.

Initial or open coding - in this process, the researcher breaks down data into fragmented parts and assigns codes to the data based on their frequency to help categorize the data. The data is open to all possible meanings and interpretations in this phase, and conceptual names or labels are assigned.

Axial coding - is the process of connecting/associating the fragmented data to form categories. Categories are either higher or lower level. Higher-level categories are noted as

themes in this study, and lower levels are the attributes of those themes and are referred to as sub-themes.

Focus or selective coding - in this process, the researcher reviewed their initial and axial coding and integrated themes into core themes, ensuring that themes are accurate and relevant to the data through a refinement process where themes can be combined or created into more distinct core themes.

Theoretical coding - establishes the relationships of core themes from focus coding and constructs a detailed narrative of the study findings.

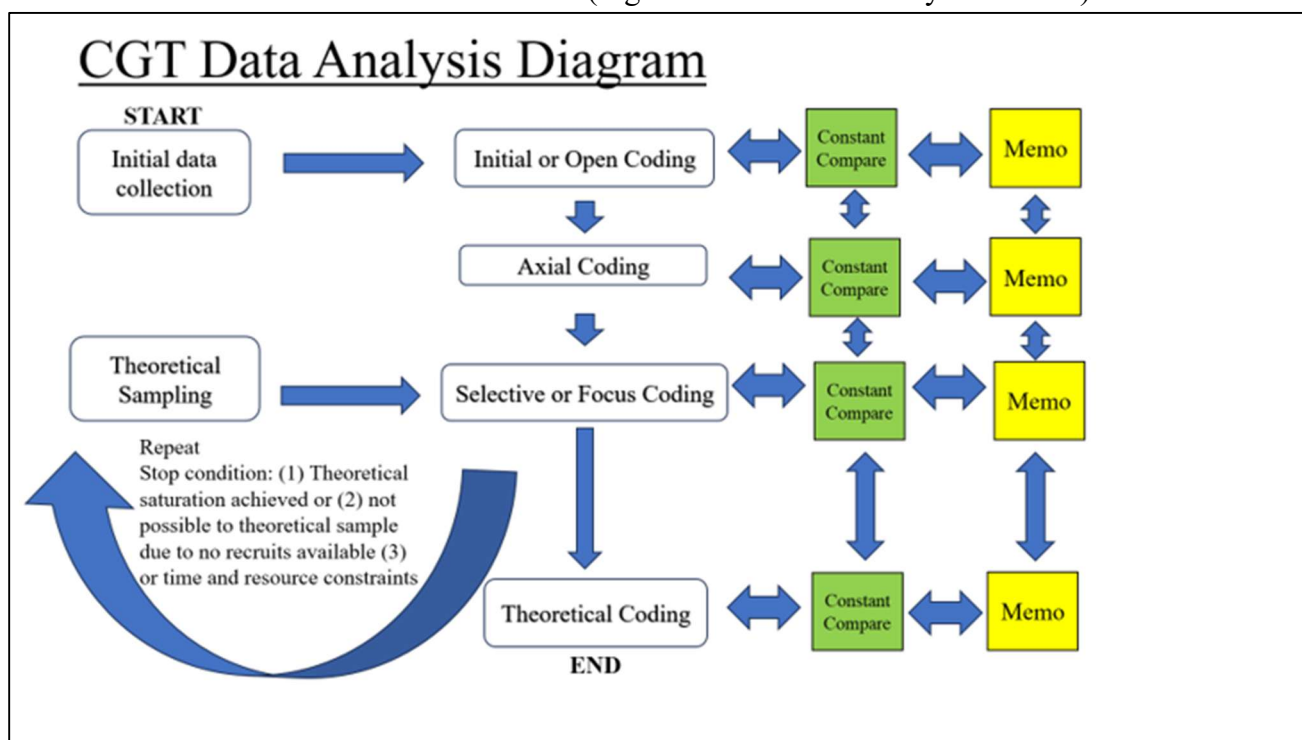
Theoretical sampling - is the process where the researcher collects additional data to enhance theoretical categories (Charmaz, 2015). Charmaz (2015) asserts, “theoretical sampling means sampling to develop, refine, or fill out the properties of tentative theoretical categories. Theoretical sampling makes these categories more robust and precise” (p. 406). Although theoretical sampling is a distinct feature in grounded theory, it is often misunderstood (Clarke et al., 2023). Theoretical sampling starts when initial data has been collected and analyzed and categories formed (Charmaz, 2015). Butler et al. (2018) and Conlon et al. (2020) assert that this can occur with one or more of the following conditions: (1) adding an interview question(s) or (2) recruiting new participants with specific characteristics that enhance the construction of categories or (3) finding another site (e.g., such as an organization or site location).

Theoretical saturation - is a process in the data analysis where no new insights and themes can be formed from new data collected.

Constant comparing - is another core feature of grounded theory. In this refinement process, the researcher constantly compares new and existing data. Constant comparing occurs in data collection, data analysis, and theory conceptualization phases.

Memo writing - is an informal note the researcher produces to document their narrative of insight, inflection, and decision-making as they gather, organize, and analyze the data. Charmaz (2015) notes, “[m]emo writing is an intermediate stage of writing that bridges coding data with drafting the theoretical analysis” (p. 405).

Below is a visual diagram of the CGT data analysis process. The diagram can also be found in the References section of the thesis (Figure 3: CGT Data Analysis Process).



Anti-Oppressive Social Work Research (AOSWR) Procedures

With an AOSWR approach, the researcher helped contextualize the study and gather, analyze, and interpret data rooted in AOP principles. Below are some important definitions and ideas in AOSWR.

Goals - in AOSWR refer to conducting a systematic inquiry of oppression and develops knowledge that empowers individuals to act towards liberation from oppression. AOP focuses on understanding and challenging structural inequalities and power imbalances that marginalized people face in our society. Using AOP as a framework, this study explored how Filipino

Canadian social work students navigate and respond to structural barriers in their educational journey in Canada. It also developed knowledge to address the inequalities they may face and provided recommendations to promote change through the research findings.

Populations - in AOSWR require the researchers to focus on marginalized populations that often do not have a voice in the research literature. Strier (2007) promotes strategies to connect participants to research studies based on building trust and reducing feelings of alienation.

Research environment - in AOSWR needs to be conducted in a safe place where participants can self-reflect and inquire. Moreover, the participant must be offered support if required, as sometimes participants may struggle with the interview process.

Methodologies - in AOSWR reject traditional social science methodologies that are technical and procedurally restrictive. Instead, it promotes using social science strategies that articulate the multifaceted dimensions of oppression, including its objective and structural features. Some social science research methodologies have historically treated participants as "subjects" with no involvement in the research process or meaning-making (Rogers, 2012). On the other hand, Strier (2007) state, "constructivist research may be conducive to revealing internalized oppression among the oppressed themselves" (p. 861).

Roles for participants - in AOSWR participants are encouraged to take an active role in the research process, fostering empowerment and meaningful involvement. Gibbs (2001) notes that empowering research involves collaborations with the participant in the research process.

Researcher and participant relationship - AOSWR promotes strategies that foster power balance between the researcher and the participant. One of the strategies suggested from AOSWR is reflecting on how the participant's and researcher's social roles and power

relationships relate to and impact the study. Reflexivity is used throughout the research process to address this concern. Burke and Harrison (1998) note, "the anti-oppressive principle of reflexivity demands that workers continually consider how their social identity and values affect the information they gather. This includes their understanding of the social world as experienced by themselves and those with whom they work" (p. 135). The researcher practiced reflexivity by examining how the research approach impacted the researcher's biases and power dynamics with the participants. This was done through a reflection journal (Appendix 10: Reflection Journal Template Using Anti-Oppressive Practice) that the researcher revisited during the coding and analysis process to ensure transparency and accountability. The researcher also recognizes that he has a unique position of dual identities in this research study: as the researcher who holds power in knowledge creation and as the oppressed, the population of interest.

Study Context and Time Frame

Interviews were conducted in May 2025. The researcher conducted one individual interview with each participant allocated for approximately 60-90 minutes maximum, but no minimum length of time was set. Some participants were more candid, while others were sparse in their narrative. The researcher offered probing questions and elaborating statements (Appendix 5: Interview Guide) to elicit further commentary. However, the researcher allowed participants to reach the natural end of their interviews when they felt satisfied that the narrative they shared was complete and aligned with what they intended to state. This study was conducted in Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada. Below is the table of the run time for each interview in minutes:

Interview Order	Participant Code Names	Run Time (in Minutes)
1	Balong	7.85
2	Sun1	13.15
3	Star 1	34.85
4	Blue 1	17.53
5	Red 1	36.80
6	White 1	16.60
7	Sun 2	54.53
8	Star 2	45.88
9	Blue 2	49.62
10	Red 2	53.23
11	White 2	54.53
12	Sun 3	66.33

Summary of Interviews: Average Duration - 38.98 Minutes. Shortest interview runtime:

Interview 1 - 7.85 minutes. Longest interview runtime: Interview 12 - 66.13 minutes.

Participant Recruitment

This study consisted of adult Filipino Canadian participants with postsecondary experience in an accredited social work program in Canada. Sarfo et al. (2021) argue that it is not the number of participants in the study that matters, but the richness of the data. As an exploratory study, the researcher decided on a sample size of 5-12 participants.

For this study, the following criteria were used: Participants were to (1) be at least 18 years of age, (2) culturally identify as Filipino Canadian, (3) have been admitted to an accredited social work program at a postsecondary institution in Canada (including those who are currently enrolled, graduated or never completed the program), (4) be fluent in English, (5) have legal

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residence in Manitoba, (6) have the technology to participate in a virtual interview or be able to meet at the interview site (7) and consent to be voice recorded. The researcher is not fluent in the Tagalog language and other Filipino dialects and does not have the resources to facilitate interviews in Tagalog. While this presents a linguistic limitation, it does not necessarily present a cultural disconnection. Although the researcher and some participants differ in language proficiency (some Filipino Canadians speak only English fluently), communicating in English is more practical for shaping the research relationship. Communicating in English was practical because it was the language both participants and the researcher were most comfortable using in a research interview setting. Using a shared language helped communicate more clearly and build rapport among the participants and the researcher. Conducting the research in English allows the researcher to remain attentive and present during the interview, as language can affect meaning, expression, and comfort. To ensure that expressions in the Filipino language align with what each participant said, the participants reviewed and commented on their transcripts, ensuring the translation matched what they intended. Future research could be conducted in Filipino languages to examine the meanings and insights that emerge when participants express themselves in their preferred language.

The criterion requiring admission to a social work program allowed for a wide variety of participants. Eligible participants include those who were admitted to a Bachelor of Social Work program or Master of Social Work. Social work students can be accepted into an accredited social work education program in Canada from the undergraduate or graduate levels. The usual path for undergraduate-level students, for admission into a faculty of social work undergraduate program, is to apply to the program after meeting the minimal requirements set by the faculty and then they are selected based on each program's criteria and the number of available

enrollment spots. Graduate students with a Bachelor of Social Work from an accredited social work program apply to an accredited graduate program in social work where the requirements may include a combination of professional and academic experience. Some graduate social work students might have to take a bridge program, where they must take foundational social work courses to enter their respective programs. Moreover, social work programs could also have accessibility criteria for students who have experienced educational barriers or inclusion based on underrepresented populations, such as the University of Manitoba ACCESS Social Work program. This broad range of experiences provided a more comprehensive understanding of different pathways into social work education for Filipino Canadians.

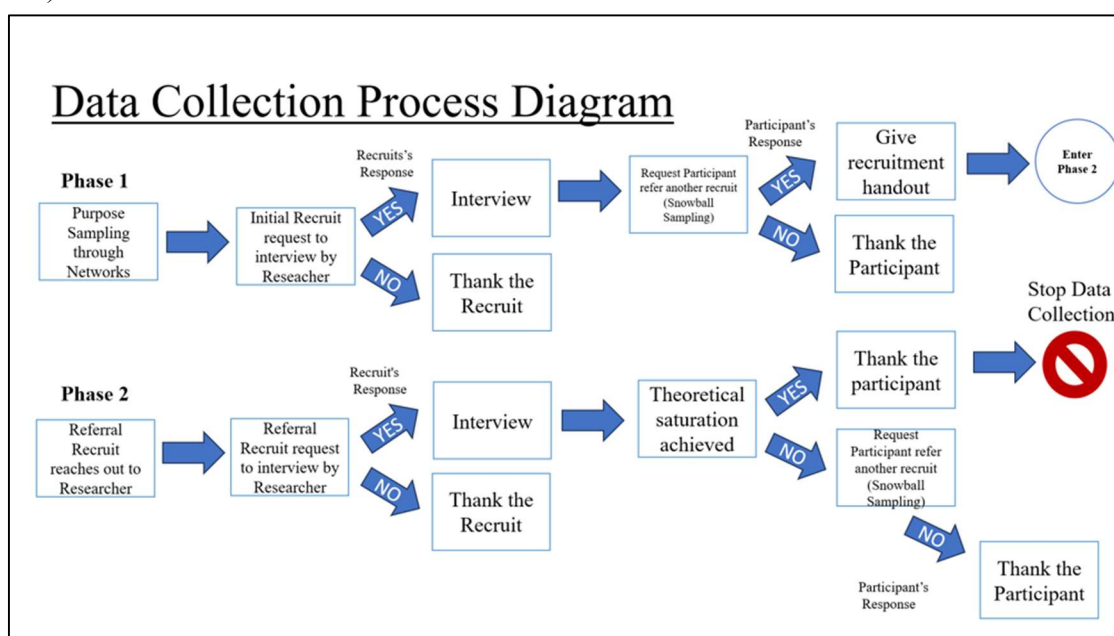
The recruitment methods used were non-random. The first step was purposive sampling, where the researcher used networks to recommend participants to be included in this study. Morris (2006) defines purposive sampling as "[a] sampling procedure in which the researcher selects study participants who would give the most complete data about the study focus" (p. 290). The researcher excluded participants with whom the researcher has a personal relationship. Since the participant pool might be limited, and where members might know the researcher, the researcher acknowledged if there was a prior educational or professional connection with the participant and in the finalized findings of this study. The researcher took steps to ensure that participants cannot be identified from the content of their interviews. The researcher also reviewed the transcript with participants to allow them to remove or make changes to ensure their anonymity. The researcher also invited initial participants to share information about this research study with other potential participants during the recruitment period.

Woodley and Lockard (2016) advocate for using snowball sampling "due to its ability to access hard-to-reach groups and previously unheard voices, highlighting how more traditional

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methods have previously alienated minorities and sensitive groups" (as cited by Parker et al., 2019, p. 6). The researcher used snowball sampling, where initial participants assist in recruiting new participants for the study. In the recruitment phase, the researcher introduced the study to recruits, built rapport, addressed concerns, and answered questions. The researcher also adhered to ethical principles such as informed consent, confidentiality, and the right to withdraw from the study at any time. These steps are intended to create an environment that promotes safety and respectful research practices (Appendix 4: Informed Consent Form). According to Massat and Lundy (1997), "by undertaking empowerment-based research, researchers are indicating that they are committed to values of empowerment, participation, fully informed consent and inclusion" (as cited by Gibbs, 2001, p. 30). The researcher sought to build trust and demonstrate transparency in the study through an audit trail (Table 3: Theme Code Lists and Figure 4: Sample Memos) that will be elaborated further in the trustworthiness section.

Below is a visual diagram of the data collection process. The diagram can also be found in References section of the thesis (Figure 2: Visual Diagram of Data Collection Process Diagram).



Research Ethics Board

This research project obtained approval from the University of Manitoba's Research Ethics Board before proceeding. Each participant was notified that they can leave the research study at any time. Interviews were conducted only if a participant provided informed consent, having received this study's purpose, potential risks, and benefits (Appendix 4: Informed Consent Form).

Steps were taken to preserve the security of participant responses. Interviews were recorded on a password-protected voice recording device. The recordings were transcribed into a password-protected digital document, and the voice recordings were deleted after the research process was completed. The transcribed information remains on an encrypted University of Manitoba Microsoft OneDrive Cloud Storage. Each participant was given a code name to protect their identity. Any identifying information was kept separate from the transcribed data, and the researcher and the research advisor were the only ones to have access. Upon completing this research project, all remaining digital and written data will be destroyed within 7 years of the end of this research study.

Support for Participants

After the interview, the participants debriefed with the researcher to discuss complex parts of the interview. The researcher indicated the availability of mental health resources from the Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA) for Winnipeg and the researcher's compiled resource guide (Appendix 6: Resources), either in physical or digital form.

Data Collection Process

The data collection process utilized a semi-structured interview with open-ended questions. According to Kakilla (2021), "[semi-structured interviews] are highly appreciated in

their power to engage in deep conversation, flexibility, and generative nature, hence stimulating new ideas” (p. 3). These attributes of semi-structured interviews create structure while allowing the researcher some flexibility and still providing in-depth data. The interviews were voice recorded and transcribed verbatim. The interview consisted of four standard questions for all participants with non-standardized follow-up probes to elicit further details of their experiences.

Interview Arrangements

The participants had the option to be interviewed in person or virtually. In-person interviews occurred at a community health center at ACCESS Norwest, 785 Keewatin Street, Winnipeg, Manitoba, in a secure meeting room that required a scan key for access, or virtually via a secure Microsoft Teams video conference, where participants were given access codes via email. The researcher attempted to accommodate the participants' schedules: in-person meetings offered Mondays to Fridays from 4 PM to 7 PM. The researcher provided virtual appointments from 8 AM to 10 PM on Saturdays and Sundays and Mondays to Fridays from 4 PM to 10 PM. Before the interview commenced, the researcher presented the participant with the informed consent form (Appendix 4: Informed Consent) and answered any questions the participant may have had regarding the informed consent form and the study. The researcher presented online participants with a digital copy of the informed consent form, which they could digitally sign.

Interview Questions

1. Please tell me about your journey into social work education. What brought you into social work education?
2. What factors helped you with your social work education?
3. What factors hindered you in your social work education?

4. What are your recommendations to help attract Filipino Canadians into social work education in Canada?

Data Collection Outcome

Recruitment

The researcher received research ethics approval from the University of Manitoba in April 2025 after minor protocol refinements from the initial research ethics application. Upon receiving ethics approval, the researcher employed purposive sampling, utilizing their networks to disseminate the research study to potential recruits who met the research study's criteria. The researcher sent advertisements to academic and professional contacts, who were asked to forward them to potential participants. The researcher utilized professional and academic resources such as the Manitoba College of Social Workers (through their e-bulletin), the Filipino Canadian Social Workers Social Service Workers and Community Workers Network (FCSCWN), the University of Manitoba Social Work Students' Association (SWSA), and the researcher's current and past professional and academic contacts, such as former classmates, professors, and colleagues to circulate the recruitment poster.

Brief Demographic Information of Participants

The final sample size for this study was 12 participants. 13 individuals reached out to the researcher expressing interest in being interviewed, but one did not respond to the researcher's follow-up email, and was not included in the study. There were 8 female, 1 non-binary, and 3 male participants in the study. The researcher did not inquire about the participants' ages, but all appear to be either young adults or in their working years, and no participant reported being retired. Four participants identified as parents, either in their interviews or inside conversations with the researcher after their interviews, including two participants who were pregnant while in

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their social work program. Four participants held both bachelor's and master's degrees in social work. Three participants were currently pursuing further graduate studies, with two in social work and one in another related discipline. There were two participants currently pursuing their Bachelor of Social Work, with one in her first year. All participants who graduated with either a Bachelor of Social Work, a Master of Social Work, or both completed their programs in Manitoba, and all are practicing social workers in different social work fields, including child welfare, disability services, settlement work, education, and counselling. The researcher did not inquire whether participants were first- to third-generation Filipino Canadians or beyond. However, the researcher did hear accounts reflecting immigrant narratives from at least the first and second generations. The researcher also did not ask participants whether they were born in the Philippines, born in Canada, or had a bicultural experience involving being born in the Philippines and later coming to Canada as a child, teenager, or adult. The demographic information was largely inferred by the researcher. The researcher did not have the opportunity to verify this information with the participants, as it was not the focus of the research study, but this is the researcher's best account. Below are tables to show gender identity and highest level of education for all the participants. The table is also found on the References section (Table 4: Summary of Participants by Gender Identity and Educational Level).

Gender Identity	Count
Female	8
Non-Binary	1
Male	3

Highest Level of Education	Count
Bachelor of Social Work Graduate	6
Master of Social Work Graduate	4
High School Graduate	2

Interviews

Four individuals were interviewed in person at ACCESS Norwest, and eight individuals were interviewed via Microsoft Teams using a secure University of Manitoba account. All 12 participants in the study agreed to sign the consent form, were provided with the four predetermined interview questions, and the interviews were not to exceed 90 minutes. The researcher used follow-up questions to elicit additional responses from participants, gather more detailed descriptions of their experiences already expressed, or clarify details participants might have mentioned that required further explanation (Appendix 5: Interview Guide). Participants were also allowed to revisit previously answered questions or elaborate on parts they felt needed expansion at any time during the interview.

Transcription

The researcher began the transcription process using Otter.ai, an artificial intelligence transcription software. Otter.ai is an approved online transcription services approved for human research by the University of Manitoba Information Security and Compliance Guidelines. The researcher reviewed each Otter.ai transcript to ensure they matched what the researcher heard in the audio recording. The researcher would correct any parts that did not match the audio recording and repeatedly reviewed the transcripts until no errors were found. For inaudible or difficult-to-understand sections of the transcript, the researcher would highlight them and ask the participant to review them to clarify what was being said. Each participant could choose a code name or have one assigned by the researcher, with the stipulation that the code name could not reveal the participant's identity. Furthermore, any mention of participants' real names in transcripts was replaced with their code names in brackets to ensure confidentiality. Afterwards, the researcher would email the participant with their transcript. Each participant would review

their transcript to ensure accuracy and to change or remove parts they did not want included in the data analysis. One participant (White 1) requested a follow-up call to discuss and correct specific wording and add quotations. Three others (Participants Star 1, Sun 2, and Blue 2) corrected quotations in their original transcripts.

Data Analysis

Coding Process

The researcher began the initial coding of each transcript and utilized Dedoose, a web-based data analysis software, that helps to visually organize qualitative data. During the initial coding process, 50 codes were identified, organized into subthemes, and grouped into five subsequent core themes. The codes, subthemes, and themes emerged in an iterative process. The researcher would code each transcript, highlighting specific codes that expressed significance to the participant and addressed the research question and objectives of this study. Initial coding was followed by axial coding for each additional transcript until all transcripts were coded. During this period, the researcher began reviewing the initial codes to identify connections with codes from other transcripts. The frequency of codes laid the initial structure for the subthemes and themes. Once the data was refined to a point where frequency was no longer sufficient, focus coding was applied to create subthemes that would establish the themes. Focus coding was implemented to move beyond the descriptive attributes of initial coding by identifying codes theoretically significant to addressing the research question. While the number of occurrences of a code within the transcripts played an important role in the construction of themes, other factors were also considered, especially when they appeared meaningful in explaining factors that led participants into social work education and when a code was present across different transcripts. This process required the researcher to make decisions and engage with the data to ensure the

codes created the building blocks to support the themes. Through the constant-comparison process, the researcher further refined the data across interviews to highlight meaning and patterns. Subsequently, the study combined specific subthemes, such as Filipino family and cultural values into one theme, as they appeared strongly interrelated and complementary. Filipino family and cultural values address one of the research question objectives: to determine the cultural and social factors that contribute to participants' pursuit of social work education. Pathways into social work education combined codes related to life-changing conditions, career reconsideration, and career transition. Mental health and self-reflection were combined into a single theme because they appear to be related. Often, participants' expressions of mental health difficulties had a self-reflection component that provided clarity to participants, and at times was a cathartic experience. Barriers combined factors relating to immigrant experience, financial hardships, microaggressions (racism), and the whiteness of the social work profession. Finally, educational experiences encapsulated participants' experiences during social work education, both beneficial and hindering.

Emerging Themes

As themes emerged and connections began to form, the researcher continued to reflect on his social location and lived experience related to the research study. The use of memos and self-reflection journals helped in interrogating assumptions about the data. The researcher acknowledges that it is impossible to separate oneself from the research study, as the excerpts captured in the data overlap with the researcher's own lived experience in social work education. This required ongoing negotiation and self-reflection to ensure the researcher's experience did not imprint on the participants' collective narrative in this study.

Scott (2025) recommends that, after completing data analysis in grounded theory research, the researcher conducts another literature review using the themes as keywords, which serves as another constant comparison for the data. The researcher conducted another Boolean search on March 8, 2026, of the different themes reported in this research study (Appendix 8: Search Strategy Themes). The researcher found a limited number of peer-reviewed sources using the keywords, but none appeared to be relevant or useful to supplement the research studies findings, reinforcing that literature on the lived experiences of Filipino Canadians in social work education in Canada remains sparse.

Trustworthiness

This research project utilized the following strategies outlined by Ahmed (2024) to improve trustworthiness. Trustworthiness was established in this research study through credibility, dependability, and confirmability. Credibility was demonstrated through triangulation with multiple participant interviews and a literature review. Dependability was shown in the audit trail. Confirmability was demonstrated through an ongoing self-reflection practice to reduce the bias of the researcher. The researcher would also periodically consult with their academic advisor and report on the researcher's progress and any concerns that arose in the research study. Below are some definitions regarding establishing trustworthiness.

Reflexivity - is when the researcher maintained a reflection journal (Appendix 10: Reflection Journal Template Using Anti-Oppressive Practice) to account for how personal biases influenced the research process. Reflexivity is a core principle of anti-oppressive practice (AOP) and constructivist grounded theory (CGT). AOP researchers are critical of self-reflection and aim to challenge the power structure in research that gives a voice to the marginalized. In the data analysis, the researcher reflected on the researcher's social location

and lived experience as a Filipino Canadian social work student. Probst (2015) asserts the "[b]enefits of reflexivity included accountability, trustworthiness, richness, clarity, ethics, support, and personal growth—beneficial for the integrity of the research process, [and] the quality of the knowledge generated" (p. 42).

Theoretical sensitivity - is a core feature of grounded theory in facilitating reflexivity.

Strauss and Corbin (1990) cite:

...theoretical sensitivity refers to the personal qualities of the researcher and indicates an awareness of the subtleties of meaning of data. One can come to a research situation with varying degrees of sensitivity depending upon previous reading and experience with, or relevant to, that area. (as cited by Orland-Barak, 2002, p. 263)

Hughes and McSherry (2024) further emphasized the importance of theoretical sensitivity, and cautioned researchers about the pitfalls of lacking a self-reflective component, as they could be accused of bias and have their theoretical findings downgraded. Hughes and McSherry state, "[t]heoretical sensitivity enables researchers to steer their studies to answer their research questions, gain insight into their study's findings and develop theory grounded in the data. However, reflection is required for researchers to understand their effect on the theories" (p. 11). Theoretical sensitivity was implemented in this research study through reflexivity practice, memo writing, and engagement with the data to synthesize a comprehensive analysis and narrative that ties together all attempts to capture the experience of Filipino Canadians in social work education in a meaningful and purposeful way.

Member checking - refers to the researcher returning to the participant, sharing findings, and comparing them with the participant's experience to assess transcription accuracy and the

consistency of the themes identified. The researcher reviewed each participant's transcript and revised it until the participant noted no further issues.

Confirmability - is a reflexive practice primarily guided by participant narrative rather than the researcher's biases. Taiwo (2018) defines confirmability as “research findings were derived from the experience of participants and also confirmed by them and others who reviewed the results” (p. 45).

Audit trail - is when the researcher used memo writing for the decision-making process and changes made during the study. According to Miller (2024), by "generating a transparent audit trail, CGT researchers are afforded ample opportunities to establish confirmability of their research aims, objectives and findings” (p. 4).

After analyzing the data from each interview, the researcher emailed each participant their transcript and offered to schedule a follow-up virtual meeting to review the transcript at the participant's request. During these meetings, participants could raise concerns about how their narratives were documented and request changes or validate how their experiences were captured. Participants could withdraw from the study at any point. The documents mentioned in the methodology section are available in the appendices under the References section of the thesis. These documents were used to maintain research standards and practices.

Introduction to the 12 Participants

The table below is meant to frame each participant's narrative with their quotations and guide readers in understanding each participant's context as they go through participant quotations in the thesis's findings section. This table also appears in the



Apleg Peg (2024). Philippine
National Flag

References section of the thesis (Table 5: Introduction to the 12 Participants). The table provides brief descriptions of each participant's appearance, narratives, disclosed highest level of education, and their educational or employment status reported in interviews and in prior communications. All participants had the option to select their own code name, but Balong was the only one to exercise it. Participants who chose to have their code names selected by the researcher were assigned code names beginning with Sun, Star, Blue, Red, and White, with numbers 1, 2, or 3, and repeated until there were no more participants. The researcher selected this naming convention because it corresponds to the colours and emblems of the Philippine national flag. The symbolism of each colour and emblem do not convey to any distinct meaning or attribute of each participant, as the code names were assigned sequentially, depending on the order in which participants were interviewed. Furthermore, this naming convention was intended to honour the cultural context of this research study while maintaining participant confidentiality. Alternative naming conventions were considered, such as pseudonyms or fake names, but they did not appear to add methodological value. While similar code names such as Sun 1, Sun 2, and Sun 3 can make it hard for the reader to distinguish each participant, it was never meant to encapsulate each participants narrative but to act as a collection of narratives. Additionally, creating an in-depth descriptive narrative for each participant could increase the risk that a participant's identity could be identifiable given the small size of the community.

Order Interviewed	Participant Code Name	Highest Level of Education	Employment or Educational status	Brief Description
01	Balong	Bachelor of Social Work Graduate	*Seasoned Child Welfare Social Worker *Originally wanted to pursue nursing but math abilities were compromised.	<i>Appearance:</i> Male, appearing to be in his 30s. <i>Status:</i> Immigrated to Canada, but did not specify the year. <i>Narrative:</i> Suffered from untreated tuberculosis that impacted his math abilities during university.

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				<i>Reason for entering social work:</i> (1) Did not get into nursing due to math abilities being impacted. (2) The participant enjoyed the feeling of being helped by social workers in the hospital. (3) The participant's girlfriend at the time was in social work, and he decided to apply as well.
02	Sun 1	Bachelor of Social Work Graduate	*Social Work Counselor *Originally pursued other social science discipline in their undergraduate. *Pursuing graduate studies in another discipline.	<i>Appearance:</i> Female appearing to be in her 20s or early 30s. <i>Status:</i> Did not report immigrating to Canada. <i>Narrative:</i> (1) Passionate about mental health. (2) An incident that happened at high school made her interested in mental health but did not specify details. (3) Felt unsupported by father, who did not feel social services were useful. The participant cried when discussing their father in this context. <i>Reason for entering social work:</i> (1) Interested in social justice and mental health. (2) Changed studies after wondering what degree could get her a job.
03	Star 1	Master of Social Work Graduate	*Settlement Worker *Collaborate with school system to support students.	<i>Appearance:</i> Female, based on audio, appeared to be in her 30s to early 40s (Audio-only interview). <i>Status:</i> Immigrated to Canada, but did not specify the year. <i>Narrative:</i> (1) Passionate about settlement work. (2) Family did not understand social work and encouraged her to go into nursing or a STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and

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				Mathematics) major due to financial prospects. <i>Reason for entering social work:</i> (1) Tried to get into another allied health program but did not pass the required course. (2) A family friend's daughter was a child welfare social worker and encouraged the participant to enter the field.
04	Blue 1	Bachelor of Social Work Graduate	*Seasoned Social Worker in disability field.	<i>Appearance:</i> Female appeared to be in her 30s or early 40s. <i>Status:</i> Did not report immigrating to Canada. <i>Narrative:</i> (1) Had a child prior to entering social work education. (2) Struggled with mental health and mentioned issues with depression and struggling to go to her university classes. (3) Family was unsupportive and put her down, stating "her life is over" now that she had a child at a young age. The participant did not specify how old she was when she had her child. <i>Reason for entering social work:</i> Social worker helped her during a difficult time in her life and encouraged her to get into social work.
05	Red 1	Master of Social Work Graduate Pursuing further studies.	*Seasoned Social Work Educator *Prior career in technical field.	<i>Appearance:</i> Male appeared to be in their 40s. <i>Status:</i> Did not report immigrating to Canada. <i>Narrative:</i> Reports questioning a career in the technical field. Was not satisfied in this field. Explored being a pastor. <i>Reason for entering social work:</i> (1) Interested in helping people.

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				(2) Mentioned others who helped them during his past struggles with addiction.
06	White 1	Recent Master of Social Work Graduate	*Current Employment Status not specified. Reports prior work in child welfare, but his current occupation is not disclosed. *Prior to social work, reports working in warehouse and in youth care.	<i>Appearance:</i> Male appearing to be in his 40s. <i>Status:</i> Did not report immigrating to Canada. <i>Narrative:</i> (1) Person expressed inner city experience. (2) Self-reports as neurodivergent. <i>Reason for entering social work:</i> Pursued social work after being overlooked for a promotion at warehouse job.
07	Sun 2	Undergraduate Social Science Degree	*Bachelor of Social Work Student. *Part-time employment not specified.	<i>Appearance:</i> Reports as non-binary and appears to be in their 20s. <i>Status:</i> Did not report immigrating to Canada. <i>Narrative:</i> (1) Reported socio-economic hardship growing up. (2) Has newcomer mother and a refugee father. Mother struggled to financially support them, and the participant had to work while going through social work education. (3) Person describes having a good relationship with their mother. Limited discussion about their father in their personal life. (4) The participant identifies as LGBTQIA+.

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				(5) The participant is passionate about social justice. <i>Reason for entering social work:</i> (1) A relative told them about social work. (2) Pursued social work for more career opportunities.
08	Star 2	Bachelor of Social Work Graduate	*Current Employment Status not specified.	<i>Appearance:</i> Female appearing to be in her 20s. <i>Status:</i> Immigrated to Canada but did not specify a year. <i>Narrative:</i> (1) The participant reports growing up in a conservative family. (2) The participant reports limited inner city experience. (3) Reports being a burnout overachiever. (4) The participant's family did not help with tuition for her education. (5) Mentioned feeling anxiety about working with vulnerable people when doing a field placement. This was due to her conservative upbringing and the narrative her family imparted to her that these vulnerable people are dangerous. <i>Reason for entering social work:</i> (1) Did not get into nursing or STEM majors. (2) The participant needed a degree so that they could get a job and be paid decently.
09	Blue 2	Bachelor of Social Work Graduate	*Student Support Services	<i>Appearance:</i> Female appearing to be in her 30s. <i>Status:</i> Immigrated to Canada, but did not specify the year. <i>Narrative:</i>

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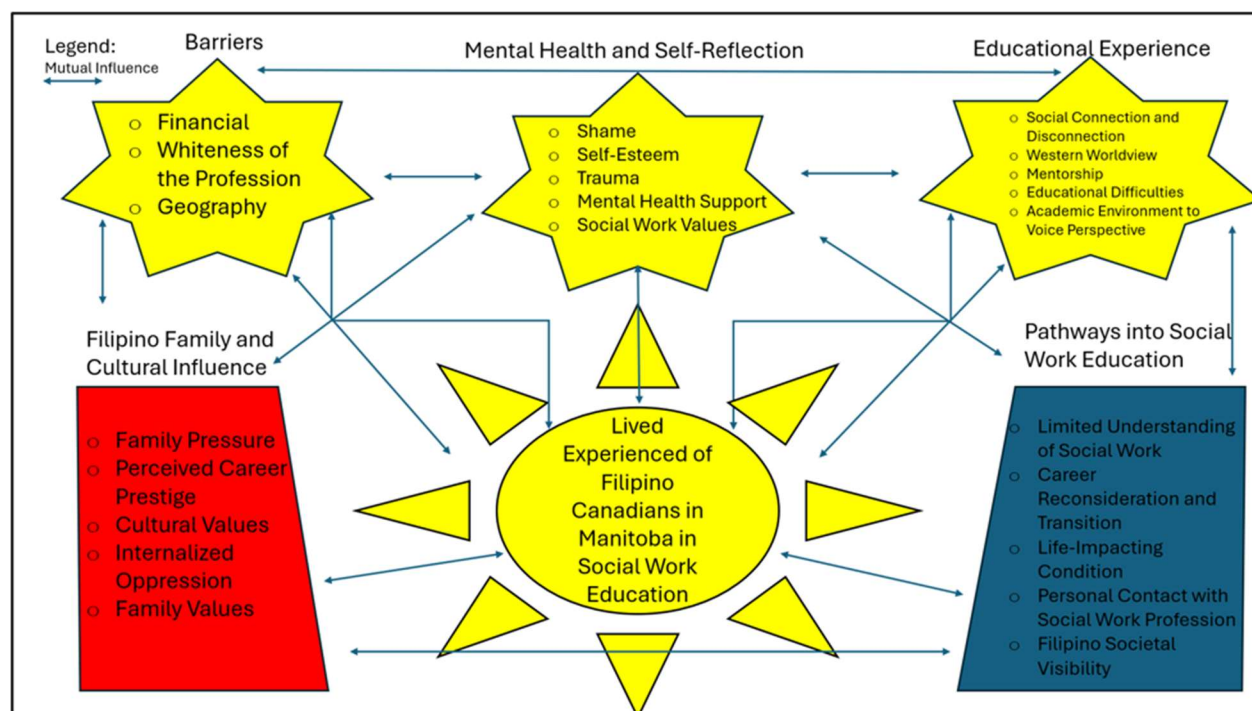
				(1) The participant had a child in high school. (2) The participant's original aspiration was to become a lawyer, even though her family's gendered expectations dictated that males in the family were encouraged to become lawyers and females to become nurses. <i>Reason for entering social work:</i> The participant needed to complete a degree that would be attainable while working and supporting a child with limited family support.
10	Red 2	High School Graduate	*Bachelor of Social Work Student *Former Business student	<i>Appearance:</i> Female appearing to be in her 20s. <i>Status:</i> Immigrated to Canada, but did not specify the year. <i>Narrative:</i> (1) Mentioned some struggles with mental health but did not provide details. (2) Family was unfamiliar with social work but encouraged the participant to pursue any higher education, as her family equated any degree with a better life. <i>Reason for entering social work:</i> (1) Dropped out of business courses. (2) Enjoyed the feeling of being helped when the participant was struggling with her mental health and decided to apply to social work.
11	White 2	Master of Social Work Graduate	Social Work Counselor	<i>Appearance:</i> Female appearing to be in her 30s or early 40s. <i>Status:</i> No newcomer experience reported. <i>Narrative:</i>

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				(1) Struggled with mental health in her youth and while in university. (2) Felt pressured by mother to pursue careers such as dentistry and nursing. (3) Father was supportive of her career decisions. (4) Passionate about supporting BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and People of Color) communities. <i>Reason for entering social work:</i> The participant applied to nursing and social work and got accepted to both. However, the participant ended up pursuing social work as the participant felt it aligned better with her personal values
12	Sun 3	Bachelor of Social Work Graduate Other social science degree. Pursuing a Master of Social Work.	Mental Health Clinician	<i>Appearance:</i> Female appearing to be in her 30s or early 40s. <i>Status:</i> No newcomer experience expressed. <i>Narrative:</i> (1) Grew up in the North End neighbourhood of Winnipeg. (2) Father worked in a homeless shelter. (3) The participant recalled that her parents allowed friends who came from troubled homes to stay with them and become part of the family while she was growing up. (4) Self-reports as neurodivergent. <i>Reason for entering social work:</i> Wanted a job in justice field and found out they required a social work degree.

Section 4: Findings

The core themes that emerged from this research study are Filipino family and cultural influences, pathways into social work education, mental health and self-reflection, barriers, and educational experiences. Additionally, subthemes also emerged that captured the nuances of descriptions and meaning and helped explain the complexity of the core themes. Below is a



visual diagram of the theme conceptualization. The diagram can also be found in the References section of the thesis (Figure 1: Visual Diagram of Themes). As participants are introduced in the subthemes through the first instance of their quotations, a brief excerpt from their context is provided to help the reader frame them within their quotations.

Theme 1: Filipino Family and Cultural Influences

The impact of Filipino family and cultural influences appeared significant in participants' decision to pursue social work education, including factors such as family expectations, cultural norms, and perceived career prestige. The theme of Filipino family and cultural influences was prominent in the interviews, with almost all participants mentioning aspects of both. There

appears to be a constant interplay between familial and cultural influences, making it difficult to examine these influences in isolation. Subthemes were needed to illustrate the complex nuances. The internalized messages from their familial interactions impacted participants' educational experiences. This is illustrated in Star 1's quotation, which uses two common Filipino expressions, "*utang na loob*" and "*makulit*," in the context of her interactions with her family and her social work education:

<i>Participant Code Name</i>	Star 1
<i>Narrative</i>	(1) Passionate about settlement work. (2) Family did not understand social work and encouraged her to go into nursing or a STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) major due to financial prospects.
<i>Reason for entering social work:</i>	(1) Tried to get into another allied health program but did not pass the required course. (2) A family friend's daughter was a child welfare social worker and encouraged the participant to enter the field.

...my parents were kind of, they really emphasized the "*utang na loob*" (*Tagalog translation: feeling of indebtedness or obligation*) of and, like, you know, conditionally expecting something, you know, in return, like, I get that, you know, relationships are two-way street, you know, like you feed into it, and then it goes back out to you. That was something like I had to really learn and just, you know, how to be unconditional when you're working with clients, just being able to turn that off. (Star 1, 2025, 17:04)

I grew up in a family where we, you know, if I ask too many questions, they're going to say, oh, you're so "*makulit*" (*Tagalog: annoying or pesky*), you're being "*makulit*", and you'll stop asking these questions. Why don't you get it the first time? And I grew up

being scared of asking questions. So...that really shaped my perspective. (Star 1, 2025, 26:39)

Participant White 2 also shared the cultural and emotional beginnings of these expectations. These aspirations were not simply about choosing a stable profession, but rather about fulfilling intergenerational hopes and desires rooted in her parents' immigration stories:

<i>Participant Code Name</i>	White 2
<i>Narrative</i>	(1) Struggled with mental health in her youth and while in university. (2) Felt pressured by mother to pursue careers such as dentistry and nursing. (3) Father was supportive in her career decisions. (4) Passionate about supporting BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and People of Color) communities.
<i>Reason for entering social work</i>	The participant applied to nursing and social work and got accepted to both. However, the participant ended up pursuing social work as the participant felt it aligned better with her personal values.

...it goes back to that lived experience of, like, you know, finishing a career in the medical field, like it's often, I find a projection, right? A projection of the first, you know, the immigrant, immigrant experience of saving face and projecting of what they worked hard for and what they've to see into their kids, right? (White 2, 2025, 36:37)

Subtheme: Family Pressure

A key subtheme, family pressure, appeared to affect participants in their social work education. This pressure was often related to perceived family career prestige, financial stability, and the need to succeed within their family context. This highlights the complexity of family expectations within this theme. Notably, there are almost no instances across all participant

interviews of initial parental approval when participants first discussed their interest in social work education except for Participant Red 2. Red 2, whose family, while unfamiliar with social work, encourages her to complete a university undergraduate degree, regardless of the discipline, as they equate higher education with a ‘good job and life’:

<i>Participant Code Name</i>	Red 2
<i>Narrative</i>	(1) Mentioned some struggles with mental health but did not provide details. (2) Family was unfamiliar with social work but encouraged the participant to pursue any higher education, as her family equated any degree with a better life.
<i>Reason for entering social work</i>	(1) Dropped out of business courses. (2) Enjoyed the feeling of being helped when the participant was struggling with her mental health and decided to apply to social work.

...my parents really tried to instill that thing where, like, oh, if you go to university and get a degree, then you'll get a good job and you'll have a good life, kind of deal. So, when I stopped, they were quite sad. (Red 2, 2025, 42:45)

In Sun 3's case, career expectations were predetermined early in childhood without regard to her abilities and interests, suggesting that her parents had already decided on her future.

<i>Participant Code Name</i>	Sun 3
<i>Narrative</i>	(1) Grew up in the North End neighbourhood of Winnipeg. (2) Father worked in a homeless shelter. (3) The participant recalled that her parents allowed friends who came from troubled homes to stay with them and become part of the family while she was growing up. (4) Self-reports as neurodivergent.
<i>Reason for entering social work</i>	Wanted a job in justice field and found out they required a social work degree.

Sun 3 (2025) shared, “I remember being four years old and my mom saying you're a dentist, you're going to be a dentist. When you grow up, you're absolutely going to be a dentist” (19:50). Similarly, Participant White 2 also expressed how her family assumed or projected that she would naturally pursue nursing, a profession widely regarded as stable and respectable within Filipino Canadian communities. White 2 (2025) stated, “...if I recall, [mother] would tell family, you know, she's applying to go into nursing and so that, you know, and then, so there's that even more pressure to perform and pursue that at that time” (08:37). White 2 explained further that this placed significant pressure on her and reinforced the expectation that there are limited pathways that she could pursue without disappointing her mother and extended family.

The subtheme of family pressure illustrates that participants' educational and career aspirations are shaped by Filipino familial relationships early on in their formative years. This family pressure further compounds the hardships participants face in considering, entering, and remaining in social work education. This context may also reflect a deeper cultural narrative about success, stability, and family obligation embedded in Filipino Canadian immigrant families. Furthermore, this subtheme illuminates how Filipino Canadian families often associate certain forms of perceived upward mobility with narratives of immigration and family sacrifices, leaving few alternative career pathways, such as social work. As a result, participants entering social work education not only have to deal with academic demands, but also with the emotional challenge of departing from these familial expectations. Thus, family pressure is a significant influence on how participants understand their career choices and their position within their families' aspirations.

Subtheme: Perceived Career Prestige

Perceived career prestige from Filipino family members was evident in participant interviews. Participants would describe how family members often suggest and even pressure them into careers while not allowing them to explore other opportunities based on their interests or personal abilities. Participants mentioned being influenced to aspire for professions perceived as prestigious within their families and the Filipino Canadian community. Participant Blue 2 mentioned that Filipino parents often steer their children toward established careers in education, engineering, or architecture, which Filipino Canadians believe are stable.

<i>Participant Code Name</i>	Blue 2
<i>Narrative</i>	(1) The participant had a child in high school. (2) The participant's original aspiration was to become a lawyer, even though her family's gendered expectations dictated that males in the family were encouraged to become lawyers and females to become nurses.
<i>Reason for entering social work</i>	The participant needed to complete a degree that would be attainable while working and supporting a child with limited family support.

Blue 2 (2025) mentioned, "Filipino parents usually encourage you to pursue a career that is well-established in society like education, engineering, architecture, something that they were encouraged to pursue during their time" (09:12). Blue 2 also shared that, growing up, her mother and aunties aspired to become nurses, and despite this influence, she eventually chose to pursue a career that more aligned with her goals and interests:

My mom and aunties who pursued nursing, only one of them actually worked in the field.

I was also a friendly visitor at the hospital in high school and during those shifts as a friendly visitor, I knew my heart was not in nursing. (Blue 2, 2025, 05:50)

Participant Star 2 built on this perspective within an immigrant context, noting that Filipino families have ‘sacrificed’ a lot to give their children more opportunities in Canada. In return, children feel pressured to choose careers known to be lucrative and in demand, such as nursing, while other, less well-known professions in the Filipino Canadian community, such as social work, are not considered:

<i>Participant</i>	Star 2
<i>Narrative</i>	(1) The participant reports growing up in a conservative family. (2) The participant reports limited inner city experience. (3) Reports being a burnout overachiever. (4) The participant’s family did not help with tuition for her education. (5) Mentioned feeling anxiety about working with vulnerable people when doing a field placement. This was due to her conservative upbringing and the narrative her family imparted to her that these vulnerable people are dangerous.
<i>Reason for entering social work</i>	(1) Did not get into nursing or STEM majors. (2) The participant needed a degree so that she could get a job and be paid decently.

For the case of immigrants, where you have to sacrifice a lot, and you have to, you need to live well so that your family's sacrifices will not be in vain. I imagine that in the list of careers you can head into, social work is often undermined, yeah, because, like, nursing is a good incentive with money. (Star 2, 2025, 38:51)

The subtheme of perceived career prestige provides insight into how participants appraise careers. In participant interviews, it was clear that familial relationships would create a pattern of associating certain professions, such as nursing, education, and STEM majors, with stability and

respectability, as they were seen as well-established occupations that could provide a good income, as noted by Star 2. These careers were familiar to Filipino Canadians, and their children were encouraged to pursue these fields. These familial expectations were tied to Filipino Canadian immigrant narratives imparted to participants, centred on family sacrifices and on choosing careers deemed worthwhile in this context to make these sacrifices worth it in the end. Blue 2's reflections also reveal how participants negotiated these pressures and ultimately chose social work despite the weight of familial and cultural expectations. Perceived career prestige, therefore, acts both as a hindrance and a source of agency for participants. Thus, this subtheme illustrates how participants forge their own pathways through their educational journey, despite competing interests, and determine a path that is congruent with their values and sense of self.

Subtheme: Cultural Values

Within the context of this research study, cultural values played a dual role; certain beliefs complemented social work while others did not. Participant Red 1 and Sun 1 both referenced the concept of *kapwa*—a sense of shared identity and interconnectedness that they perceived as congruent with social work values. Red 1 and shared the following quotation about *kapwa*:

<i>Participant Code Name</i>	Red 1
<i>Narrative</i>	Reports questioning a career in the technical field. Was not satisfied in this field. Explored being a pastor.
<i>Reason for entering social work</i>	(1) Interested in helping people. (2) Mentioned others who helped them during his past struggles with addiction.

I think that I maybe tapping into that idea of the Filipino, you know, core value that, that idea of "kapwa" (*Tagalog: refers to the concept of a shared humanity or interconnectedness among Filipinos*) identity and you know you, you and I, right where there's no other. And you. Uh, I shouldn't say obligation, but kind of this, this, sort of this, like, leaning towards helping other, other people. I think we have it in, in us. (Red 1, 2025, 27:52)

<i>Participant</i>	Sun 1
<i>Narrative</i>	(1) Passionate about mental health. (2) An incident that happened at high school made her interested in mental health but did not specify details. (3) The participant felt unsupported by her father, who did not feel social services were useful. The participant cried when discussing her father in this context.
<i>Reason for entering social work</i>	(1) Interested in social justice and mental health. (2) Changed studies after wondering what degree could get her a job.

Sun 1 also noted, "I feel like a lot of Filipino values are kind of similar to, like, social work values, like collectivism, the idea of like kapwa" (Sun 1, 2025, 07:01).

In contrast, although religion can play a part in Filipino families and cultural practices, participants described moments when their Roman Catholicism conflicted with the values introduced in their social work education and therefore did not complement the pursuit of the profession.

<i>Participant</i>	Balong
<i>Narrative</i>	Suffered from untreated tuberculosis that impacted his math abilities during university.
<i>Reason for entering social work</i>	(1) The participant did not get into nursing due to math abilities being impacted by untreated tuberculosis and a subsequent stroke.

	(2) The participant enjoyed the feeling of being helped by social workers in the hospital. (3) The participant's girlfriend at the time was in social work, and he decided to apply as well.
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Participant Balong (2025) noted, "Catholicism has been used negatively to affect certain demographic of people, I think those are the things or experiences that helped me in my social work education, because it opened my eyes on how it can affect people" (02:55).

This subtheme illustrates how Filipino cultural values shape participants' engagement with social work education in complex and sometimes contradictory ways. Concepts such as *kapwa* - or interconnectedness were expressed as compatible with social work, offering participants a cultural entry point as a frame of reference into social work education. Other times, participants described how their social work education, particularly in the aspects of their Roman Catholic religion, led them to reexamine how their faith has harmed people. While religion and culture are distinct, it cannot be overstated how influential Catholicism has been in shaping Filipino culture. These contrasting influences (i.e., *kapwa* and Catholic beliefs) reveal that Filipino cultural values do not uniformly support or hinder learning among participants in social work education. This prompted a re-evaluation among participants regarding which aspects of their cultural influence aligned with social work, a process that demanded self-reflection, cultural negotiation, possible unlearning, and reforging ways of knowing, doing, and being. This interplay between cultural congruence and dissonance was central to how participants found meaning in their social work education.

Subtheme: Internalized Oppression

Participants described internalized oppression as shaped by cultural norms and family influences and how, through their social work education and personal growth, they were able to deconstruct these internalized messages in meaningful reflections. Participant Sun 3 mentioned how issues regarding mental health stay in the family. These experiences of internalized oppression appear to be culturally inherited and a factor in influencing participants' emotional expressions, help-seeking behaviour, and sense of self. Participant Sun 3 (2025) shared, “[I]ike, no matter if they're, you know, like they're dealing with mental health issues or whatever. It stays in the family” (42:32).

Participant Blue 2 imparted a description of past colonial interactions with this concept, noting that silence and displays of strength were survival mechanisms for remaining on ‘the good side’ of the colonizer and maintaining family honour:

For many Filipinos we don't like to show weakness and prefer showing strength, because being strong means you can be recognized by colonizers, by oppressors and you are more likely going to end up ‘on their good side’, that is what I referred to when I mentioned silence equates to safety. Speaking up could bring shame to the family, sometimes danger. And for generations, Filipinos unintentionally passed on the value of not speaking up to protect the family or the family's honour. (Blue 2, 2025, 45:06)

Participant White 1 explained how the curriculum in his social work education helped him understand his own ‘colonization’ and ‘lateral oppression’. Social work appeared to be a factor that assisted participants in naming, challenging, and unlearning some of these internalized beliefs and behaviours:

<i>Participant</i>	White 1
<i>Narrative</i>	(1) The participant expresses inner city experience. (2) Self-reports as neurodivergent.
<i>Reason for entering social work</i>	The participant pursued social work after being overlooked for a promotion at a warehouse job.

Curriculum really helped me too, because I'm Filipino, we're Filipino, and it helped me understand my own colonization, Roman Catholic, or my own, like lateral oppression, sorry, lateral violence, stuff. Stuff like that, you know, combined with the Western critical thinking theory, approaches modalities like it was like the best of both worlds.

(White 1, 2025, 04:39)

This subtheme is important as it shows how internalized oppression operated at the personal and educational level for participants. Participants' belief that mental health issues need to be contained within the family, that silence equates to safety, and that the pressure to present strength rather than vulnerability all reflect intergenerational patterns. These patterns appear to be shaped by the Philippines' colonial history that is manifested in cultural norms expressed by Blue 2 so eloquently in her descriptions of being on the 'good side of the colonizer'. These internalized oppressive forces affect how participants express their emotions, seek out help, and interact socially with Filipinos and non-Filipinos. In social work education, students engage in self-reflection that demands a level of vulnerability not often encountered in their familial and cultural contexts. Participants' social work education provided an environment in which to name, contextualize, and challenge these prior beliefs. Through the deconstruction of these beliefs using social work theories, participants began to recognize how their colonial legacy, religion (Roman Catholic), and cultural expectations instilled in their families had influenced their internal narratives and sense of self. In short, internalized oppression emerges not only as a

burden but also as a catalyst for profound personal transformation among participants in their social work education.

Subtheme: Family Values

In this subtheme, participants shared how family values, such as conservatism, religion, and cultural traditions, influenced their prior worldview before entering social work education. These family values sometimes reinforced stigmatizing attitudes toward marginalized groups such as LGBTQIA+ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer or questioning, intersex, asexual, and other genders and identities not specified) individuals. Participant White 2 recalled tensions between her Catholic upbringing and her commitment to LGBTQIA+ allyship. White 2 described these experiences as challenging, being taught in her household that LGBTQIA+ identities were unacceptable and meeting instant disapproval from family members when they chose to be an ally:

Catholicism, LGBTQ (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer) community, my parents have been against it, and I was taught to be. Yeah, they cannot. And so, when I became an ally, who, yeah, it was met with, yeah. It was met with a lot of challenges.
(White 2, 2025, 16:10)

Star 2 mentioned living in a conservative Filipino Canadian household where marginalized people, who social workers often work with, were often seen as “dangerous”. This familial narrative created challenges to reframe this thinking once they were placed in settings that required them to work with marginalized groups:

I grew up in a conservative family, and like when you look into social work, the people that you are working with are often underrepresented, marginalized and often

misunderstood as dangerous to society. I also grew up under that umbrella, so I was very hesitant, especially working in community. (Star 2, 2025, 03:58)

This subtheme demonstrates how family values, such as conservative and Catholic beliefs, influenced participants' initial worldviews and how these values clash with those encountered in their social work education. Social work education became the site where participants questioned, re-evaluated, deconstructed, and transformed these long-standing beliefs into a perspective aligned with each participant's present worldview.

Filipino family and cultural influences is an important theme for several reasons. It displays how family and cultural influence is the root source of how participants choose their careers. This includes family expectations, cultural narratives on prestige and stability, and immigrant narratives on upward mobility. It articulates the emotional pressures participants carried entering their social work education. It explains how cultural values both support and conflict with social work values. It also surfaces how the colonial history of the Philippines continues to shape the experiences of Filipino Canadians. It highlights how social work education can be a site for personal transformation for participants. Finally, it demonstrates how entering social work can be emotionally difficult for participants, as it involves departing from family expectations and risking disappointment and conflict with family.

Theme 2: Pathways into Social Work Education

The pathways into social work education for participants were equally diverse, reflecting each participant's background and unique context. Each participant's motivations reflected this diversity. The pathways included academic hardships, life-impacting conditions, and career reconsideration and transitional periods. The paths described by participants were often non-linear and influenced by both opportunities and challenges. Among the handful of participants

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who had prior encounters with social workers, most described these interactions as positive and were even encouraged by social workers to enter the helping field. Social work was not the first choice for all participants. Below is a table illustrating the different pathways for each participant. This table is also in the Reference section of the thesis (Table 2: Pathways into Social Work Education Chart).

Interview Order	Participant Code Name	Pathways into Social Work Education
1	Balong	• <i>Life-Impacting Conditions</i>: hospitalized for tuberculosis and subsequent stroke. • <i>Personal Encounter with the Social Work Profession</i>: the participant wanted to be in a helping profession and felt cared for by social workers while in hospital for tuberculosis and stroke. • <i>Career Reconsideration and Transition</i>: the participant's original education pathway into nursing did not materialize due to impaired math ability caused by tuberculosis and stroke. • The participant's girlfriend, who was enrolled in social work during this time, encouraged him to enroll in social work.
2	Sun 1	• <i>Career Reconsideration and Transition</i>: finding an educational pathway that provided employment opportunities that aligned with the participant's passion in mental health and social justice. Previously enrolled in another social sciences discipline.
3	Star 1	• Socio-Economic Environment: newcomer experience and lived in the inner city. • <i>Career Reconsideration and Transition</i>: the participant's original educational pathway into another allied health field did not materialize because the participant did not pass her statistics course. • <i>Personal Encounter with the Social Work Profession</i>: family friend's mother's daughter was a child welfare social worker.
4	Blue 1	• <i>Life-Impacting Conditions</i>: pregnancy and mental health issues prior to entering social work. • <i>Personal Encounter with the Social Work Profession</i>: encouraged to pursue a career in social work by a support who was also a social worker.
5	Red 1	• <i>Life-Impacting Conditions</i>: past struggles with substance misuse. • <i>Career Reconsideration and Transition</i>: previously worked in a technical field that the participant found unfulfilling. Explored different helping roles, including becoming a pastor, but felt social work was more aligned with his values and the desire to help people who are hard to reach and often forgotten.
6	White 1	• <i>Career Reconsideration and Transition</i>: previously worked in a warehouse role and in support work in youth care. The participant was overlooked for a promotion in a warehouse job, prompting him to seek other opportunities.

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		• Encouraged to pursue a career in social work by colleagues.
7	Sun 2	• Socio-Economic Environment: newcomer mother and refugee father. • <i>Career Reconsideration and Transition</i>: finding an educational pathway that provided employment opportunities and aligned with their passion in social justice. Previously enrolled in another undergraduate social sciences discipline.
8	Star 2	• <i>Career Reconsideration and Transition</i>: original education pathway into nursing, law, and STEM did not materialize. The participant needed an attainable undergraduate degree that could be completed within a reasonable timeframe, as the participant's family were not financially supporting her education. The participant also wanted a profession that could give her a living wage.
9	Blue 2	• <i>Life-Impacting Conditions</i>: pregnancy in high school. • <i>Career Reconsideration and Transition</i>: originally aspired to become a lawyer. Needed to get an undergraduate degree that was attainable, could be completed in a reasonable amount of time, as the participant's family were not financially supporting her education. The participant also wanted a profession that could give her a living wage to support herself and her child.
10	Red 2	• <i>Life-Impacting Conditions</i>: struggles with mental health. • <i>Career Reconsideration and Transition</i>: the participant's original educational pathway into business school did not materialize, as the participant dropped out because it did not align with her values. • <i>Personal Encounter with the Social Work Profession</i>: encouraged to pursue a career in social work by a social worker.
11	White 2	• <i>Life-Impacting Conditions</i>: past struggles with mental health. • <i>Career Reconsideration and Transition</i>: the participant's original pathway into nursing school did not materialize, as she did not feel it aligned with her values and strengths in advocacy and mental health.
12	Sun 3	• Socio-Economic Environment: lived in the inner city and observed peers experiencing poverty and violence in high school. • <i>Career Reconsideration and Transition</i>: finding an employable educational pathway. Completed a social science undergraduate degree, but found jobs in criminal justice required a social work degree.

Subtheme: Limited Understanding of Social Work

Factors that limited the initial consideration of social work for participants were, first, a lack of understanding of what social work was, and second, its visibility in the Filipino Canadian community and within their families. For many participants, family pressure played a role in the career paths they initially pursued. Participants often mentioned that it came down to prestige or stability that a career would provide for those seeking a university degree. Careers such as

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nursing were understood and seen as prestigious, offering financial stability, and were considered desirable within their Filipino families. For participant Sun 3, her parents never mentioned social work as a possible career, and she never considered it until she learned that jobs in criminal justice, a passion of hers, required a social work degree. However, this was only after she had completed an undergraduate degree in another social science discipline that did not lead to opportunities in criminal justice. Sun 3 (2025) noted, “[w]e were never exposed to this field. It's not like an option that our parents was like, I can't see my mom saying it's like, become a social worker, right? Like, I don't think it was a thing” (42:32). Sun 3 further explained that she did not know what social work was until she entered the program. Sun 3 (2025) stated, “[t]he first time I actually knew what a real social worker was, was when I like, I'm guess. I'm entering this program because I want this job” (55:18). Blue 2 concurred with this notion and noted that in her Filipino Canadian household, family members have a limited range of acceptable careers for their children and often limit them to established ones such as nursing. Blue 2 (2025) asserted “[b]ecause I come from a Filipino family; many Filipinos are not aware of other careers that are not as established like a career in marketing or counselling” (03:08).

This subtheme is significant because it demonstrates how invisible social work is within Filipino Canadian families and communities, where participants repeatedly reported not being exposed to it in their formative years and in their regular familial interactions. This limited exposure to social work among participants also meant that, given their familial ties, social work was not perceived as a legitimate option, as it was not recognized as a desirable career. Compounding this, participants often did not understand what social workers do until entering the program. This creates a critical implication for social work education to address to promote and attract diverse populations, including Filipino Canadians, into the field.

Subtheme: Career Reconsideration and Transition

In this subtheme, participants shared their experiences of career reconsideration and transition. This includes accounts of barriers and points of misalignment in participants educational and career pathways. Two participants, Red 1 and White 1, pursued social work as a transition to a new career or opportunity after their initial careers were less fulfilling or had limited career advancement. Participant Red 1 shared his experience of feeling unfulfilled in his past career, as a technical professional, and wanting a career to help marginalized people, often forgotten individuals in our society:

I actually wanted to be a pastor. And then I realized I don't want to be in the church. I don't want to be stuck working in churches. I want to help people that are, are, hard to are hard to reach, people that people that other people don't want to help. You know, people would, would rather avoid them. And so social work seemed like a good fit.

(Red 1, 2025, 10:17)

Red 1 also discussed in his interview his history of substance misuse and subsequent interactions with the addiction field. He mentioned this experience helped him seek out a career that was more aligned with his personal values. Red 1 expressed gratitude toward those workers who supported and mentored him during his period of substance misuse, which had a profound impact on his life, allowing him to maintain 15 years of sobriety. Through self-reflection on his dissatisfaction with his prior occupation and his personal goal of working within the community, he entered the social work field.

This commentary on career exploration and transition continues with White 1's narrative. Participant White 1 shared that being denied a promotion prompted him to reconsider his career:

I worked in a warehouse for nine years, and, yeah, I applied for a promotion, didn't get it. I wasn't happy with that decision, so I decided to go back to school, Inner City Social Work (University of Manitoba ACCESS Inner City Social Work Program located in the inner city of Winnipeg). (White 1, 2025, 00:24)

White 1's experience adds another dimension to career dissatisfaction. This does this by adding commentary on how limited opportunities for advancement prompt people to pursue alternative careers. White 1 mentioned that it was only because a former colleague had been encouraging him for years to apply to the Inner City Social Work program, specifically, that he did so when he was overlooked for a promotion. White 1's experience illustrates that, when career setbacks occur, a career exploration process is initiated that opens participants' minds to reconsider opportunities, even ones overlooked in the past.

A different experience was had by Participant Sun 3, as career opportunities were scarce, after the completion of a different undergraduate degree, prompting her to change her career pathway:

I graduated with my BA (Bachelor of Arts) and realized you can't get any jobs with a criminology degree. So, I was looking at the criteria, because I want to become a probation officer initially. And in order to become a probation officer, you need your Bachelor of Social Work. (Sun 3, 2025, 00:22)

Sun 3 shared that this transitional difficulty required her to work two jobs to pay for school while pursuing her social work education, as Sun 3's parents were unwilling to fund her education. Moreover, Sun 3 also mentioned that during this time that she began to thrive, that her inner city experience, as a person residing in the north end neighbourhood, was invaluable in the field and helped validate her experience:

I was able to keep my attention and really love what I do, because, like, I got to be hands on with people and talk to them the way that I would with other people that I lived with growing up. (Sun 3, 2025, 22:26)

Sun 3's experiences in her social work education reinforced her decision to reconsider her career and transition. It also allowed her to continue to foster her previous interest in criminal justice by connecting with a social work professor with a criminal justice focus:

...there was one professor, and they were both, they both specialized in crime and the justice system. And so going into that and them giving me the experience of, like, we got to visit Stony (Stony Mountain Institution – Adult Prison), we got to visit we got to visit Headingley (Headingley Correctional Institution – Adult Prison) and actually got to see the jails. Got to talk to judges. I did a presentation in front of, like a panel of people, like judges, police officers and staff, and got really good feedback at the end of it. So, it kind of like all of that gave me, like this just validation of, like, you're doing it. This is, this is like you're meant to do this. (Sun 3, 2025, 26:41)

Participant Balong described his career reconsideration process as beginning when he endured a personal health crisis and was moved by the care he received from hospital staff, including social work. From this experience, Balong saw social work as the closest attainable alternative to nursing when nursing was no longer feasible. Balong described how entering social work was a way to gain more career opportunities while also fulfilling his desire to do meaningful work:

I was in hospital for two months, and one of the things I remembered was how much I enjoyed the feeling of being helped. So, if I wasn't going to be a nurse, the next thing that I was thinking of is being a social worker. (Balong, 2025, 00:21)

Balong's narrative also reinforces Sun 3's insight that the helping field is one that Filipino Canadians appear to gravitate toward. While being a nurse or a health care aide appear to be common career pathways for Filipino Canadians, pursuing social work is not. Social work is another helping field that is often overlooked, but is one where Filipino Canadians could possibly thrive as well. Sun 3 cemented this idea by sharing the following insight:

Like, it's just not something that I've ever seen before or heard of, even going to school, like, I've never even seen, like, the representation of Filipinos in helping, the helping field, aside from health, right? (Sun 3, 2025, 12:47)

This subtheme is important as it shows how seeds of change are planted for participants where, career stalemates, career dissatisfaction, and unrealized careers for various reasons compels participants to explore other options including social work education.

Subtheme: Life-Impacting Conditions

Some participants shared how life-impacting conditions had long-term effects on their health or led to life-altering situations, prompting them to reconsider other career paths. Participant Balong (2025) discussed how his diagnosis specifically affected his mental capacity, stating, "I had tuberculosis, and then it was left untreated. So, I had a stroke that affected the left side of my body, so it affected my math abilities" (00:21).

Participant Blue 2 noted that becoming pregnant shifted her priorities from her law aspiration to considering a more practical program that would immediately provide a stable income to support her growing family:

...in my grade 12 year I got pregnant with my son, so my priority and focus was to get into an undergrad degree that I could likely finish in four years' time and can help me land an actual career so I can start providing for my son. (Blue 2, 2025, 0:55)

This subtheme is significant because it shows how life-impacting conditions can make social work education more appealing to individuals who had not previously considered it. It also shows how social work became a more practical degree for financial stability.

Subtheme: Personal Encounter with the Social Work Profession

While only a few participants had prior contact with social workers before their social work education, those who had such encounters generally found these interactions positive, which influenced them to consider entering social work themselves. These experiences often preceded hardships, as shown in the examples below. Some participants mentioned that their interest in social work began with encounters with the profession during moments of personal vulnerability. Participant Blue 1 recalled a period when she became a young mother and experienced postpartum depression. This experience brought her into contact with a social worker whose support and encouragement opened her to the idea of pursuing a career in social work:

<i>Participant</i>	Blue 1
<i>Narrative</i>	(1) Had a child prior to entering social work education. (2) Struggled with mental health and mentioned issues with depression and struggling to go to her university classes. (3) Family was unsupportive and put her down, stating “her life is over” now that she had a child at a young age. The participant did not specify how old she was when she had her child.
<i>Reason for entering social work</i>	Social worker helped her during a difficult time in her life and encouraged her to get into social work.

I became a young mom and had my son, and then I had a social worker come and visit me after that, I guess I was having some post like, I guess, like depression after birth and stuff, and so that's when I kind of realized this is something that I wanted to...

(Blue 1, 2025, 00:21).

Participant Red 2 described a turning point in her life, recalling how her own use of mental health services and counselling with a social worker left a lasting impression. These experiences were an initial and meaningful exposure to the profession of social work for these participants. Red 2 noted:

...because I myself have, like, used services like mental health services and counseling services and such like that, and I've encountered, they're not a current social worker, but someone who was a social worker before, who had helped me in my life, and I remember the warmth and just the appreciation I had for that person. (Red 2, 2025, 06:51)

This subtheme is important because it shows how positive encounters with social workers could influence people to become interested in the field. This exposure to social work for Filipino Canadians is often not gained through formal means such as school, but through lived experiences, often amid hardship and vulnerable times in their lives. This is not to suggest that Filipino Canadians will only consider social work during a period of vulnerability, but rather that a relational component is necessary with Filipino Canadians to entice them to enter the field. In other words, fostering positive relationships is essential for encouraging Filipino Canadians into social work education.

Subtheme: Filipino Societal Visibility

Participants described their perspectives on the limited societal visibility of Filipino Canadians, how these issues affect them, and the aspirations participants perceive for

themselves. Participant Sun 1 noted that Filipino migration is often misunderstood, recalling a colleague who questioned why so many Filipinos come to Canada, revealing a lack of awareness of the social and economic realities that drive Filipino Canadians to migrate in the first place.

Sun 1 stated:

I remember two weeks ago sitting in the office, and my coworker was asking another, like, a white coworker was asking the Filipino coworker, like, why are there so many Filipinos in Canada? Like, it's beautiful there. Why would you why wouldn't you stay there? (Sun 1, 2025, 07:09)

Participant Sun 3 shared the insight that Filipino Canadians are rarely seen as frequent users of social services, even though some do access social services and are often associated with caregiving roles, such as nursing or foster parenting. Sun 3 noted the following:

...like Filipinos actually using social services until I started working in the mental health field for adults like, and that's just insane for me. Like to even think about that, like even working in care, you know that we don't see this, but we always see them in the helping field, like when it comes to being foster parents, or we see them being like nurses and everything. (Sun 3, 2025, 17:45)

Participant Sun 2 mentioned that a Filipino social work professor or a Filipino Canadian social work student completing a thesis made these roles feel more attainable. Sun 2 shared the following quotation to illustrate this:

I think even seeing like, for example, like a Filipino Social Work professor, like for me, it seems like so far away and like something that you wouldn't consider, but seeing someone being able to do that you're like, or doing their thesis. (Sun 2, 2025, 39:23)

This subtheme is important because it further supports the societal invisibility of Filipino Canadians in Canada, where issues related to them are often omitted and stereotyped. This further reinforces the struggle for Filipino Canadians to imagine themselves outside stereotypical roles, like being a professor or a graduate student completing a thesis.

The theme of pathways into social work education is important because it shows that Filipino Canadian students seldom enter social work education through a linear process, but rather illustrate their unique and diverse pathways, motivations, and contexts. This theme also shows how structural forces and socio-economic conditions can influence participants' pathways into social work education. In addition, it highlights how life-impacting conditions serve as catalysts for entering social work education. Likewise, it shows that positive encounters with social workers can inspire Filipino Canadians to enter social work. Lastly, it exposes the limited societal visibility of Filipino Canadians among participants and the broader Canadian society.

Theme 3: Mental Health and Self-Reflection

Mental health and self-reflection emerged to be a consistent theme that impacted participants' educational journeys. These internal struggles included feelings of shame, fear, and loneliness during their social work education. Furthermore, participants described instances of internalized oppression from social messages shaped by their family and culture. On the other hand, participants also described experiences of personal growth and resilience as being instrumental in navigating their academic, cultural, and personal challenges. This appears to highlight self-reflection as a motivating factor for participants to continue their educational journeys in social work.

Subtheme: Shame

Participants described expressions about shame, including how it stemmed from preconceived beliefs from their families and communities, as well as from personal anxieties, and how it surfaced and impacted their learning experience in social work education. Shame emerges not merely as an individual's feelings, but as a response to deep, ingrained beliefs, cultural norms, and internalized expectations from their family and their Filipino culture.

Participant Blue 2 imparted how classroom reflections can trigger feelings of 'shame' and 'guilt', leading some students to question whether they belonged in social work. Blue 2 also went on to share how shame can be a compass to surface, navigate, and challenge ingrained internalized biases. Blue 2 imparts this by stating:

The knowledge that you know before you start the program is influenced by your family, your community and those values and beliefs get ingrained over the years. When you sit in those classes, and you are encouraged to reflect, you may feel shame, guilt and may start to doubt if social work is for you, but do not fault yourselves. As long as you have the humility to accept that you can shift those beliefs by challenging those present biases, mindsets and knowledge about other people and communities, as long as you are willing to do introspection on yourself, you will be okay. (Blue 2, 2025, 36:17)

Participant White 2 describes in her transcript how shame manifested in interpersonal interactions. This shame emerged through White 2's high anxiety and fear of judgment from making a mistake during her practicum. White 2 unpacked this experience and mentioned that her 'shame-based' emotions were centered in feelings of judgment from family, contrasted with supportive supervision through her practicum. These accounts show how shame operates both internally and relationally for Filipino Canadian students, influencing their confidence, sense of

belonging, and learning, while also highlighting opportunities for growth when met with non-judgmental support. White 2 articulates this with the following quotations:

I think it was a lot of the practicum, the support I was getting from practicum, because I struggled, because I had such high anxiety talking to people, and they were there doing role playing with me, and just not and I knew that was shame based, like I struggled to talk to families and, like, being judged and but they were there every step of the way, so that, I think that was probably the highlight of my undergrad. (White 2, 2025, 25:09)

This subtheme is particularly important because it shows how the internalized beliefs among participants, such as shame, could arise within their social work educational experiences as Filipino Canadians. Participants experienced shame as an obstacle to overcome and a catalyst for change, with cultural roots as articulated in Blue 2's quotations. For example, shame could impede confidence in social work education, as White 2 noted that her practicum anxiety was rooted in shame. On the other hand, it could be the impetus that leads participants to critical self-reflection to facilitate personal growth. This additionally shows the need for non-judgmental learning environments to reduce anxieties rooted in shame among Filipino Canadians, which are ingrained in their family beliefs and values.

Subtheme: Self-Esteem

Participants shared experiencing self-esteem issues impacted by cultural and family expectations. Participant Blue 1 mentioned struggling with internalized messages emanating from negative family judgments regarding her pregnancy and incomplete education. However, Blue 1 also discusses these same critiques as being a major motivator for her to complete her social work education. Blue 1 shared the following quotation:

My self-esteem. I would say I struggled with, like, I guess, like, part of the reason why, like, I went to university, anyways, is because I was a young mom, and with my family and me being like, the first one to have a baby at a young age, it was like, okay, her life is done. So, a lot of my push came from I'm going to prove them wrong and stuff like that. But it was a lot of talk from family members saying, oh, she's never going to finish, right? So, and then so that would I would internally, have that in my head and like, saying I'm not enough, or I can't do this. (Blue 1, 2025, 06:16)

For Sun 3, she mentioned how self-doubt in her academic ability was tied to racialized academic stereotypes. These racialized stereotypes include not excelling in math, which led her to believe she was not 'smart' enough and influenced her early decisions about educational pathways. Sun 3's excerpt illustrates how Filipino students often carry expectations that impair their confidence, and how participants negotiate, resist, and reinterpret these messages as part of their educational process. Sun 3 cited the following:

I went to university initially to become, like, an accountant, because I had no idea. Like, I didn't know math, so I wasn't smart enough to like, because, like, like, all the other Asians, like, you know, growing up, so I was terrible at math, so that was no way to happen. (Sun 3, 2025, 06:48)

Next, White 2 shared that exploring their self-esteem might be something Filipino Canadians need to examine as part of their learning experience in social work. White 2 mentioned her internal narrative, which centred on self-doubt and criticism, impacted her learning experience in social work education. White 2 shared the following quotations:

...as a Filipino immigrant or second generation but just remain open minded and depending on the narrative too, because often there's a lot of self-doubt and criticism and

self-esteem issues that can be and may become a denominator. And take those as a learning experience into the work as a student. (White 2, 2025, 44:56)

This subtheme is important because it articulates how cultural influences, such as family expectations, create an internalized dialogue of self-worth that could have a damaging effect on participants.

Subtheme: Trauma

Participants described processing trauma during their social work education. Participant Blue 1 explained that her trauma originated from her parents' unresolved hardships and that participants often absorb the emotional burden of their parents' struggles. Blue 1 (2025) shared, "[b]ecause most of my trauma come from, came from being like an immigrant child, like a child of immigrant parents, and that had their own struggle, like had their own kind of like struggles" (07:48).

Red 1 further expanded on the narrative of trauma and how it attracted him to social work. He described historic and familial emotional burdens and how he had inappropriate coping mechanisms that led him into social work as a means of healing himself. Red 1 stated the following:

...people get into social work because they're like the wounded healers. Um. And I think we all face sort of these psychosocial issues, right? You can put it all sorts of labels on it, and I'm not exempt from that. You know, there's some, I don't know, some historical trauma, I suppose, and certain ways of that, that I chose to cope with, that that weren't really healthy. (Red 1, 2025, 04:49)

For others, trauma became a catalyst for intentional transformation. Participant Blue 2 reflected on how becoming a young parent while in the program prompted deep self-reflection,

allowing them to integrate lessons from child welfare coursework into her own parenting goals. These accounts demonstrate how Filipino Canadian students understand trauma and how it shapes their identities and influences their perspective in their social work education. Blue 2 shared the following:

I learned a lot about myself and parenting. When I was working on my program, (child's name) was around two and I've incorporated many lessons from my child welfare class in my own parenting with the hope of minimizing trauma for my child. I think it was a bonus being a student. I was also around 19 when I was accepted into the program and it helped me during the transition from teen to young adult. (Blue 2, 2025, 17:31)

This subtheme is important because it sheds light on the roots of emotional trauma for some participants. From their experience as immigrant children to dealing with their parents' interpersonal issues and adjusting to life in Canada. All these factors appear to impact their psychological well-being before, during, and after entering social work education. Some participants also used lessons from their social work classes to change parenting practices within themselves that might have been modelled or instilled by their immigrant parents, to stop harmful intergenerational cultural transmissions in parenting.

Subtheme: Mental Health Supports

Mental health resources appeared to be a factor in supporting some participants in their educational journey. Participants noted the role of mental health supports, such as therapy, in assisting them through the personal struggles they encountered during their social work education. Participants expressed that mental health resources were important, as non-judgmental emotional support was not often available through their family and cultural ties. Participants shared how mental health supports assisted them to deal with emotional hardship during their

social work education. Participant Blue 1 noted that therapy provided a neutral space free from judgment where she could express herself more than in her family and social networks. Blue 1 stated the following:

I think it's really the therapy, because I'm just thinking about me and all the trauma, like open trauma that I had to experience going through school. I think therapy was a big one for me, and having that support system was very important, right? And it couldn't be your parents, and it couldn't be someone you know, close, right? It had to be someone completely neutral. So, I think that was that's a big one. (Blue 1, 2025, 16:52)

Next, Participant White 2's quote presents how her mental health challenges during university required external mental health support to address her emotional needs. White 2 also noted that she often avoided family support due to concerns about feeling judged or fear of not being understood regarding her mental health. White 2 articulates this in her following excerpt:

I was also going through some mental health challenges throughout university. She was more than just a professor, so I think she was a huge support system for me during that time, and encouraged me to continue therapy, because I stopped for a while.

(White 2, 2025, 18:23)

This subtheme is important because it describes how help-seeking behaviour outside of the Filipino Canadian family circle is still seen as necessary for participants to work through their mental health challenges, as articulated by Blue 1 in her narrative. This subtheme also illustrates some of the emotional hardships that participants carry as they enter and progress in their social work education. White 2 described her professor as providing informal support that offered the necessary encouragement to seek help, illustrating the importance of these informal supports to participants in their social work education. This again shows that relationships matter

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in helping participants address their emotional needs and concerns during their academic journeys.

Subtheme: Social Work Values

The participants shared that social work values, introduced in their social work programs, helped validate their personal values, which aligned closely with core social work principles. The participant transcripts seem to describe how social work is not only a career pathway for participants, but also a possible framework for them to reimagine their own possibilities from cultural constructs that could be limiting. Participants noted that social work values reinforced and aligned with their personal core beliefs, thereby strengthening their understanding of themselves and others including their families. While participants were not explicit as to which social work values impacted them, from the context of their transcripts it would suggest the following as significant: (1) respecting the dignity and worth of all people, (2) promoting social justice, and (4) valuing human relationships (Canadian Association of Social Workers, 2024).

Participant Sun 2 mentioned how social work values were more aligned and resonated with their own personal values, allowing them to persevere through their social work education. Sun 2 shared the following:

...social work is like a field I find, even though social work isn't perfect, and I had, like, caused a lot of harm, of course, it's like a field where that, I find it has a lot of those values that align with what I want to do. And it kind of motivated me to go there.

(Sun 2, 2025, 00:15)

Participant White 2 expressed how social work values were helpful in shaping her own perspective outside of Filipino Canadian cultural and religious norms that were instilled in them.

This reference show that social work values can reinforce participants' personal beliefs and lay a foundation that is not constrained by their religious and Filipino cultural norms:

The values of social work helped me and helped shape my thoughts outside of the cultural lens of Filipino culture, because I felt like it was such a box, you know, like these expectations I can't see outside Catholicism or the culture, and these are the rules. This is what it is. And I think social work brought forth for me to look through various lens and various perspectives, from a non-judgmental space, a non-judgmental connection with other human beings. (White 2, 2025, 10:23)

White 2 also mentioned that she lived in a traditional Filipino Canadian household. With this upbringing, she was often subject to expectations about how to behave and which careers to pursue that did not align with her personal values. This would cause conflict at times with her own personal beliefs, as she self-reported to be an ally with the LGBTQIA+ community, which goes against traditional Filipino Canadian cultural values, as it goes against the teachings of the Roman Catholic Church, where these teachings often interweave with Filipino Canadian cultural values.

This subtheme is important because it shows how social work values helped participants validate their own personal values. Sun 2 and White 2 quotations show that when personal values and social work values align, participants remain more committed to their social work education. Social work values also served as an avenue for participants to see beyond their Filipino cultural lens and to rethink their relationships with others and their ways of seeing the world.

The theme of mental health and self-reflection is important, as it contextualizes the emotional realities of Filipino Canadians students within the backdrop of their experiences in social work education. This theme articulates how internalized oppression operates for

participants, how it can impact their sense of self and feeling of belonging and whether social work is for them. It also demonstrates how self-reflection can foster resilience and personal transformation in participants. This theme helped reveal other focal points, serving as a launchpad for insights, connecting experiences, and providing an opportunity for both participants and the researcher to reflect, reinterpret, and find meaning in their social work educational experiences.

Theme 4: Barriers

Participants described several barriers they faced while pursuing social work as a potential career pathway. Barriers related to social work education included financial constraints, whiteness of the social work profession, and geography. Participants also described a range of barriers that influenced their openness or hesitation to pursue social work as a career. Participants noted how financial realities and cultural stereotypes about professions influenced their journey into social work education and their perceptions of social work as a sustainable profession.

Subtheme: Financial

Participants described how economic constraints, family expectations, and employment prospects intersect to influence career paths and challenge the perspective of what counts as a secure or successful career. Star 2 shared that there was a lot of pressure to succeed to ‘make up’ for her parents' sacrifice in immigrating to Canada:

In regard to sacrifice. Yeah, there I find that Filipino children from immigrant families, especially, especially in first generation, some children do have that pressure of, I need to be successful. I need to make a name for myself. That's the thing. That's the number one thing that I often see with all my peers, you have to make a title for yourself. That's why

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being an RN (Registered Nurse), being a lawyer, being a doctor, especially, having that title separates you from being an immigrant that has nothing to start for a lot of Filipino Canadians, I feel like that's the number one incentivizer. (Star 2, 2025, 41:33)

Star 2 further mentioned how difficult this pressure was to establish a name for herself without having the financial support for her education from her family:

...at the time I was just I was like burnt out achiever. I thought I could do anything. I thought I could make it when I didn't make it, social work wasn't even my second choice. I thought of pursuing law, but because of because of money constraints, I was the only one paying my loan. My parents weren't helping me. It was all on me. (Star 2, 2025, 40:31)

Next, Star 1 shared that there was pressure to pursue a lucrative career from her family and that the lack of familial understanding and support was incredibly disheartening:

...it's kind of discouraging, initially, during the first year that my family didn't really understand, you know, what social workers did, and how much you know, how much they are really such an asset to the community. (Star 1, 2025, 09:25)

Star 1 also mentioned the difficulty of dissolving stereotypes regarding social work and its sustainability as a career for her family:

I think that's really important with that initial piece of being able to break down those stereotypes, and also, too, in terms of the breaking down the perspective of, you know, like, only STEM is a sustainable job, when you know, social work is also a sustainable career. (Star 1, 2025, 20:23)

Blue 2 also shared sentiments similar to Star 1 and mentioned that it was not until she graduated and secured employment in her first week that her mother changed her perspective on

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social work as a financially secure job. Blue 2 mentioned, “I was able to secure employment weeks after graduation so that challenged my mom’s stereotype of job security for social workers” (Blue 2, 2025, 04:37).

The financial subtheme is important because it highlights the socioeconomic circumstances and pressure to succeed in the context in which participants are embedded. Often, participants initially mentioned pursuing other careers perceived as more lucrative. Star 2 mentioned in her quotations that she would have to pay for her education on her own. Although she had ambitious goals to pursue a career in law, she lacked financial support, which led her to label herself a ‘burnout overachiever’. This is consistent with what was articulated in the literature review, where parents would not take out financial loans for their children’s education. Next, Blue 2’s quotations also illustrate that even after completing her social work education, her mother still had doubts that social work would be a financially stable career. However, she was able to dispel this belief after getting a job one week after graduation. These preconceptions appear culturally rooted and are transmitted by family members and the Filipino Canadian community. However, these preconceptions can be challenged when other options, such as social work, show that there are stable careers beyond nursing and STEM.

Subtheme: Whiteness of the Profession

Participants noted that their social work education was overwhelmingly white in different aspects. Participant Red 1 reflected on his BSW and MSW educational experiences, expressing disappointment that, as a profession grounded in social justice, he was still experiencing prejudice in the classroom:

...both my MSW, MSW and BSW experiences were incredibly white, an incredibly white experience. And it's disappointing. It's disappointing in a profession that claims to be

social justice oriented. It's disappointing in just kind of seeing things happen in comments, the microaggressions, to see that it's just not, it's not. It doesn't change even social work profession, it's still there. (Red 1, 2025, 15:58)

Participant Sun 2 shared their perspective that, because they are a person of colour, they felt they needed to reserve their comments in their social work classrooms. Sun 2 worried that sharing their perspective might not be understood or could even be seen as hurtful to their white professors:

<i>Participant</i>	Sun 2
<i>Narrative</i>	(1) Reported socio-economic hardship growing up. (2) Has newcomer mother and a refugee father. Mother struggled to financially support them, and the participant had to work while going through social work education. (3) Person describes having a good relationship with their mother. Limited discussion about their father in their personal life. (4) Person identifies as LGBTQIA+. 5) Person is passionate about social justice.
<i>Reason for entering social work:</i>	(1) A relative told them about social work. (2) Pursued social work for more career opportunities.

Like if I want to say something in class about my experience, I feel like there's going to be, I don't have to feel maybe as bad about what I might say and worried about hurting, what a white professor might feel about what I'm saying, about how maybe white culture, or, I don't know if that's the right word, but like whiteness affects my

experience and stuff like I would feel less so then less may be afraid to talk in class about my experience. (Sun 2, 2025,13:22)

Next, Participant Sun 3 also described the numerical dominance of white peers in her program at the University of Manitoba:

...in terms of representation during when in my in my class, we're a helping field where the majority of people who we serve are people of color and people like of Indigenous that like a BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and People of Color) folks, especially when you're in a clinical field, I feel like it's probably dominantly white, like, I don't know about now, but even in my like, I see like, in my in (Ontario University), I see half and half like, you know, like, but there are (Another Ontario University), and it's just, or they're, they're at an Ontario university, so you'll see a lot of that, but U of M (University of Manitoba), it was very white. It was like, all my friends that were in that program were white. (Sun 3, 2025, 39:47)

The subtheme of whiteness in the profession is important because it has many implications for social work. For one, there appears to be an incongruence between the social work values disseminated that promote diversity and the lived experiences of Filipino Canadian participants in social work education. Red 1 shared how 'incredibly white' his social work educational experience was and how disappointed he was that social work frames itself as social justice-oriented, but falls short in this case. Red 1's experience of microaggressions in his classes illustrates that much work still needs to be done in social work education to address racism in the academic setting and curriculum. Next, Sun 2's quotations on whiteness also shed light on how participants had to curtail their opinions, as shown when Sun 2 feared that doing so would hurt their white professor's feelings. This illustrates self-monitoring behaviour, in which participants

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feel they must accommodate white professors' feelings or face possible repercussions. Sun 2's excerpt reveals a lot. First, the dominant culture's perspectives and power structures appear to remain entrenched in much of social work education. Second, Sun 2's commentary shows that the Western worldview remains the default context in social work classrooms. In other words, whiteness is structural, not personal in this context. This creates a barrier to fostering a sense of belonging and full participation in the classroom for Filipino Canadian students. In addition, Sun 3's quotations show that her social work classroom is numerically dominated by white students. This numerical dominance of white students could impede classroom discussion in terms of depth and diversity. If most individuals in a social work classroom subscribe to the dominant discourse, it could become difficult for other perspectives to surface, be recognized, and be valued. Compounding this further increases the burdens Filipino Canadians students experience in the context of their social work education.

Subtheme: Geography

Participants also noted that geography could influence their access to post-secondary education and determine their comfort level in practicing social work in communities familiar and unfamiliar to them. Participants noted differences within their neighbourhoods, in the central and northern parts of Winnipeg, where participants were often raised in vibrant Filipino Canadian communities. In contrast, the University of Manitoba Fort Garry campus, located in the southern part of Winnipeg, was described by some participants as creating accessibility issues related to distance from their neighbourhoods. This further created disconnection, as participants had no ties or familiarity with this geography. White 1 provided details of this experience and mentioned that the Maples neighbourhood is his home. White 1 reported going to the University of Manitoba Inner City Social Work campus located on Selkirk Avenue, not far from the Maples.

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Inner City students who needed to attend a Fort Garry main campus class would sometimes have to travel over an hour by bus from their northern and inner city neighbourhoods. White 1 further mentioned a disconnection from the communities and surroundings of the Fort Garry main campus, as it was unfamiliar to him and he had no ties to that area:

I live in, the (Maples - neighborhood in the north part of Winnipeg). I'm never gonna go to U of M to use their facilities. Makes no sense. So, I think it's accessibility and location, geographic, location. I think that's kind of like a oppressive thing like U of M is at Fort Garry, like, I'm in the north (northern part of the city of Winnipeg).

(White 1, 2025, 03:12)

Sun 3 grew up in an inner city neighbourhood of Winnipeg and mentioned that this experience made it much easier for her to interact with these communities, as they were familiar and not intimidating. Sun 3 mentioned that, growing up, her family would often help her friends from troubled homes, who would stay over and became family in a sense, even going on family trips together. These experiences were invaluable once she started her social work practicum:

...during my practicums, that's when it really showed that, like, I can work with populations, like I'm not, like, even the fact that, like, visiting, you know, homes in the north end (inner city neighbourhood of Winnipeg), like I wasn't afraid to go to these houses by myself, or whatever, like, I don't know, maybe now I would be a lot more freaked out, like, you know, going into a meth house, but, but, like, it just kind of validated my experience. (Sun 3, 2025, 31:10)

This subtheme is important in the commentary of Filipino Canadians in social work education because it shows how geography could act as a structural barrier for some participants. White 1 mentioned that the accessibility, meaning the travel time and resources to get to the Fort

Garry Campus, which is on the southern part of Winnipeg, from his neighbourhood located in the northern part of Winnipeg became a barrier. These neighbourhoods, with their strong Filipino Canadian presence, were familiar to participants. Sun 3 reported a stronger sense of connection to these areas, such as the North End, showing that geography can foster and hinder connection and even validate participants' experience. In this way, familiarity became a strength once participants were in their placement, practicing in these neighbourhoods.

The theme of barriers is important because it reveals some of the structural and cultural barriers that Filipino Canadian students experience before and during their social work education. It illustrates the family pressures and motivations that Filipino Canadians face when entering higher education. Participants shared that their families instilled high expectations for them to pursue lucrative careers, without the financial support to back them up in this endeavour, often forcing them to fund their entire education. If these aspirations are not realized, participants shift to other options, including social work. Even after graduating and securing employment, participants must also convince their families that social work is a stable career. It also shows how “whiteness” in social work can create learning environments where Filipino Canadian students feel uncomfortable expressing themselves. It further demonstrates that they are underrepresented in the classroom compared to their white peers. It also provides a possible explanation for why Filipino Canadian students may hesitate to pursue social work or feel uncertain about their belonging in the profession. Furthermore, this theme directly addresses the research objective of identifying barriers. While the earlier themes focused on more personal and relational aspects regarding participants entering social work education, such as life circumstances and personal motivations, this theme shifts our focus to structural influences that imposed constraints on Filipino Canadians in social work education. This shift sets the stage for

participants to identify personal shortcomings and challenges in their pathways into social work education. This shift further reframes these contexts and connects them to larger structural forces, allowing them to be reinterpreted through a more empowering narrative.

Theme 5: Educational Experiences

Participants' educational experiences were mixed and shaped by classroom dynamics, social connection and disconnection, Western worldview, mentorship, prior educational difficulties, and academic environments to voice their perspective. These influenced the confidence of participants, persistence, and ability to envision themselves as future social workers. In terms of resources, the participants offered a wide variety of suggestions on what would be helpful, which were specific to their individual experiences.

Subtheme: Social Connection and Disconnection

Participants reported that social connections formed during their social work education with both Filipino and non-Filipino peers were beneficial. In addition, participants also mentioned how social connections helped foster a sense of belonging and improved their overall enjoyment of their social work education. In one instance, Participant Red 2 mentioned that her encounter, on the first day of classes, with other Filipino students helped create meaningful friendships and brought a sense of cultural familiarity in a predominantly white classroom:

I coincidentally, ended up sitting next to the two Philippines, the two other two Filipinas (Filipino female) in my class. So, all three of us ended up sitting in a row like that, and then we all we also ended up having to go into a little group discussion at the end. And that was interesting to how we coincidentally ended up all in the same row, in the same group. And then after that, I fostered a mass friendship with them as well.

(Red 2, 2025, 15:15)

White 2 noted that her friendships went beyond the classroom, offering support through emotional challenges during coursework. In these situations, social connection was both a sustaining and transformative aspect of participants' educational journey. It contributed to White 1's persistence in completing her program, personal growth, and a sense of community, especially in an academic space not always designed to nurture these interactions. White 2 noted the following:

...just the friends I made along at university as well, like, I have two specific ones, actually, that I'm currently contracting with. It's ironic, because we're still friends, you know, we're still good friends, and we did do our MSW (Master of Social Work), together. So, and I think there were a couple of people, we had a wonderful group as well outside of university, just for support, because was, I found that some topics in social work were very triggering for some of us... (White 2, 2025, 18:23)

Blue 1 shared a similar sentiment to White 2 about how lifelong friendships formed during her social work program, and the feeling that the knowledge in her social work education made her a better person, were the most enjoyable parts of her social work program:

I think the most part that I enjoyed is me being a better person going into social work and just a new perspective, but the lifelong friends and the connections is probably the second that I would say is the biggest thing that I enjoy. (Blue 1, 2025, 05:09)

Participants expressed their awareness of the scarcity of Filipino peers within their social work education and practice. This scarcity led to feelings of disconnection and not belonging in social work education. Blue 2 explained the contrast between her experience in social work education and in the field in terms of connection:

Back in 2014 I had a cohort who was Filipino, and we happened to share a mutual friend. So, I got to know her back in social work school and to date, we still connect periodically. (Blue 2, 2025, 23:45)

I really did not know of any Filipino social workers up until 2020, when I worked at [Child Welfare Agency] after hours. I could count in one hand how many Filipino social workers I actually know. I know my husband has a couple more in his agency, but those that I know of personally and worked with, I can count in one hand. (Blue 2, 2025, 24:41)

Red 2 contrasts with her earlier experience of social connection, in which she describes meeting two Filipinas in her class, feeling connected and becoming instant friends, and then shifts to feelings of disconnection in the next quotation. In this quotation, Red 2 recalls the difference in her sense of connection. When she attended a high school with a large Filipino population, she felt connected, and when she entered university, started her part-time work, she felt the opposite. Red 2 mentioned that this experience made her realize she was a minority in these spaces and not seeing many Filipinos in these environments was eye-opening and isolating:

It was very much like the major population in my high school was Filipinos. So, I never thought it as well growing up, I never felt like different or felt disconnected at all because my high school was like majority was like me, kind of thing. So, when I left my high school and started venturing out into, like, university or even, like in my job and workplace, that sort of when I started noticing, like, oh, like, I am the minority here. (Red 2, 2025, 16:11)

This subtheme is important because it highlights the impact of social connection and disconnection on participants' educational experience in social work. In terms of social

connection, participants who were able to connect with peers and foster connections helped reduce feelings of isolation and disconnection. Furthermore, having peer connections helped some participants better process difficult social work topics that were triggering. Social connection also appears to increase participants' enjoyment of their educational experiences, especially when they can make connections with peers that can develop into friendships well after their social work programs have ended. On the other hand, social disconnection can have the opposite effect. Participants mentioned that seeing few Filipinos in their social work classrooms, and in the field, led to feelings of isolation and a lack of belonging.

Subtheme: Western Worldview

Participants noted that their social work education curriculum was centred on a Western worldview, to the point that they saw it as limiting, especially when working with diverse populations. Moreover, participants perceived the Western worldview as not matching their own worldview, which caused challenges in adapting to this perspective. Participant Sun 2 mentioned how expanding the social work curriculum from a Western worldview could be more beneficial for serving communities with diverse populations:

I think it's valuable to learn about different ways of looking at things from different perspective. We often look at things from like a more Western perspective, and I think it's really beneficial, because you're going to be working with people from different backgrounds. So, learning how different backgrounds view things and their worldview can maybe help you to better support some of the clients you're working from, and kind of get a better understanding, not just from a Western perspective. (Sun 2, 2025, 11:44)

Sun 2 also noted how being exposed to worldviews that align with their Filipino culture could be empowering and improve their learning experience. Sun 2 noted the following:

I guess connecting to other Filipinos. I guess for me as well, I think it would be nice to have more like read more about texts from Filipino people. I think that'd be really beneficial for education and learning more about Filipino worldview. (Sun 2, 2025, 43:11)

Sun 2 further mentioned how, in a Western worldview, one could feel excluded in academic settings if one's perspectives are not acknowledged. Sun 2 (2026) stated, "I think that sometimes academia sometimes feel very Western and very in some ways, it can feel like if you're not including different world views and ideas, you kind of feel excluded and not really heard, I guess so" (48:04).

Participant Star 1 commented that her curriculum was 'very Western' and noted that some theories and interventions imparted in her social work education did not align well with the issues and needs of the newcomer youth population they encountered during her field placements:

It was very Western. In my experience, the curriculum was very Western. And I know the U of M (University of Manitoba) curriculum has changed now, but at the time, when I did my BSW it was very Western, and I found that a lot of the valuable experiences and learning that I made and learning that I gained was more through the field placement piece with the clients that I worked with, because I work with newcomer youth from different backgrounds and different ages. And I found that, you know, some of the social work theories that we learned, or the interventions weren't really as of a good fit with such a diverse population, whereas some were a better fit. (Star 1, 2025, 07:00)

Star 1 also mentioned Filipino cultural attitudes about eye contact. Star 1 articulated that she had been told growing up that it was a sign of disrespect. However, she was required to make

eye contact to show attentiveness in a social work context and struggled to adjust. Star 1 stated the following:

I did not do well in eye contact just because I grew up like being told, like, you know, you shouldn't be looking at people in the eye is very disrespectful, but in social work, like you have to, that's how you show being attentive, like you're paying attention. So, I had to really navigate that in my first year, and which was really challenging, because it kind of felt like I was being split into two. (Star 1, 2025, 12:56)

Specific aspects of Western worldview in social work education that participants found challenging were the theories. Star 1 gives a good example of this in her quote. In attachment theory, the child and mother are the focus, but within a Filipino context, this would also extend to family members and even community members. Star 1 explains in the following excerpt:

...for example, like the attachment theory, just because on, based on my personal experience growing up, and just the different way of, you know, raising children back home, it was kind of like tricky for me to connect with that initially, when I started the program. But on in terms of like, you know, working with Western youth, like, yes, I see it, you know, kind of explaining behaviours and mindsets and things like that...

(Star 1, 2025, 09.25)

But not all Western-rooted theories were seen as conflicting as Star 1 also mentioned how they saw value in the strength-based approach:

...the strengths-based approach was a huge benefit, and also just made a lot of sense in terms of, like, a lot of the things we were learning and doing in social work, but definitely some, some things were, you know, were more for a Western audience and not necessarily a good fit for such a diverse non-Western populations. (Star 1, 2025, 07:00)

Balong mentioned how cultural differences can influence how Filipinos and Western worldviews might perceive mental health issues. In a Western worldview, mental health is understood in psychological and cognitive terms. In a Filipino context, mental health issues can manifest more as physical or somatic symptoms. In assessments rooted in Western world view, in this case, might miss these crucial indicators of mental health issues and recommend inappropriate interventions for Filipino Canadian individuals seeking support:

Western people get mental health affected with like, the way they think, but people from the east, the way they get affected with their mental health is through physical symptoms. That's why you see a lot of Filipinos complain about, oh, my, my neck, my back pain. That's how we see it. So, like growing here in Canada and talking more about, like, mental health and how it affects people, the way it affects people from the Western side is something that I had to get used to, because it wasn't really a big thing in the Philippines. (Balong, 2025, 04:41)

The subtheme of the Western worldview is important as it has critical implications for social work education. For one, participants struggled with the Western worldview that dominated their social work curriculum. Second, participants shared accounts of how the theories did not reflect their context, creating an internal cultural conflict. Finally, participants noted that Western theories were presumed to be applicable to all populations, but participants were aware this was not true. The Western worldview also caused struggles for participants to adapt, as practices like eye contact were required to demonstrate attentiveness, whereas in the Filipino cultural context, such eye contact would be seen as disrespectful, causing confusion and cultural conflict. Balong mentioned how the Western worldview on mental health is understood through psychosocial aspects, whereas in Filipino culture it is understood and expressed through

complaints about physical health. This further shows how the Western worldview overlooks these subtle differences in cultural presentation, showing a disregard for these important distinctions and prioritizing the dominant discourse of the Western worldview in social work education. The absence of a Filipino Canadian context in the social work curriculum also signals a need to acknowledge the diversity of knowledge from other cultures. This also suggests that social work may not be invested in addressing all forms of diversity, as it appears to prioritize some while largely ignoring others. If this is not addressed, it could lead to an existential issue of what social work stands for, as purported values have little follow-through if this stance remains. It is also important to note that the quotations shared in this subtheme were from both past and present Filipino Canadian students, further showing that there is an issue and that it remains unaddressed.

Subtheme: Mentorship

Mentorship, both educational and personal, appeared to play an important role for several of the participants. Participants noted that mentorship could be culturally affirming and provided practical guidance for crucial moments in their educational journeys. Participant Blue 1 noted how an encounter with a social worker, during a vulnerable transition in her life, fostered a connection that inspired her to enter social work. Blue 1 stated the following:

I had a social worker come and visit me after that, I guess I was having some post like, I guess, like depression after birth and stuff, and so that's when I kind of realized this is something that I wanted to do, because they made a really big impact in my life. I ended up becoming really close with her. She's still in my life till this day, as a mentor...

(Blue 1, 2025, 00:21)

Participant Sun 2 mentioned that having a Filipino Canadian professor was culturally affirming. They also mentioned how it helped them network, learn about different resources, and connect with other peers, including other Filipino Canadian social work students. Sun 2 shared the following:

I guess my professor, who is Filipino, they also help me to network a lot with others. And I guess maybe that is, I'm still thinking about it, but I guess I think that could be helpful, especially if you're not, hmm, I find that networking like helps you to learn more about different resources and options available. And I think that, yeah, she was always like, trying to get me involved in different things. (Sun 2, 2025, 16:08)

Practicum instructors also emerged as important mentors to Filipino Canadian students. This was achieved through practicum instructors providing guidance and constructive feedback, which helped participants feel comfortable asking questions. This fostered participants' independence in unfamiliar practicum settings that were often Western-rooted. Participant Star 2 noted that her practicum instructors served as an academic safety net that facilitated her personal and professional growth. This helped her navigate her self-doubt, build her confidence, and see herself as capable in social work. Star 2 explained this further with the following excerpt:

My instructors were very understanding, like, hey, this is my first time working in a hospital, and mistakes are going to happen. They were very, very understanding of it, and because of how they handled some of my mistakes, well, I was more open to like, sharing like, hey, am I doing this wrong? Is there something else I can improve on? It was just very easy for me to handle feedback. Because, yeah, they were giving me constructive feedback. They were being appropriate, and they were being very gentle with how I was learning as well, which was good, um, another factors that they, sometime in the second

half of my placement, they were encouraging me to be more independent, which I was appreciative of... (Star 2, 2025, 12:56)

This subtheme is important because it demonstrates how mentorship can build confidence and reduce self-doubt in Filipino Canadian students in social work education. Star 2's quotation illustrates this in her commentary. She discusses the fear of making mistakes in her placement and how appropriate feedback from her practicum instructors fostered her agency and encouraged her to be more independent. Mentorship also helped ground participants during tumultuous periods in their lives as in Blue 1's case. Mentorship can also help Filipino Canadian students feel a sense of connection through networking and by introducing different resources that could be helpful in their future social work career as noted by Sun 2.

Subtheme: Educational Difficulties

Some participants expressed in their interviews that earlier post-secondary difficulties, during which they were exploring or pursuing other educational programs, were a factor that led them into social work education. These included situations where participants did not meet the prerequisites or the grade point average required to enter their desired programs. Star 1 (2025) mentioned, "...initially my plan was not to go into social work. I wanted to become a respiratory therapist, but then I failed my stats, course, at the UofM (University of Manitoba), so I had to think of a backup plan" (00:26).

Other participants, such as Red 2, also expressed feelings of disconnection or disinterest in her prior educational program. This was because her personal interests or values did not align with her business studies, leading her to withdraw eventually. Red 2 shared this experience below:

I didn't want to do business, so I dropped out because I felt very lost in that I didn't know where my path was going because that, business was my path, but like just listening to myself, I knew that this was not what I wanted. So rather than trying to hastily switch to another program, or like or something else, or to just keep taking classes without a real plan. (Red 2, 2025, 30:10)

These educational disruptions reveal how participants had to negotiate personal and cultural expectations for pursuing careers. These ranged from practical to more prestigious goals, and the emotional weight of not meeting their academic expectations also opened their scope to other career possibilities. Balong shared the following to illustrate this:

I did try to go to nursing on my second year, but because of my GPA from my first year, I didn't get into the Faculty of Nursing, and then I had to think again, like, what field should I go to? (Balong, 2025, 0:21)

This subtheme is important because it highlights cultural discourses about success and further reinforces the non-linear pathways of participants into social work education. It shows that, from the beginning, there appears to be a narrow perspective on which careers are considered successful among Filipino Canadians, as illustrated by quotations from Star 1 and Balong. When Star 1 and Balong's original career ambitions hit dead ends, both were forced to come up with a backup plan they might not have considered up to that point. Furthermore, participants struggled at first to listen to themselves and to pursue careers that better matched their interests or values, as demonstrated by Red 2's quotation. Overall, when original career pathways do not work out, participants are sometimes compelled to move away from cultural norms of success and seek alternative career options that better match their interests and personal values or that are more attainable.

Subtheme: Academic Environment to Voice Perspective

A safe learning environment for students to express their perspective was a noted factor in participants' social work education experiences, particularly regarding classroom dynamics. For example, Participant Blue 2 mentioned feeling open to expressing themselves in a classroom where their instructor intentionally created a safe environment. This classroom environment facilitated sharing differing opinions, and students were all encouraged to participate. Blue 2 noted the following:

I feel very privileged to have instructors that provided housekeeping at the beginning of their courses. Housekeeping referring to reminders that the classroom was a safe place for everyone to speak up, everyone has a chance to speak and if there are contradicting opinions, we can agree to disagree. I'm quite grateful for the spaces that allowed me to share. (Blue 2, 2025, 45:06)

On the other hand, Participant Star 2 shared a contrasting experience. Star 2 mentioned that she did not want to draw attention to herself and remained silent in classroom discussions. She further mentioned she would often agree with the sentiments from her predominantly white peers rather than expressing her own opinions. Star 2 articulated the following:

...when you're working with classmates, you have to be more like it's encouraged to share your own personal perspective. Regardless of what the view is, right? I couldn't really do that because, especially with the these, with my white classmates, they're like, you know, they're well off. Their family has been here for years. At least, majority of them have, and my experience as an immigrant just felt so what's the word? It felt very I felt I felt different, like I couldn't fit into the mold of what everyone else is. So, I just rather keep

my mouth shut, because, you know, it felt I didn't want that attention on me. I didn't want to seem like a token, if that makes sense. (Star 2, 2025, 24:46)

In another reference, Participant Star 1 shared feeling discomfort asking questions in the classroom, out of concern that others might perceive it as annoying, based on her experiences within her family:

You know, the way I wanted to be a social worker, in the sense of, I wanted to give my clients space to ask questions, feel safe asking questions, and be confident in asking questions, because I know for me, I would get a lecture if I asked too many questions. (Star 1, 2025, 26:39)

This subtheme focuses on the academic environment in which participants can voice their unique perspective. It is important because it highlights the need to create safe learning environments where Filipino Canadian students feel comfortable sharing. One part of this discussion is the importance of establishing group guidelines, which is crucial for facilitating engaged dialogue with all students. As Blue 2 mentioned, a 'safe place for everyone' implies that some students feel more uncomfortable voicing their opinions than others, especially when the dominant culture in their classroom is not their own. When participants felt different, they were compelled to self-silence. This was because participants did not want to draw attention to themselves or be tokenized for superficial inclusion, as they did not feel equal to their predominantly white peers.

The theme of educational experience is important because it shows how Filipino Canadian students' learning is shaped by classroom dynamics, mentorship, and institutional culture in their social work education. It reveals how the Western worldview is embedded in social work education. This creates a further cultural negotiation process and adds emotional

strain for Filipino Canadian students that their white peers do not have to deal with. It also shows how mentorship can help counteract feelings of shame, self-doubt, and internalized oppression that participants may exhibit in their social work education. This theme also highlights how social connection could foster a sense of belonging in predominantly white spaces. It also shows how social disconnection and the scarcity of Filipino peers can contribute to feelings of not belonging among Filipino Canadian students in their social work program.

Section 5: Discussion

Interpretation of Findings

The lived experiences of Filipino Canadian students in social work education in Canada highlight issues of cultural negotiation, internalized oppression, the emotional burden of family expectations, institutional whiteness, safe spaces within academic institutions, the need for self-reflection to build resilience, and the search for belonging and representation, are all encapsulated in the core themes. These themes did not operate in isolation but rather interplayed and overlapped with other themes. This interaction influenced how participants engaged with peers and faculty and saw themselves in their respective social work programs and in the social work profession. Using a constructivist grounded theory (CGT) approach enabled the researcher to construct meaning with participant interviews to surface how cultural identity, family dynamics, and sense of self are influenced in their educational pathways. Many of the reflections shared by participants centered on the desire to belong, their experiences navigating white spaces, and their ongoing self-reflection to make sense of these experiences, their meanings, and interpretations. Using an anti-oppressive (AOP) and anti-oppressive social work research (AOSWR) lens further enriched the discourse. The AOP/AOSWR lens illuminated how institutional whiteness, Western curriculum, and classroom dynamics contributed to participants

feeling marginalized and exhibiting self-silencing behaviour. This was further compounded by participants sometimes dealing with mental health and emotional challenges, on top of meeting family expectations. The blending of CGT and AOP/AOSWR provided the necessary framework for interpreting the narratives of the participants as culturally situated and structurally influenced, rather than as personal shortcomings. Many participants reported experiencing emotional hardships in their social work education, and participants had to adapt to a curriculum that was not culturally aligned with Filipino culture and worldviews. These are the added burdens Filipino Canadian social work students face in their educational experiences.

Filipino Worldview

The educational experiences shared by participants highlighted the added burden for Filipino Canadian students to adapt to a Western worldview in the social work curriculum. Participants mentioned a Filipino worldview in their interviews being a possible solution. However, participants had trouble describing the full meaning of a Filipino worldview. Even the researcher is unclear what a Filipino worldview encapsulates, nor is the researcher confident in defining it. The struggle to articulate what a Filipino worldview is not because it was absent from the lives of the participants who mentioned it, nor is it arbitrary in its description. Rather, the Filipino worldview was rooted in cultural values that were often embodied, reinforced, and lived within Filipino families and communities. In that sense, a Filipino worldview is relational in nature, rather than formally defined, making it challenging to translate into academic language. Participants describe aspects such as *kapwa*, collectivism, and a greater focus on family and community. It is difficult to translate what these constructs or abstract ideas mean into academic language that might be expected in a Western worldview context, which demands things to be defined, and this is perhaps why participants struggled to express the full meaning. However,

incorporating core Filipino values, such as *kapwa* and *utang na loob*, which participants identified as central cultural values, may be a useful starting point. Manos (2025) provides a conceptual description of *kapwa* and *utang na loob*:

Unlike Western conceptions of social relationship, *kapwa* does not describe a connection between separate individuals. Rather, it names the fundamental unity underlying apparent separation. You and I are not two isolated selves who then relate—we share a common identity at the core of our being. (Manos, 2025, p. 2)

Utang na loob (debt of inner self/will) is another concept often misunderstood through Western frames. Superficially, it appears to mean indebtedness or obligation—if someone helps you, you owe them *utang na loob*. But *utang na loob* is not commercial debt. The word *utang* (debt) combined with *loob* (inner self) indicates something deeper—when someone acts with *kagandahang-loob* (goodness of heart) toward you, they have touched your *loob*, created a bond at the level of shared being. (Manos, 2025, p. 8)

This ambiguity about what is a Filipino worldview might indicate a knowledge gap that warrants exploration in future research, both within the Filipino Canadian context and in how this might differ from, or align with, the Philippines and other countries where Filipino's reside, as well as within their subdivisions (e.g., provinces, states, territories, cities, and neighbourhoods). Furthermore, this exploration can extend to individual attributes of how gender, age, religion or spirituality, sexual orientation, gender identity, occupation and career aspirations (i.e. how are careers perceived by Filipinos in addition to how one's sense of self is influenced by a career), bicultural experience, and first- to third-generation perspectives and beyond. Furthermore, a person's origin stories within the Philippines and their cultural distinctiveness within these regions; immigration stories; and conflict stories with the Philippines

(i.e., political factions and alignments) impact their worldview and conceptualization of what it means to be Filipino across these diverse contexts, experiences, and in different periods of time. Nevertheless, the aim is not to define, but to share and to embrace the multitude of experiences and expressions of a Filipino worldview as it continues to evolve in our ever-changing societies.

Cultural Resistance and Resilience

Participants exhibit resistance and resilience through overcoming cultural and familial narratives that had shaped their experiences. Participants reported having to challenge familial and ingrained Filipino Canadian cultural norms to succeed in social work education. This could be seen as participants following non-traditional pathways in careers that aligned with their personal values rather than those of family members. Additionally, participants had to surmount familial narratives of failure and success, as well as of what it means to be Filipino Canadian in the broader Canadian context. Participants also demonstrated resilience by blending approaches from Filipino and Western worldviews in a way that still honours their Filipino culture while building self-awareness and resilience to navigate these often-challenging conflicting perspectives.

Reframing Interventions and Assessments

In designing interventions for Filipino Canadian students, a culturally informed distinction needs to be made, emphasizing that a Western approach may not be appropriate. For example, participants reported difficulties asking questions and asserting themselves in their social work classrooms. A Western worldview might respond to this by providing solutions, such as assertiveness training. Although this may be useful training for Filipino Canadian students, it misses the cultural context of the need to feel safe, belonging, and validation of cultural experiences, as articulated in the participants' interviews. These are important contexts that need

to be addressed to conceptualize interventions with Filipino Canadian students in their social work education. In other words, interventions for Filipino Canadians need to be relationship-based rather than deficit-based. In a Western context, a person who is silent and does not assert themselves in a classroom might be perceived as deficient in a skill or a lack of assertiveness. In a Filipino context, these culturally shaped relational behaviours are centred on connection, belonging, and the validation of their unique perspectives, fostering openness to express themselves. Star 2 explained in her quotation:

...often times, when I'm asked the question in class, I just mimic what everyone else says instead of speaking my mind. That was what I find difficult in the faculty as a whole. I just didn't have someone tell me; I get what you're I get what you're saying. I have that same experience. (Star 2, 2025, 23:40)

The reframing of interventions also opens conversations about assessments, highlighting how nuances in the Filipino Canadian educational experience matter and can shape the relationship between the practitioner and the person seeking help. While part of this interaction will be relationship-based, it will also need to focus on how a presenting issue can prompt further examination, surface underlying issue(s) and address them in a more meaningful way.

Participants described avoidant behaviours they sometimes exhibited, such as masking or minimizing serious matters like mental health issues, and the need to create safe spaces where a person seeking help may feel more compelled to address the issue rather than suppress it. This was highlighted in participant commentaries describing how they might initially be reserved when discussing their real issue when seeking help. Practitioners who are non-Filipino may need to take extra care in this regard. The practitioner can do this by consulting with a fellow Filipino Canadian practitioner or engage in culturally informed professional development opportunities

focused on working with Filipino Canadian students. Filipino Canadian students can enter social work education with a multitude of issues related to family dynamics, sense of self, and stress in adapting to a curriculum that may be paradigmatically different from what they were ingrained with since birth, while still honouring their traditions. This reality requires social work education to build bridges to engage Filipino Canadian students in all aspects of academic life. In short, practitioners need to adopt a more holistic approach when working with Filipino Canadian students, one that includes cultural components.

Challenges Implementing AOP/AOSWR and CGT Approaches

The researcher found that the AOP/AOSWR and CGT approaches required a good understanding of the subtle differences among the approaches in the literature and of how to integrate them without being hindered by conflicting perspectives. For example, a literature review is required for approval of a graduate studies research proposal, which conflicts with some grounded theory recommendations. Moreover, there were different CGT approaches, making it difficult to determine which was most appropriate and what constitutes CGT research. In other words, constructivist grounded theory is not a rigid approach. While this research study utilized CGT based on Charmaz, other CGT scholars have distinct interpretations and methodological priorities. These differences complicate what determines what counts as CGT research. As a result, the researcher needs to address these variations carefully to ensure methodological coherence in the research conducted. However, the researcher admits that these are common debates in academic literature.

AOP principles were also hard to implement, as it was unclear what threshold or discourse is needed to be met to state that a research study is AOP. The AOP tenets shared earlier appeared to be value-based and abstract, offering broad descriptions of AOP principles

rather than actionable methodological guidance. In short, AOP principles are not well defined both operationally and methodologically.

Application of AOP Central Ideas In this Research

This research applied the AOP central ideas of (1) linking personal and political power, (2) awareness of social differences, (3) historical and geographical location, and (4) reflexivity and mutual involvement, which this thesis introduced in the theoretical framework section and are described below in terms of how each was implemented in this thesis.

Linking personal and political power

This research linked personal and political power by reframing participant narratives of personal struggles and showing their structural roots. It also reinterpreted feelings of self-doubt, pressure to excel, and shame as expressed by participants and linked them to broader structural contexts, such as racism, colonialism, struggles as newcomers or their descendants, and adaptation to social work educational institutions.

Awareness of social differences

This research addressed awareness of social differences by contextualizing participants' experiences of feeling unrepresented in their educational experience in social work. This research also shared participants' feelings of being out of place in social work classrooms and fear of being singled out in classrooms that remain predominantly white. It also highlighted the need to reconcile Filipino cultural values with Western academic theories and habitual methods.

Historical and geographical location

This research addressed historical and geographical contexts by situating Filipino Canadians and their experiences growing up in racialized neighbourhoods in Winnipeg (e.g., Maples), a city with one of the largest Filipino populations outside the Philippines. These

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neighbourhoods were shaped by race and class, as illustrated in participants' narratives.

Participants articulated a geographical shift when they entered social work education with limited representation of Filipino Canadians in their predominantly white classrooms.

Furthermore, this research illustrates the social meaning of the time and place where, even in 2026, colonial influences persist and marginalize Filipino Canadians within the context of social work education.

Reflexivity and mutual involvement

This research demonstrated reflexivity through the researcher's self-reflection within the study. This was essential, given the researcher's unique insider position as a Filipino Canadian researcher conducting research with Filipino Canadian participants. The researcher shared awareness of how his cultural identity as a Filipino Canadian shaped the interviews and their interpretation of them. Using analytic memos and allowing participant interview data to guide decisions throughout the analysis and knowledge-creation process were crucial, as the researcher could not infer anything without explicit mention by the participants. This was central to maintaining the integrity of this research.

Application of AOSWR in this Research Study

This research applied anti-oppressive social work research (AOSWR) to challenge inequalities and foster transformation regarding the context of Filipino Canadians in social work education. This was done by naming and contextualizing the problem rather than allowing institutional narratives to define it. Inviting participants to share their experiences situates the research within the broader context of the marginalization faced by Filipino social work students. This analysis identified the core problem: Filipino Canadian students are marginalized in social work education. Transformation is addressed through recommendations that provide a vision for

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change and outline concrete steps for institutions to implement these changes meaningfully.

Below are demonstrations of how the researcher implemented AOSWR principles in this research study:

Goals

Using AOP/AOSWR as frameworks, this study explored how Filipino Canadian social work students navigated and responded to structural barriers in their educational journey in Canada. It also developed knowledge to address the inequalities they may face and provided recommendations to promote change based on the research findings. AOP/AOSWR shaped the researcher's attention to power, oppression, and resistance. The researcher looked for a structural explanation rather than blaming individuals for their challenges in social work education. Finally, the researcher focused his analysis to also highlight stories of resilience, agency, and cultural strength by drawing aspects of Filipino values related to kapwa, collectivism, and community orientation.

Populations

This research focuses on Filipino Canadian students and the structural inequalities they face in navigating a Western-centric curriculum. These inequalities challenged what was culturally familiar to them without recognizing the impact and hardship this creates. This contrasts with how their white peers typically engage with the curriculum, which is their default context, while the Filipino Canadian context is often underexamined in social work classroom discussions or academic literature.

Research environment

ACCESS Norwest is a secure and disability-accessible health and social service office in Winnipeg where the in-person interviews of this study were conducted (Winnipeg Regional

Health Authority, n.d.). Scan key doors are required to enter the interview room section of the building. Security is also on-site during office and clinic hours, and mobile security is available outside of office hours. For virtual interviews, the researcher used the University of Manitoba Microsoft Teams, a secure platform for video conference calls. These accommodations were meant to help participants feel safe to share their experiences in a confidential space.

Methodologies

This study uses a CGT methodology, where both the researcher and the participant take an active role in "co-constructing" knowledge. This approach aligns with empowering methodologies, as it co-creates knowledge through collaboration with participants and prioritizes marginalized perspectives, such as those of Filipino Canadian social work students.

Roles for participants

During the member check phase of the study, the researcher collaborated with participants to review their transcripts for accuracy, and participants decided which segments needed to be changed or omitted. Moreover, participants determined whether the core themes that emerged in the data analysis related to their experiences in a follow-up email sent by the researcher, which summarized the initial research findings.

Researcher and participant relationship

AOSWR helped inform the researcher's reflexivity and assisted them in monitoring their influence on the data, ensuring that his own experience did not dominate the discourse. The researcher recognized the colonial influences on academic research and attempted not to replicate them. However, the researcher concedes that referring to individuals as participants still carries a dehumanizing element in language. Furthermore, it is difficult to select a different term that does not conflict with academic conventions. The researcher attempted to be transparent

about his power relations in this research to the best of his ability. The researcher acknowledged his dual role as a researcher and as a member of the marginalized (Filipino Canadian students in social work education) and honoured the stories of participants.

Implications for Social Work Education

The findings of this research study point out several critical implications for social work education in Canada. This included the underrepresentation of Filipino Canadian students in social work. Furthermore, Participants described interwoven burdens in their social work education. Moreover, Participants shared their experiences of the ongoing negotiation of their cultural identity within their social work programs. Western academic norms shaped this, and participants often felt that their Filipino ways of knowing were sidelined. This tension sometimes deepened into internalized oppression, where self-doubt, hesitation, and shame reflected both personal histories of trauma and broader structural issues. Engaging with Western-rooted theories added another layer of strain. Participants felt disconnected from their Filipino worldview and community contexts, which were absent from the curriculum. These academic challenges were compounded by concerns about field-placement readiness when entering practice settings that required them to apply Western approaches that were counterintuitive to what they knew in their Filipino worldview. This often-led participants to hesitate or appear unwilling to assert themselves, as they worried about making a mistake in environments that did not reflect their cultural traditions. Together, these contexts illustrate how Filipino Canadian students not only learn social work content but also navigate cultural issues, confront internalized oppression, and prepare for professional roles within institutions that do not align with their Filipino worldview. With awareness of these issues, institutions and faculty members may better understand and respond to the needs of their Filipino Canadian students in a more engaged and

sensitive manner. Through this learning, they may help direct future research to further address these issues.

Participants' student experiences of self-silencing, shame, and internalized oppression demonstrated that culturally informed education practice cannot be limited to course material. Rather, it requires opening a larger conversation within institutions about the added burden placed on Filipino Canadian students. This burden includes Filipino Canadian students internalizing Western worldview theories and ways of doing while trying to reconcile them with their Filipino culture. It also includes adapting to institutional whiteness with limited Filipino Canadian representation, without regard for how difficult and isolating this experience can be. Institutions also appear to not consider Filipino Canadian issues significant enough to include meaningfully in academic discourse. Filipino Canadian students described navigating educational pathways while challenging familial expectations of success, dealing with interpersonal issues, and managing the emotions that surface throughout their educational experience. Moreover, they search for meaning in it all to find the resilience to persevere within institutions that fail to recognize these issues as needing attention. Possible interventions to address this include establishing Filipino Canadian advisory groups. This advisory group could serve as a formal structure within social work education, bringing together current and former students to contribute their insights and recommendations to social work educators. It could help by sharing experiences and highlighting successes and challenges. These intentional conversations could also inform curriculum development, teaching approaches, and student support strategies that better reflect the current and future needs of Filipino Canadian students. Funding research on the educational engagement of Filipino Canadians in social work education could also strengthen the evidence needed to inform and improve ongoing program development.

This could further help social work education meet diversity and equity goals. Another intervention could involve changing university student support services to better align with the needs of Filipino Canadian students, such as by hiring Filipino Canadian personnel.

Canadian social work programs need to implement more culturally informed practice in their courses and practicum settings. Social work programs can create self-reflective opportunities with a more intentional and culturally grounded purpose. This enables Filipino Canadian students to reflect openly and critically on how institutions shape their cultural identities and narratives, emotional responses, and engagement in learning and future social work practice. Acknowledging that these contexts exist in open discourse, rather than leaving Filipino Canadian students to uncover them without support, could reduce confusion, doubt, and unnecessary discomfort about whether social work is the right pathway for them. Social work programs and faculty members must avoid assuming that all students enter social work education with the same level of readiness, engagement, and sense of belonging.

Limitations of the Research Study

This research study's limitation is its small participant pool and time constraints for completing the thesis, which limit the ability for the researcher to create a more cohesive and in-depth analysis. This research utilized snowball sampling, a non-random sampling method, limiting its generalizability to the larger population. Nevertheless, Dragan and Isaic-Maniu (2013) assert, “[t]he characteristic of this type of sampling is that it is not used to estimate the characteristics of the general population but to estimate the characteristics of a network of ‘hidden’ populations” (p. 162). The decision to use snowball sampling was practical, as it allowed the researcher to reach a specific group within a reasonable time and with limited resources, which might have been difficult with other sampling methods. Furthermore, the small

participant pool and only one interview per participant limited the researcher's ability to achieve data saturation. Moreover, having one researcher in this study reduced triangulation. However, the researcher conducted multiple interviews and reviewed literature sources to help address this.

This research study is exploratory in nature and merely scratches the surface of research on Filipino Canadians, which remains sparse in the current academic literature at the time of this thesis's completion. However, it is growing bit by bit as more researchers take on this effort.

One way the researcher could have strengthened their theoretical framework is by incorporating additional perspectives, such as anti-racism. Anti-racism was considered in prior drafts, but was removed to maintain the focus of this research and keep assumptions to a minimum, consistent with CGT. Future research can use this study to justify an anti-racism approach if its research question and objectives align more with that lens. The researcher could also have considered Filipino methodologies, such as *Sikolohiyang Pilipino* (Filipino Psychology), which is more rooted in the Filipino cultural context. Grounded theory is methodologically challenging even for experienced researchers, as it is time-consuming, data-intensive, and can be problematic if not done correctly. Considerable experience or guidance is needed before pairing it with other methods.

Another shortcoming of this research is that it did not achieve theoretical saturation, a defining feature of grounded theory, due to its limited sample size. Nor did it provide a conceptual understanding of the lived experiences of Filipino Canadians in social work education in Canada. The research findings in this research apply only to the participants' experiences in the study. The researcher also attempted to demonstrate theoretical sampling by asking participants, once their interviews were completed, to recruit individuals they might know who had not completed their social work education, as all participants in this study were current social

work students or had completed their studies. Other options for theoretical sampling included adding an additional research question or research location, but this would need additional ethics approval and could not be done in the time frame available to complete this thesis.

In summation, this research study generated a theoretical description consistent with Charmaz's constructivist grounded theory approach. The researcher offered an interpretation and contextual understanding of Filipino Canadian experiences in social work education in Canada but did not meet the threshold for integration into a grounded theory for several reasons. (1) The research study offers a reflexive interpretation but not a theory-building, including core processes. (2) The themes did not meet the analytical integration to show the relationships between themes. (3) The small sample size was not large enough to reach theoretical saturation. Lastly, the interpretations of the data are the researcher's alone and are not absolute or exhaustive, and they do not encapsulate all the possibilities and descriptions of Filipino Canadians in social work education. In research, there is an ongoing process of examination, refinement, and learning that can never really be complete. However, research sometimes offers actionable, transformative insights that others can build on to further the discourse.

Recommendations

The recommendations below outline actionable steps to strengthen support for Filipino Canadian students. While not all the recommendations might be practical to implement, depending on resources and invested stakeholders, they provide direction and open conversations on possible solutions that can create meaningful change to reduce the marginalization of Filipino Canadian students in social work education.

Future Research

Future studies could build on this research in terms of scale and subgroups. This could include conducting studies at the national, interprovincial and territorial, and municipal levels to capture, compare, and contrast the experiences of Filipino Canadians in social work education across Canada, thereby strengthening and expanding the literature. This study was conducted in Manitoba, so its scope is limited in that respect and would benefit from additional data across Canada to enrich the findings, analysis, and recommendations.

Other research opportunities include comparing the experiences of Filipino Canadian social work students with those of other racialized student groups. This will help determine whether certain student social work educational experiences are unique to Filipino Canadians or speak more broadly to structural issues in academic institutions. However, this would require that research on Filipino Canadians' educational experience expand, as comparing two bodies of literature where one is not substantial enough can lead to improper inferences. Other experiences to consider include conducting a longitudinal study of Filipino Canadian students, as this study was a single interview and does not capture the full experiences of participants as they enter and complete their social work education. One subgroup for researchers to focus on, whose perspective might offer more interesting insights, is Filipino Canadian students who did not complete their social work programs, as these perspectives could further describe and increase the understanding of the mechanisms that hinder Filipino Canadians in social work education. Additional experiences, touched on in participant interviews that could be expanded further, include how sexual orientation, family's immigrant status, and socioeconomic background influence pathways in social work education. This was not captured in this research study but could add more contextual depth to further address the research question. Although

AOP/AOSWR recognizes multiple forms of oppression, including sexual orientation, immigrant status, race, and class, these aspects were not discussed in sufficient depth by participants to be articulated in a meaningful way. For instance, Participant Sun 2 mentioned being non-binary but did not mention their gender identity as being a barrier in their social work education. Further investigation into how different personal attributes impact participants social work education might surface interesting commentary and nuances. Future research can address this by focusing on these areas of research interest to uncover what emerges. This research study also included both undergraduate and graduate students, whose experiences and life stages might be considerably different and demand further research. One grounded theory technique that Filipino Canadian researchers could use when the researcher and participants share a common experience is the self-interview technique. In this technique, the researcher interviews themselves, codes their transcript, and adds it to the dataset. The self-interview technique can increase transparency and analytical depth in a research study, but the researcher must maintain a robust reflexive practice to reduce potential bias. In addition, the researcher will need to be attentive to their emotional well-being, as answering the questions may elicit self-reflection that can be emotionally difficult to process and address while still conducting the study. This was a technique the researcher considered but did not have enough time or experience to implement appropriately. Other possibilities for future research include whether grounded theory can be deconstructed from its Western roots and reformed to reinterpret data in relational and cultural contexts. This would better align with populations that do not subscribe to a Western worldview and reveal what emerges from the data. These research recommendations are from the researcher alone, as research recommendations were not the focus of the interviews but would still be beneficial to articulate.

Government and Policymakers

This research study has illustrated the knowledge gap in the literature regarding Filipino Canadians in social work education in Canada. Government and policymakers can address this by funding research to address this knowledge gap and other important issues related to Filipino Canadians. Furthermore, government officials and policymakers can increase the visibility of social work among Filipino Canadians by partnering with Filipino community organizations, such as the Philippine Canadian Centre of Manitoba (PCCM), to promote social work as a respectable, meaningful, and viable career and to legitimize it through their endorsement and support.

Canadian Social Work Programs and Educational Institutions

Canadian social work programs and educational institutions can encourage Filipino Canadians to consider social work by establishing mentorship programs, tailoring mental health supports, and collecting student demographic data. In terms of mentorship, institutions can facilitate this by connecting Filipino Canadian students with Filipino social workers, graduates, and community leaders. Some of these initiatives have been pursued by the Filipino Canadian Social Workers Social Service Workers and Community Workers Network (FCSCWN). However, based on the informal conversations the researcher has had with participants and practicing Filipino Canadian social workers may indicate that awareness of the organization varies, reflecting broader challenges in visibility, communication, and engagement with Filipino Canadian students and practicing social workers. This would require more resources and time from FCSCWN members, as well as additional financial contributions and support from institutions and organizations (e.g., Canadian Association of Social Workers and Manitoba College of Social Workers and other regulating bodies) to organize events (e.g., speaker series,

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Filipino culture special events involving food, music, dance, art, exhibitions, discussions) and social media, blogs, and print media promotions. This can be further cemented by also establishing scholarships and bursaries for Filipino Canadians to enter social work education. This initiative could reduce the financial hardship Filipino Canadian students might face, as participants shared that financial burdens hinder their social work education. Additionally, media advertisements must include descriptions and images that explicitly reference Filipino Canadians and that do not allow the observer to assume the cultural background of the Filipino Canadians individual(s) depicted. Other places to engage Filipino community members in a Winnipeg context include Zumba classes or Hans Kai groups (health promotion) at Access Norwest (community clinic), or anywhere Filipino Canadians gather (that is appropriate and that meets policies for engagement with their guidelines by their respective social work programs, institutions or organizations), where many participants are older adult Filipinos. This can be facilitated through print media that captures Filipino Canadians' attention or through Filipino Canadian presenters. Even though older adult Filipino Canadians may not consider social work as a career, since many may be in retirement age, connecting with these Filipino Canadian community members might increase visibility, dialogue, and change minds. Often, Filipino Canadians will recommend things to other Filipinos, a necessary step in building legitimacy with Filipino Canadians and in showing that social work can be a promising and fulfilling career.

Institutions also need to start collecting data and reporting student demographic information to identify gaps and track progress in initiatives aimed at encouraging Filipino Canadians to pursue social work education. The implications of this data collection could inform recruitment strategies, student support, and assessing and addressing representation in the profession for underrepresented groups. The collection of racial demographic information must

be based on ethical and anti-oppressive practice in collaboration with Filipino Canadian community representation and students, along with other racialized groups. This is to ensure transparency, consensus, and that the data collected is reviewed to ensure the information is used specifically to support Filipino Canadians and to their benefit, not their respective institutions. Moreover, the collecting of this data must be enforced by privacy laws in each institution's provincial and territorial governments. Other universities already do some form of this, including voluntary demographic disclosure by students, such as Toronto Metropolitan University Student Diversity Self-ID, University of Toronto Student Equity Census and the McGill University's Equity Data Collection Initiative.

Other things institutions can do include maintaining equity initiatives in admissions and possibly setting aside certain spots for Filipino Canadian students, aligning with Filipino Canadians' demographic presence in the broader population. Participant Blue 2 (2025) mentioned, "I also hope that initiatives like the equity diversity inclusion category in the admission process is maintained to increase the likelihood of visible minority groups like Filipino students to be offered consideration in the program" (25:57).

Social Work Faculty Members and Educators

Social work faculty members and educators are cornerstones of student academic experience and satisfaction. An important insight shared by participants is the need to integrate Filipino cultural knowledge and worldview into the curriculum. This can be done by incorporating cultural values and teachings (e.g., Filipino elders, leaders, professionals, and community members), examining the migration history of Filipinos in Canada, integrating Filipino community perspectives into the course content, using case studies specific to Filipino Canadians, and engaging in classroom discussion or in creating assignments that engage students

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in examining issues relevant to the Filipino Canadian community. Participant Sun 2 (2025) supported this and stated, "...Filipino identity isn't really explored much in the curriculum" (07:55). In doing so, social work educators can create better learning environments where Filipino Canadian students may feel more comfortable and less hesitant to share their perspectives. Social work educators also need to be intentional about group guidelines, especially when classrooms appear homogeneous, where Filipino Canadians might feel uncomfortable being singled out or sharing opinions that differ from those of their non-Filipino Canadian peers. Other interventions would include engaging with schools and with current Filipino Canadian social work students, educators, and practicing social workers in secondary schools with a high Filipino Canadian student population (e.g., Daniel McIntyre Collegiate Institute, Technical Vocational High School (Tech Voc), École Secondaire Sisler High). The purpose of this school engagement is to promote the profession and dispel misconceptions that social work is limited to child welfare, lacks financial security, and that there are no Filipino Canadians in social work.

Future and Current Filipino Canadian Social Work Students

Based on experiences shared by participants, the researcher recommends that future Filipino Canadian students improve their educational experiences through mentorship, building community, peer groups, and establishing a robust self-reflective practice in their social work education. Mentorship offers guidance for navigating sometimes complex educational pathways and for understanding institutional cultures embedded in higher learning, providing support in overcoming the unique challenges Filipino Canadians may face. Furthermore, building community among Filipino Canadian students in their social work programs and through networking groups (e.g., FCSCWN) can help reduce feelings of isolation and the need for connection. Students are also encouraged to engage in self-reflective practice and focus on how

their culture, family, and sense of self shape their worldview and recognize they are not alone in their journey.

Final Reflections on the Research Experience

This research has been a long journey for the researcher with both personal and academic challenges to overcome. There were challenges at every stage, from the thesis proposal, ethics approval, data collection, data analysis, finalization of the draft of the thesis, and the defence of the thesis. The researcher chose constructivist grounded theory through a process of self-reflection, academic instincts, and the appropriateness of the research method to answer the research question. Furthermore, constructivist grounded theory is aligned with social work values. Charmaz (2020) states, “Constructivist grounded theory advances critical inquiry and social justice research in the public sphere. Challenges to traditional forms of conducting research occur when researchers enter public spheres fraught with contradictions and/or injustice, inequities, and relentless trouble” (p. 165). Furthermore, CGT helps answer questions that require a deep examination of social interactions. Miller (2024) states, “CGT [constructivist grounded theory] is particularly well-suited for researchers in pursuit of developing a deep and abiding understanding of under-examined issues” (p. 4). While the researcher considered other methodologies, constructivist grounded theory has provided the most robust and intimate understanding of the research data.

The researcher was guided by his research advisor and committee throughout this process, who challenged the researcher to understand, implement, discuss, and summarize the research findings and analysis to research standards. The researcher also understands that his context as a Filipino Canadian social work student, the group of interest, provided a unique

research sensitivity to the data. This position was not used to dominate the discourse, but to better inform and deepen the analysis.

This research required ongoing self-reflection in the researcher's meaning-making process throughout the study. Additionally, as a former and current social work student and as a Filipino Canadian, the researcher navigated their educational experiences while attempting to remain faithful to the experiences shared by the participants. Through this research study, the researcher became increasingly aware of the significance of this research, the themes that surfaced and were given context, and the interpretations constructed through the personal histories of participants, cultural experiences, and within social work education. Rather than viewing these positions as a limitation in this research study, the researcher came to understand them as an essential part of this research process. This is central to constructivist grounded theory, as it acknowledges that knowledge is co-created and that the researcher's standpoint must be examined as well but not dominate the discourse.

Engaging with the data also requires the researcher to reflect on their own internalized beliefs regarding the research question and its larger implications. Many of the narratives shared by participants in this research study resonated with the researcher's own experience. The participant narratives affirmed feelings the researcher had long held but never had the time or space to articulate, reflect on, or felt comfortable fully expressing. The sharing of personal and cultural experiences by the participants created clarity and discomfort for the researcher at times, particularly when participants described experiences of internal oppression that mirror the researcher's own experiences. The researcher made sure not to share such personal experiences with the participants during the interview process or at any time before the analysis. This was to

ensure the researcher's experiences did not dominate the meanings and interpretations shared by participants.

The researcher's shared Filipino Canadian identity helped build trust between the researcher and participants, supporting greater openness in sharing information and strengthening the data. After the interviews ended, participants sometimes noted feelings of relief, gratitude, and comfort at the researcher's ability to grasp specific cultural situations, or at least validation of their experiences. The researcher's own personal experience with Filipino cultural norms and contexts allowed the research to better recognize subtleties that might otherwise be disregarded. However, this commonality also required the researcher to avoid assuming that shared meaning is absolute and to be open-minded. This was meant to allow the researcher to consider other interpretations and to be open to the possibility of exceptions to these experiences in social work education among participants.

Unanticipated Findings

The importance of self-reflection cannot be overstated in this research study. Self-reflection was instrumental in participants' ability to navigate sometimes complex family and cultural dynamics, develop a sense of self, and succeed in social work education. Even in the participants' interviews, many were self-aware and could articulate the interplay with family, culture, and Western worldview in their individual stories, and how it helped them overcome barriers in their social work education. However, there is a framing that needs to be established. While many participants were able to self-reflect at a high level, there were some individuals who could not grasp the full interpretation and meaning of their experience in social work education. In addition, the research interview process may elicit self-reflection that the participant may not have considered until the moment of the interview. For instance, Participant

Sun 1 was given the clarification question: What would be your advice for a younger version of you entering social work education? Sun 1 (2025) responded by stating, “[u]m, honestly, wow, that's quite an emotional question. Like, I can feel myself getting a little emotional, as you say” (10:14). This example illustrates how a well-worded question can elicit insights, emotions, and self-reflection that the participant may not have realized. The experiences of participants also helped the researcher understand the researcher’s own social work educational experiences by reinforcing experiences and insights that were once thought to be held by the researcher alone. This was not meant to be mistaken for bias, but to help guide the researcher’s theoretical sensitivity. Other interesting findings were that sometimes culture was not a factor in some participants' experiences, or that their experiences were more centered on life transitions, such as career reconsideration.

Unforeseen Issues in the Research Study

Regarding the proposed timeline for this research study, the researcher experienced delays in obtaining research ethics board approval, requiring two attempts to add the necessary details and obtain one certificate, which was still outstanding. One recruit reported being a past student of the research advisor. The researcher made the necessary changes to the protocol to get the recruit included in the research study by allowing those who were no longer under the professional or academic supervision of the research advisor to be included in the study. Thereafter, the protocol was approved, and the participant was made eligible for the research study, and the participant was then interviewed. The researcher also had to get the protocol renewed and received two extensions due to medical reasons (Appendix 1: Research Ethics and Compliance Protocol, Amendment, and Renewal Approval). These factors hindered the researcher’s ability to adhere to the proposed timeline (Table 1: Proposed Timeline). These

unforeseen issues also created some distance between the researcher and the data at times, leading to pauses in the research study and possibly reducing the researcher's theoretical sensitivity, thereby hindering a deeper analysis.

Section 6: Conclusion

Final Statements and Remarks

As the researcher concludes this thesis, the researcher reflects on how instrumental this journey has been in the researcher's life in the last few years. The researcher had to grapple with the deeper meaning of the participants' stories in a way that honours their perspectives while also finding meaning in the researcher's own lived experience in social work education. Filipino Canadian social work students navigate complex intrapersonal, familial, cultural, and structural contexts throughout their educational journey. Moreover, Filipino Canadian silence in the classroom is not simply an indication of their inability to assert themselves, but rather a cultural strategy shaped by history and adapting to a Western sociocultural context. In addition, family expectations and socioeconomic realities shape these educational pathways. The researcher concludes this research with mixed emotions, as it contributes to the literature on Filipino Canadians in social work education while also recognizing that much still needs to be done. This research highlights the need for further research on Filipino Canadians, not just in the context of social work education, but also in broader societal contexts within contemporary Canadian society. Even now, the researcher is still making connections with the data that, unfortunately, cannot be articulated further, as this thesis needs to be finalized for dissemination. Lastly, social work, as a profession and academic discipline, is tied to its guiding values of diversity and social justice and needs to remain accountable to these commitments.

In closing, while our colonizers have long since gone, Filipino Canadians continue to reinterpret, resist, reclaim, and transform the legacy that once sought to silence us as a people to highlight our resilience and agency. By completing this thesis, the researcher challenges the structures and social order that marginalize Filipino Canadians, highlighting what is important, what needs to change, and what needs to be done within the social context of Filipino Canadians in social work education in Canada and beyond.

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Table 1: Proposed Timeline

Task	Dates	Duration
The committee reviews the thesis proposal	December 2024	Two weeks
Researcher revision period after committee review	December 2024	Two weeks
Submits thesis proposal to ethics board	January 2025	One month
Recruitment period through online and physical advertisements	February 2025	One month
Participant interview period	March 2025	Two weeks
Transcribing period	March 2025	Two weeks
Member checking and revision	April 2025	Two weeks
Finalize and defend the thesis	April - June 2025	2.5 months

Table 2: Pathways into Social Work Education Chart

Interview Order	Participant Code Name	Pathways into Social Work Education
1	Balong	• <i>Life-Impacting Conditions</i>: hospitalized for tuberculosis and subsequent stroke. • <i>Personal Encounter with the Social Work Profession</i>: the participant wanted to be in a helping profession and felt cared for by social workers while in hospital for tuberculosis and stroke. • <i>Career Reconsideration and Transition</i>: the participant's original education pathway into nursing did not materialize due to impaired math ability caused by tuberculosis and stroke. • The participant's girlfriend, who was enrolled in social work during this time, encouraged him to enroll in social work.
2	Sun 1	• <i>Career Reconsideration and Transition</i>: finding an educational pathway that provided employment opportunities that aligned with the participant's passion in mental health and social justice. Previously enrolled in another social sciences discipline.
3	Star 1	• <i>Socio-Economic Environment</i>: newcomer experience and lived in the Inner city. • <i>Career Reconsideration and Transition</i>: the participant's original educational pathway into another allied health did not materialize because the participant did not pass her statistics course. • <i>Personal Encounter with the Social Work Profession</i>: family friend's mother's daughter was a child welfare social worker.
4	Blue 1	• <i>Life-Impacting Conditions</i>: pregnancy and mental health issues prior to entering social work. • <i>Personal Encounter with the Social Work Profession</i>: encouraged to pursue a career in social work by a support who was also a social worker.
5	Red 1	• <i>Life-Impacting Conditions</i>: past struggles with substance misuse. • <i>Career Reconsideration and Transition</i>: previously worked in a technical field that the participant found unfulfilling. Explored different helping roles, including becoming a

		pastor, but felt social work was more aligned with their values and the desire to help people who are hard to reach and often forgotten.
6	White 1	• <i>Career Reconsideration and Transition</i>: previously worked in a warehouse role and in support work in youth care. The participant was overlooked for a promotion in a warehouse job, prompting them to seek other opportunities. • Encouraged to pursue a career in social work by colleagues.
7	Sun 2	• Socio-Economic Environment: newcomer mother and refugee father. • <i>Career Reconsideration and Transition</i>: finding an educational pathway that provided employment opportunities and aligned with their passion in social justice. Previously enrolled in another undergraduate social sciences discipline.
8	Star 2	• <i>Career Reconsideration and Transition</i>: original education pathway into nursing, law, and STEM did not materialize. The participant needed an attainable undergraduate degree that could be completed within a reasonable timeframe, as the participant's family were not financially supporting her education. Person also wanted a profession that could give them a living wage
9	Blue 2	• <i>Life-Impacting Conditions</i>: pregnancy in high school. • <i>Career Reconsideration and Transition</i>: originally aspired to become a lawyer. Needed to get an undergraduate degree that was attainable, could be completed in a reasonable amount of time, as the participant's family were not financially supporting her education. Person also wanted a profession that could give them a living wage to support herself and her child.
10	Red 2	• <i>Life-Impacting Conditions</i>: struggles with mental health. • <i>Career Reconsideration and Transition</i>: the participant's original educational pathway into business education did not materialize, as the participant dropped out because it did not align with her values. • <i>Personal Encounter with the Social Work Profession</i>: encouraged to pursue a career in social work by a social worker.

11	White 2	• <i>Life-impacting Conditions</i>: past struggles with mental health. • <i>Career Reconsideration and Transition</i>: the participant's original pathway into nursing education did not materialize, as she did not feel it aligned with her values and strengths in advocacy and mental health.
12	Sun 3	• <i>Socio-Economic Environment</i>: lived in the Inner city and experienced peers experiencing poverty and violence in high school. • <i>Career Reconsideration and Transition</i>: finding an employable educational pathway. Completed a social science undergraduate degree, but found jobs in criminal justice required a social work degree.

Table 3: Theme Code List

Theme: Filipino family and Cultural influences	
<i>Codes</i>	<i>Frequency</i>
Family pressure	33
Perceived career prestige	17
Internalized oppression	14
Family values	6
Helping mentality	6
Family support	5
Religion	4

Theme: Pathways into Social Work Education	
<i>Codes</i>	<i>Frequency</i>
Limited understanding of social work	24
Life-Impacting condition	20
Career reconsideration	16
Career transition	16
Unplanned pathway into social work	10
Personal encounter with the social work profession	9
Social service employment experience	4

Theme: Barriers	
<i>Codes</i>	<i>Frequency</i>
Financial	25
Newcomer experience	16
Limited diversity	15
Geography	7
Filipino societal visibility	4
Stability	4
Newcomer	3
Racism	3
Language barrier	1

Theme: Mental Health and Self-Reflection	
<i>Codes</i>	<i>Frequency</i>
Mental health challenges	13
Social work values	12
Fear	8

Shame	7
Mental health resource	6
Multiple identities	6
Personal values	6
Trauma	5
Healing	4
Help-seeking	4
Self-esteem	4
Open-minded	3
Interest	2
Passion	2

Theme: Educational Experiences	
<i>Codes</i>	<i>Frequency</i>
Filipino peers	20
Mentor	16
Western worldview	10
Social connection	9
Educational resources	7
Isolated	6
Educational hardships	6
Safety to voice perspective in classroom	4
Placement experience	3
Admission	2
Filipino representation in the classroom	1
Social skills	1

Table 4: Summary of Participants by Gender Identity and Educational Level

Number of participants	12
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Gender Identity	Count
Female	8
Non-Binary	1
Male	3

Education Level Summary	Count
Bachelor of Social Work Graduate	6
Master of Social Work Graduate	4
High School Graduate	2

Interview Order	Participant Code Name	Highest Level of Education Completed
1	Balong	Bachelor of Social Work Graduate
2	Sun1	Bachelor of Social Work Graduate
3	Star 1	Master of Social Work Graduate
4	Blue 1	Bachelor of Social Work Graduate
5	Red 1	Master of Social Work Graduate
6	White 1	Master of Social Work Graduate
7	Sun 2	High School Graduate
8	Star 2	Bachelor of Social Work Graduate
9	Blue 2	Bachelor of Social Work Graduate
10	Red 2	High School Graduate
11	White 2	Master of Social Work Graduate
12	Sun 3	Bachelor of Social Work Graduate

Table 5: Introduction to the 12 Participants

Order Interviewed	Participant Code Name	Highest Level of Education	Employment or Educational status	Brief Description
01	Balong	Bachelor of Social Work Graduate	*Seasoned Child Welfare Social Worker *Originally wanted to pursue nursing but math abilities were compromised.	<i>Appearance:</i> Male, appearing to be in his 30s. <i>Status:</i> Immigrated to Canada, but did not specify the year. <i>Narrative:</i> Suffered from untreated tuberculosis that impacted his math abilities during university. <i>Reason for entering social work:</i> (1) Did not get into nursing due to math abilities being impacted. (2) The participant enjoyed the feeling of being helped by social workers in the hospital. (3) The participant's girlfriend at the time was in social work, and

				he decided to apply as well.
02	Sun 1	Bachelor of Social Work Graduate	*Social Work Counselor *Originally pursued other social science discipline in her undergraduate. *Pursuing graduate studies in another discipline.	<i>Appearance:</i> Female appearing to be in her 20s or early 30s. <i>Status:</i> Did not report immigrating to Canada. <i>Narrative:</i> (1) Passionate about mental health. (2) An incident that happened at high school made her interested in mental health but did not specify details. (3) Felt unsupported by father, who did not feel social services were useful. The participant cried when discussing her father in this <i>Reason for entering social work:</i> (1) Interested in social justice and mental health. (2) Changed studies after

				wondering what degree could get her a job.
03	Star 1	Master of Social Work Graduate	*Settlement Worker *Collaborate with school system to support students.	<i>Appearance:</i> Female, based on audio, appeared to be in her 30s to early 40s (Audio-only interview). <i>Status:</i> Immigrated to Canada, but did not specify the year. <i>Narrative:</i> (1) Passionate about settlement work. (2) Family did not understand social work and encouraged her to go into nursing or a STEM major due to financial prospects. <i>Reason for entering social work:</i> (1) Tried to get into another allied health program but did not pass the required course. (2) A family friend's daughter was a child welfare social

				worker and encouraged the participant to enter the field.
04	Blue 1	Bachelor of Social Work Graduate	*Seasoned Social Worker in disability field.	<i>Appearance:</i> Female appeared to be in her 30s or early 40s. <i>Status:</i> Did not report immigrating to Canada. <i>Narrative:</i> (1) Had a child prior to entering social work education. (2) Struggled with mental health and mentioned issues with depression and struggling to go to her university classes. (3) Family was unsupportive and put her down, stating “her life is over” now that she had a child at a young age. The participant did not specify how old she was when she had her child. <i>Reason for entering social</i>

				<i>work:</i> Social worker helped her during a difficult time in her life and encouraged her to get into social work.
05	Red 1	Master of Social Work Graduate Pursuing further studies.	*Seasoned Social Work Educator *Prior career in technical field.	<i>Appearance:</i> Male appeared to be in his 40s. <i>Status:</i> Did not report immigrating to Canada. <i>Narrative:</i> Reports questioning a career in the technical field. Was not satisfied in this field. Explored being a pastor. <i>Reason for entering social work:</i> (1) Interested in helping people. (2) mentioned others who helped them during his past struggles with addiction.
06	White 1	Recent Master of Social Work Graduate	* Current Employment Status not specified. Reports prior work in child welfare, but his	<i>Appearance:</i> Male appearing to be in his 40s. <i>Status:</i> Did not report

			current occupation is not disclosed. *Prior to social work, reports working in warehouse and in youth care.	immigrating to Canada. <i>Narrative:</i> (1) Person expressed inner city experience. (2) Self-reports as neurodivergent. <i>Reason for entering social work:</i> Pursued social work after being overlooked for a promotion at warehouse job.
07	Sun 2	Undergraduate Social Science Degree	*Bachelor of Social Work Student. *Part-time employment not specified.	<i>Appearance:</i> Reports as non-binary and appears to be in their 20s. <i>Status:</i> Did not report immigrating to Canada. <i>Narrative:</i> (1) Reported socio-economic hardship growing up. (2) Has newcomer mother and a refugee father. Mother struggled to financially support them, and the

				participant had to work while going through social work education. (3) The participant describes having a good relationship with their mother. Limited discussion about their father in their personal life. (4) The participant identifies as LGBTQIA+. (5) The participant is passionate about social justice. <i>Reason for entering social work:</i> (1) A relative told them about social work. (2) Pursued social work for more career opportunities.
08	Star 2	Bachelor of Social Work Graduate	*Current Employment Status not specified.	<i>Appearance:</i> Female appearing to be in her 20s. <i>Status:</i> Immigrated to Canada but did

				not specify a year. <i>Narrative:</i> (1) The participant reports growing up in a conservative family. (2) The participant reports limited Inner city experience. (3) Reports being a burnout overachiever. (4) The participant's family did not help with tuition for her education. (5) Mentioned feeling anxiety about working with vulnerable people when doing a field placement. This was due to her conservative upbringing and the narrative her family imparted to her that these vulnerable people are dangerous.
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				<i>Reason for entering social work:</i> (1) Did not get into nursing or STEM majors. (2) The participant needed a degree so that they could get a job and be paid decently.
09	Blue 2	Bachelor of Social Work Graduate	*Student Support Services	<i>Appearance:</i> Female appearing to be in her 30s. <i>Status:</i> Immigrated to Canada, but did not specify the year <i>Narrative:</i> (1) The participant had a child in high school. (2) The participant's original aspiration was to become a lawyer, even though her family's gendered expectations dictated that males in the family were encouraged to become lawyers

				and females to become nurses. <i>Reason for entering social work:</i> The participant needed to complete a degree that would be attainable while working and supporting a child with limited family support.
10	Red 2	High School Graduate	*Bachelor of Social Work Student *Former Business student	<i>Appearance:</i> Female appearing to be in her 20s. <i>Status:</i> Immigrated to Canada, but did not specify the year. <i>Narrative:</i> (1) Mentioned some struggles with mental health but did not provide details. (2) Family was unfamiliar with social work but encouraged the participant to pursue any higher education, as her family equated any degree with a better life.

				<i>Reason for entering social work:</i> (1) Dropped out of business courses. (2) Enjoyed the feeling of being helped when the participant was struggling with her mental health and decided to apply to social work.
11	White 2	Master of Social Work Graduate	*Social Work Counselor	<i>Appearance:</i> Female appearing to be in her 30s or early 40s. <i>Status:</i> No newcomer experience reported. <i>Narrative:</i> (1) Struggled with mental health in her youth and while in university. (2) Felt pressured by mother to pursue careers such as dentistry and nursing. (3) Father was a cheerleader and supported her in

				her career decisions. (4) Passionate about supporting BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and People of Color) communities. <i>Reason for entering social work:</i> Applied to nursing and social work and got accepted to both but ended up pursuing social work as the participant felt it aligned better with her personal values.
12	Sun 3	Bachelor of Social Work Graduate Other social science degree. Pursuing a Master of Social Work.	*Mental Health Clinician	<i>Appearance:</i> Female appearing to be in her 30s or early 40s. <i>Status:</i> No newcomer experience expressed. <i>Narrative:</i> (1) Grew up in the North End neighbourhood of Winnipeg. (2) Father worked in a homeless shelter. (3) The participant

				recalled that her parents allowed friends who came from troubled homes to stay with them and become part of the family while she was growing up. (4) Self-reports as neurodivergent. <i>Reason for entering social work:</i> Wanted a job in justice field and found out she required a social work degree.
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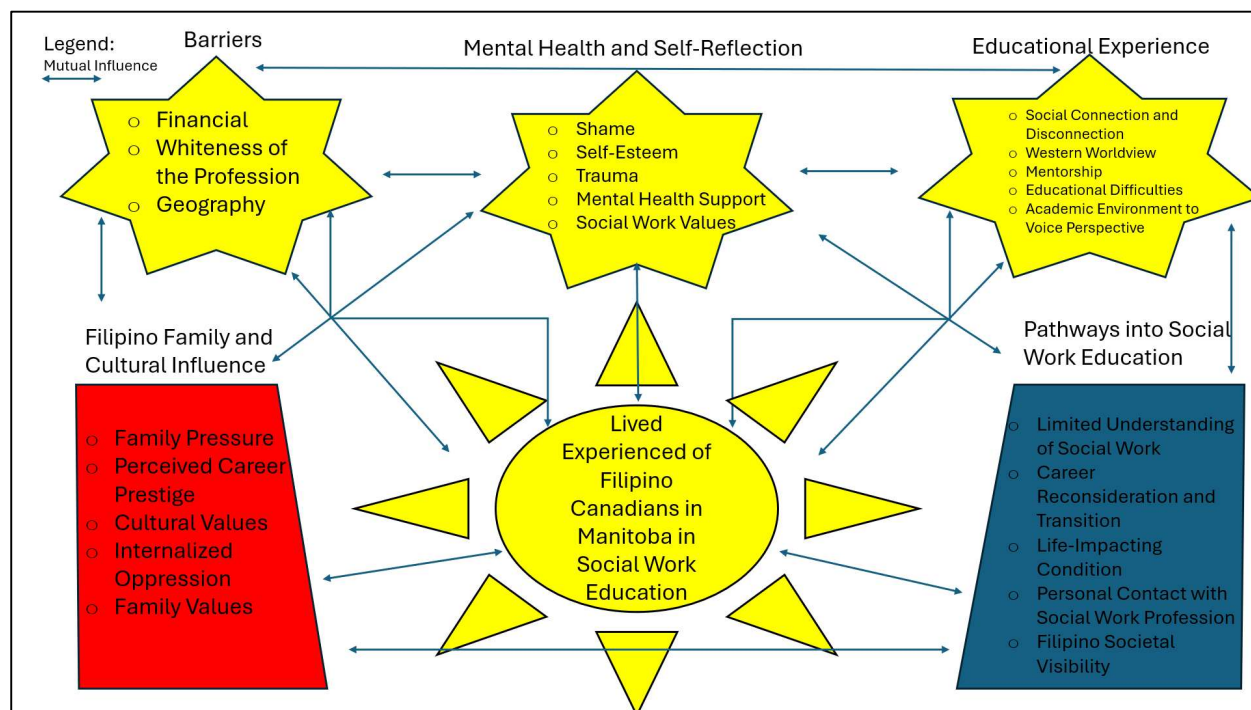
Figure 1: Visual Diagram of Themes

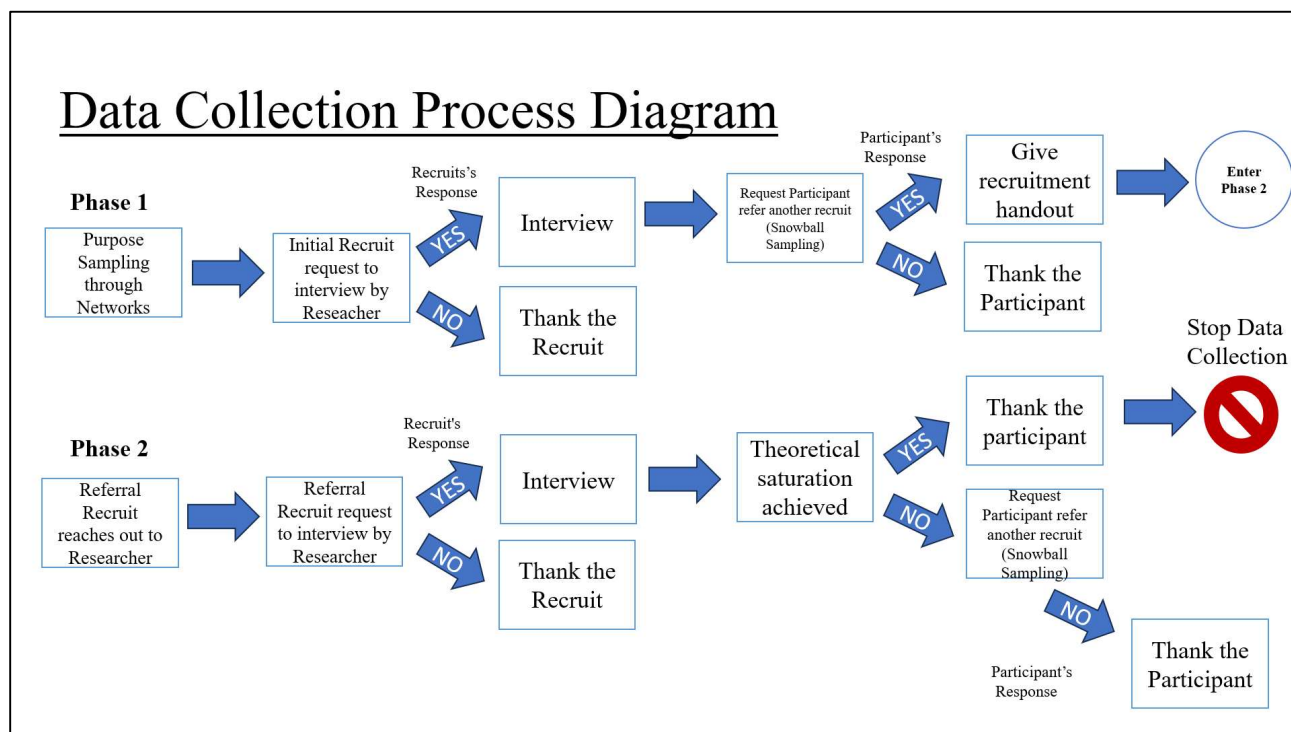
Figure 2: Visual Diagram of Data Collection Process Diagram

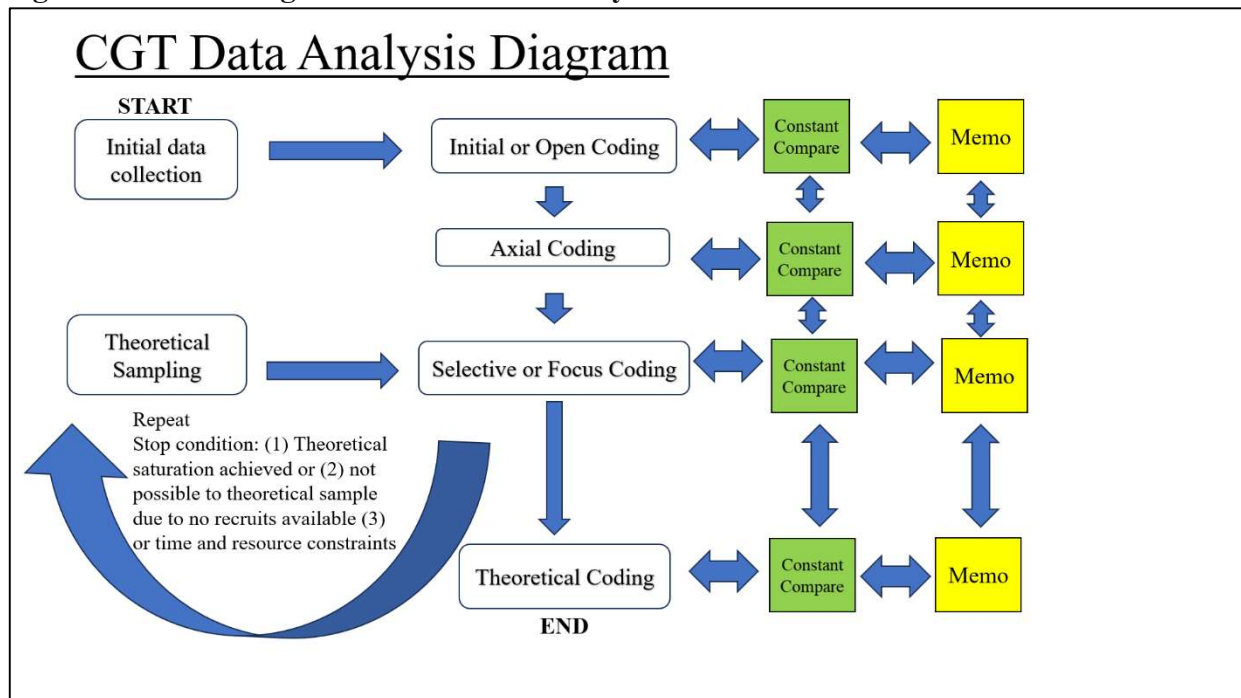
Figure 3: Visual Diagram of CGT Data Analysis

Figure 4: Sample Memo Writing

Reflection ☐ I found this comment about Filipino culture about tough love and don't complain very striking and similar to attitudes with Filipino and mental health seeking behavior. By rlaureano 07/2025	Initial Assumption ☐ My initial assumption is that most Filipino's do not consider Social Work as their first option career wise. By rlaureano 07/2025	Reflection ☐ I found this very interesting how he mentioned Filipino mask experiencing mental health issues by expressing physical health symptoms. By rlaureano 07/2025	Reflection ☐ How social work challenged predefined cultural norms of Filipino Canadians By rlaureano 07/2025
Reflection ☐ I had a similar experienced of being helped that made me consider the helping field By rlaureano 07/2025	Reflection ☐ I feel Filipino Canadian consider Social Work after having some experience with the Social Work either through employment or personal connections By rlaureano 07/2025	Reflection ☐ This was my first interview. I was a bit nervous and tried to be attentive to the participant and offered them a refreshment and informed them where the bathroom was. By rlaureano 07/2025	Observation ☐ Participant becoming teary-eyed during a light pause By rlaureano 07/2025
Culture ☐ I wasn't aware that eye contact could be seen as disrespectful in Filipino culture. I tried to moderate this in future interviews. By rlaureano 07/2025	Reflection ☐ I can relate to this experience of health issue hindering a career path By rlaureano 07/2025	Reflection ☐ I can relate to family members discouraging me to go into social work from my step grandmother who told my parents it wasn't a good career as its low pay. My step grandmother was a social worker in the Philipinnes By rlaureano 07/2025	Reflection ☐ I can relate to not wanting to go to classes due to struggling with my mental health By rlaureano 07/2025
Observation ☐ Participant cried discussing struggle with dad not supporting her career path and worldview By rlaureano 07/2025	Observation ☐ Participant visibly cried discussing her mother immigrant experience By rlaureano 07/2025	Self Reflection ☐ I can relate to having someone help me and shifting into social services care. By rlaureano 07/2025	Social Connection ☐ I found having connection and peers helped me out in my social work education By rlaureano 07/2025

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Appendix 1: Research Ethics and Compliance Protocol, Amendment, and Renewal

Approval



University of Manitoba | Research Ethics and Compliance

Human Research Ethics - Fort Garry
66 Chancellors Circle
Winnipeg, MB R3T 2N2
humanethics@umanitoba.ca

Protocol Approval

Effective: April 17, 2025

Expiry: April 16, 2026

Principal Investigator:	Rafael Laureano
Advisor(s):	Eveline Milliken
Protocol Number:	HE2025-0037
Protocol Title:	<i>The Lived Experiences of Filipino Canadians in Manitoba Who Pursued Social Work Education in Canada</i>

Martha Koch, Acting Chair, REB1

Research Ethics Board 1 has reviewed and approved the above research. The Office of Human Research Ethics (OHRE) is constituted and operates in accordance with the current *Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans- TCPS 2 (2022)*.

Please note the following important information about your protocol approval:

- i. Approval is granted for the research and purposes described in the protocol only.
- ii. Any changes to the protocol or research materials must be approved by the OHRE **before implementation**.
- iii. Any **deviations** to the research or **adverse events** must be reported to the OHRE immediately through an **REB Event**.
- iv. This approval is valid **for one year only**. A Renewal Request must be submitted and approved prior to the above expiry date.
- v. A **Protocol Closure** must be submitted to the OHRE when the research is complete or if the research is terminated.

- vi. The University of Manitoba may request to audit your research documentation to confirm compliance with this approved protocol, and with the UM [*Ethics of Research Involving Humans*](#) policies and procedures.



University of Manitoba | Research Ethics and Compliance

Human Research Ethics - Fort Garry
66 Chancellors Circle
Winnipeg, MB R3T 2N2
humanethics@umanitoba.ca

AMENDMENT APPROVAL

May 12, 2025

Principal Investigator:	Rafael Laureano
Advisor(s):	Eveline Milliken
Protocol Number:	HE2025-0037
Protocol Title:	<i>The Lived Experiences of Filipino Canadians in Manitoba Who Pursued Social Work Education in Canada</i>

Martha Koch, Acting Chair, REB1

Research Ethics Board 1 has reviewed and approved your Amendment Request submitted on **April 29, 2025** to the above-noted protocol. The Office of Human Research Ethics (OHRE) is constituted and operates in accordance with the current *Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans- TCPS 2 (2022)*.

Please note the following important information about your amendment approval:

- i. Approval is granted for **this amendment only**.
- ii. Any further changes to the protocol require subsequent amendment approvals from the OHRE before implementation.
- iii. Any **deviations** to the research or **adverse events** must be reported to the OHRE immediately through an **REB Event**.
- iv. Amendment Approvals do not change the protocol expiry date. Please refer to the original Protocol Approval or subsequent Renewal Approvals for the **protocol expiry date**.



RENEWAL APPROVAL

Effective: April 15, 2026

New Expiry: April 16, 2027

Principal Investigator:	Rafael Laureano
Advisor(s):	Eveline Milliken
Protocol Number:	HE2025-0037
Protocol Title:	<i>The Lived Experiences of Filipino Canadians in Manitoba Who Pursued Social Work Education in Canada</i>

Office of Human Research Ethics as designated by REB1

Research Ethics Board 1 has reviewed and renewed the above research. The Office of Human Research Ethics (OHRE) is constituted and operates in accordance with the current *Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans- TCPS 2 (2022)*.

Please note the following important information about your renewal approval:

- i. Any changes to the protocol or research materials must be approved by the OHRE **before implementation**.
- ii. Any **deviations** to the research or **adverse events** must be reported to the OHRE immediately through an **REB Event**.
- iii. This renewal is valid for **one year only**. A Renewal Request must be submitted and approved prior to the above expiry date.
- iv. A **Protocol Closure** must be submitted to the OHRE when the research is complete or if the research is terminated.

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Appendix 2: Recruitment Email and Poster

Subject line: Filipino Canadian Interview:

Hello, my name is Rafael Laureano. I am a graduate student with a Bachelor of Social Work degree (BSW) from the University of Manitoba and the principal researcher for this research project. I am recruiting participants who are willing to participate in interviews (only one interview will be conducted per participant) that will be voice recorded. See attachment. [Copy of poster advertisement in attachment]

Title: The Lived Experiences of Filipino Canadians in Manitoba Who Pursued Social Work Education in Canada

Student Principal Researcher: Rafael Laureano, BSW, RSW, MSW Candidate (Faculty of Social Work)

Student Advisor: Dr. Eveline Milliken, Associate Professor, BSW, MSW, PhD, Faculty of Social Work, contact: eveline.milliken@umanitoba.ca] or call 204-474-6032

Purpose: The purpose of this research project is to understand the lived experiences of Filipino Canadians in Manitoba within the context of their social work education in Canada.

Eligibility: The participants I am interested in recruiting are: (1) at least 18 years of age, (2) self-identify as Filipino Canadian, (3) have at least been admitted to an accredited social work program at a Canadian postsecondary institution at the undergraduate or graduate level (including those who graduated, currently enrolled, or never completed the program), (4) be fluent in English, (5) reside in Manitoba (6) be willing to meet in person or by University of Manitoba Microsoft TEAMS (7) consent to be voice recorded, (8) have no prior personal relationship with the principal researcher or the student advisor, and (9) you are not currently

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under the researcher or the advisor's supervision in an academic or professional capacity during this research project's recruitment and interview period.

Definition: Filipino Canadian, as defined in this research, is an individual of Filipino heritage who is legally allowed to reside and work in Canada. This includes those born in the Philippines and later immigrated, as well as individuals born in Canada with Filipino ancestry. While the experiences of newcomers and their descendants will differ, this study will consider them together due to time and resource constraints. This can include people who were born in the Philippines and moved to Canada, or people who were born in Canada with at least one Filipino parent, or people who can trace their direct ancestry (e.g. parent, grandparent, and so forth) who immigrated from the Philippines themselves, or their descendants immigrated to Canada.

Date: Be available for one in-person or virtual interview in April or May 2025.

Duration: The interview will be approximately 60 - 90 minutes in length.

Location: (1) In-person interviews at ACCESS Norwest, 785 Keewatin Street, R2X 3B9, Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada. (2) Virtual interviews will be conducted on Microsoft Teams through a secure link.

Sincerely,

Rafael Laureano (Student Principal Researcher)

Phone: 431-XXX-XXXX and Email: um*****@myumanitoba.ca

Recruitment Poster for Research Project



Faculty of
Graduate Studies



University
of Manitoba

Faculty of Social Work



Title of research project: The Lived Experiences of Filipino Canadians in Manitoba
Who Pursued Social Work Education in Canada

Student Principal Researcher: Rafael Laureano, BSW, RSW, MSW Candidate
(Faculty of Social Work)

Student Advisor: Eveline Milliken, Associate Professor, BSW, MSW, PhD,
Faculty of Social Work, contact: eveline.milliken@umanitoba.ca] or
call 204-474-6032

Purpose: The purpose of this research project is to understand the lived experiences
of Filipino Canadians in Manitoba within the context of their social work
education in Canada.

Eligibility: The participants I am interested in talking to are: (1) at least 18 years of
age, (2) self-identify as Filipino Canadian, (3) have at least been admitted to an
accredited social work program at a Canadian postsecondary institution at the

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undergraduate or graduate level (including those who graduated, currently enrolled, or never completed the program), (4) be fluent in English, (5) reside in Manitoba (6) be willing to meet in person or by University of Manitoba Microsoft TEAMS (7) consent to be voice recorded, (8) have no prior personal relationship with the researcher or advisor, and (9) are not currently under the researcher or the advisor's supervision in an academic or professional capacity during this research project's recruitment and interview period.

Definition: Filipino Canadian, as defined in this research, is an individual of Filipino heritage who is legally allowed to reside and work in Canada. This includes those born in the Philippines and later immigrated, as well as individuals born in Canada with Filipino ancestry. While the experiences of newcomers and their descendants will differ, this study will consider them together due to time and resource constraints. This can include people who were born in the Philippines and moved to Canada, or people who were born in Canada with at least one Filipino parent, or people who can trace their direct ancestry (e.g. parent, grandparent, and so forth) who immigrated from the Philippines themselves, or their descendants immigrated to Canada.

Date: Be available for one in-person or virtual interview in April or May 2025.

Duration: The interview will be approximately 60 - 90 minutes in length.

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If you are interested in participating, please contact:

Rafael Laureano: um*****@myumanitoba.ca

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Appendix 3: Participant Invitation Letter

Subject line: Filipino Canadian interview invitation email letter:

Dear Participant:

My name is Rafael Laureano. I am a graduate student with a Bachelor of Social Work degree (BSW) from the University of Manitoba. I am the student principal researcher for this research project. Thank you for agreeing to this interview (only one interview will be conducted per participant). The title of this research project is The Lived Experiences of Filipino Canadians in Manitoba Who Pursued Social Work Education in Canada. The purpose of this research project is to understand the lived experiences of Filipino Canadians in Manitoba within the context of their social work education in Canada.

Your participation is entirely voluntary and completely confidential. You can decide to exit the research at any time without penalty. Any identifiable information in your interview will be anonymized to maintain your privacy. There is minimal risk or anticipated discomfort for this research project. However, after this interview, each participant will be offered a resource guide for mental health and counselling, in case a need arises, and the opportunity to debrief with the researcher.

This interview will take approximately 60-90 minutes, be voice-recorded, and require you to sign a consent form. Interviews will commence between April or May 2025. The researcher can interview you at the ACCESS Norwest office at 785 Keewatin Street, R2X 3B9, in Winnipeg, Manitoba or virtually via Microsoft Teams through a secure link. Participants will receive a follow-up email to review the transcription to ensure their accuracy and for participants to request changes or parts of their transcript be omitted if needed. Participants will also review the accuracy of the themes elicited from the data analysis. This follow-up review of the

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transcripts and themes will occur three weeks after your interview date and will require approximately 60-90 minutes of your time. The participant has 14 days to reply to the researcher upon receiving their transcript review and the themes from the data analysis. After that time, the researcher will assume the transcript and themes are accurate for participants who do not reply by this time. Please get in touch with me to schedule your interview date and time and whether you would like it in person or virtually. Also, don't hesitate to contact me if you have any questions or concerns before then.

Sincerely,

Rafael Laureano (Student Principal Researcher)

Phone: 431-XXX-XXXX and Email: um*****@myumanitoba.ca

Student Advisor: Dr. Eveline Milliken, Associate Professor, BSW, MSW, PhD

eveline.milliken@umanitoba.ca] or call 204-474-6032

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Appendix 4: Informed Consent Form



173 Dafoe Road
Winnipeg, Manitoba
Canada R3T 2N2
T: 204 474 7050
F: 204 474 7594
Social_Work@umanitoba.ca

Informed consent form for individual interview with participants:

Study Title: The Lived Experiences of Filipino Canadians in Manitoba Who Pursued Social Work Education in Canada

Student Principal Researcher: Rafael Laureano, BSW, RSW, MSW Candidate, Faculty of Social Work, University of Manitoba

Student Principal Advisor: Dr. Eveline Milliken, BSW, MSW, RSW, PhD, Associate Professor, Faculty of Social Work, University of Manitoba

Conflicts of Interest and Undue influence: There is no conflict of interest for this research study. There is no direct personal, professional, or financial benefit to researcher (also referred to as student principal researcher). The researcher conducting this research in partial fulfilment of their Master of Social Work degree.

You (the participant) are being invited to participate in a research study. This consent form, a copy of which has been given to you or a copy of which you can download or

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print, is only part of the process of informed consent. If you want more details about something mentioned here, or information not included here, feel free to ask any of the people named above. Please take the time to read this document and any accompanying information carefully. It is very important that you understand:

- what is being asked of you,
- what the risks and benefits of participation are, and
- how the information you provide will be used and stored.

Purpose of Study: The researcher is doing this research study for a master's thesis under the supervision of Dr. Eveline Milliken. This research study is about the lived experiences of Filipino Canadians in Manitoba within the context of their social work education in Canada.

Filipino Canadian, as defined in this research, is an individual of Filipino heritage who is legally allowed to reside and work in Canada. This includes those born in the Philippines and later immigrated, as well as individuals born in Canada with Filipino ancestry. While the experiences of newcomers and their descendants will differ, this study will consider them together due to time and resource constraints. This can include people who were born in the Philippines and moved to Canada, or people who were born in Canada with at least one Filipino parent, or people who can trace their direct ancestry (e.g. parent, grandparent, and so forth) who immigrated from the Philippines themselves, or their descendants immigrated to Canada.

Study Procedures: If you decide to participate in the research study, we will meet for a one-time 1-1.5-hour interview. You can choose to have your interview in person or virtual. In-person interviews will be at ACCESS Norwest, 785 Keewatin Street, R2X 3B9, Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada, and virtual interviews will be on UM (University of Manitoba) Microsoft Teams through a secure link. With your consent, I will voice record

in-person interviews with the researcher's computer and smartphone, which are both password-protected. Virtual interviews will be voice-recorded using UM Microsoft Teams.

Each participant **will be assigned a non-identifiable code** name (a name where a reader cannot identify you) to protect your identity, which will be assigned by the researcher or chosen by you.

Would you like to be assigned a code name by the researcher?	YES ☐ or NO ☐
If you select NO to being assigned a code name by the researcher, please write your desired code name here: 	Instruction: Please do not select code names that can identify you by people outside of this study or names that will be offensive to others.

After your interview, you can review the transcript (the document of what you said). You can add, change, or delete information from the transcript as you see fit. The researcher will email you a copy of the transcript and the themes from the data analysis (the interpretation by the researcher of the information collected from this research study) 3 weeks after your interview date, and you will have 2 weeks to respond if they are accurate. This will take 1-1.5 hours of your time. If the researcher does not hear from you after 2 weeks, the researcher will assume you are okay with the transcript and themes.

Study Risks: There is minimal risk anticipated to participants. Nothing in the research study procedures will produce foreseeable potential harm above or beyond what an individual could encounter in their everyday routine. However, participants may experience difficult emotions during their interview. The researcher will provide a resource lists, including a copy of the Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA) Resource Guide (Winnipeg and Manitoba 2023 Edition), with mental health and counselling resources, including the Klinik Crisis Line. The researcher will also be available after the interview if you would like to debrief.

Study Benefits: While participating in this research study may have limited personal benefits to you, it allows participants to share their experiences in Canadian social work programs. The results of this research may help us better understand the experiences of Filipino Canadians in Canadian social work education. This research study may also advance research literature on Filipino Canadians. It may help us better understand Filipino Canadians' motivations for entering Canadian social work education. It may increase discussion on diversity in social work education in Canada. The findings of this research study could also lead to improvements in professional development, training, programs, and support services for Filipino Canadians in Canadian social work education programs. However, not all these claims can be guaranteed. This research study will also contribute to the partial fulfilment of the researcher's master's thesis.

Compensation: There will be no compensation for participating in this interview.

Use and Storage of Information: All the information you provide as a participant in this study is confidential, which means we as the research team must keep it safe. We will do our best, however, it is not possible to guarantee absolute confidentiality. We will only share your personal information if required through court order or law (e.g., suspected child or elder abuse).

The researcher and the student advisor have a professional obligation (as registered social workers) to report information to appropriate authorities. Examples of when information is required to be disclosed includes expression of suicidal thoughts or suspected child abuse.

Your information will be stored on a secure platform approved by the University of Manitoba. We will have a file that links your name to your information using a code name. We will keep the file with your name, contact information, and code names separate from the research information you share with us. When we share the results of this study, we will combine everybody's responses. We may use some your information through quotes. The quotes will not include your name. The researchers will keep this personal information separate from any research information. Only people on the research team will see your personal information and/or responses. We will destroy any information that identifies you (name, contact information) by October 28, 2025. The rest of the information may be kept indefinitely. All remaining digital and written data will be destroyed within 7 years of the completion of this research project. This data will only be used for potential future research or academic purposes

Your research information may be shared outside of the University of Manitoba with researchers, other organizations, and/or made publicly available. The information is

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being shared for further analysis or testing, as part of the research study, and/or because it is required by a funder or journal. It will not include your name or any information that could identify you.

Withdrawal:

Your participation in this research study is voluntary. You can choose to answer only the questions that you are comfortable with. You may withdraw from the study for any reason. You do not have to explain why. You will not be penalized in any way. Should you withdraw partway through the study, all of your information will be destroyed unless you have consented to allowing us to keep it. You may withdraw from the study until June 1, 2025. After this date, we will start our analysis so it may not be possible to withdraw your information as it will not be linked to your name. To withdraw, please contact Rafael Laureano at the phone number or email above. You can contact the research until October 28, 2025, to request that your quotations from the study be removed.

Confidentiality: [For online interviews] By agreeing to a virtual interview, you accept Microsoft's terms of service and privacy policy for Microsoft Teams. The University of Manitoba Ethics Board has approved the Microsoft Teams software for data collection. While the researcher has taken all necessary precautions to keep your information confidential, please be aware that third parties can sometimes access online data transmitted over the internet. Only you and the researcher will be in the virtual interview. The voice recordings will be transcribed using otter.ai (an artificial intelligence transcription online service) to help with data analysis.

[For in-person interview] By agreeing to an in-person interview, you accept that the researcher has taken every reasonable step to maintain your privacy. The researcher will interview you in a secure area in one of the ACCESS Norwest meeting rooms requiring scan card access. However, others might recognize you who are not involved

in this research study and are not obligated by this consent form. Only you and the researcher will be in the interview room. The voice recording file will be uploaded to a password-protected computer and transcribed with otter.ai.

Otter.ai complies with the University of Manitoba Information Security and Compliance guidelines for online transcription services and is approved for human research (last reviewed February 2023). The transcribed information for the in-person and virtual interviews will be saved onto the researcher's University of Manitoba's Cloud service on Microsoft One Drive, which is password protected. This follows the University of Manitoba Data Storage Guidelines for Research with Human Participants. The researcher and the student advisor are the only ones with access to Microsoft One Drive. The researcher's advisor may review the researcher's data to ensure this research study follows the human research ethic standards of the University of Manitoba. All responses in the participant's interview are confidential. The researcher will work with the participants to ensure their experience is described in a way that minimizes the risk of being identified by readers.

Dissemination: The research study result will be shared through (1) the publication of a master's thesis, (2) possible future journal publications and presentations in relevant academic fields, and/or (3) a summarized report of the study results to be sent to the interested participant; (4) the data will use code names and may use direct quotations from transcripts.

Questions or Concerns: Designated University of Manitoba personnel may check that this study is being done safely and properly. To do this, they may visit the study site or review the research records. We will tell you if someone outside the research team will be there while you are participating. If this makes you uncomfortable, please tell a member of the research team, who will ask the personnel to return at another time. This study has been reviewed and approved by a Research Ethics Board at the University of Manitoba. However, this does not mean that participation is risk-free. If you have questions about your rights as a research participant, you may contact the Office of Human Research Ethics at humanethics@umanitoba.ca or (204) 474-7122. If you have any questions, concerns, or complaints about this study, you may contact any members of the research team listed on the first page or the Office of Human Research Ethics.

Consent

By signing this document, I agree that:

- I have read the above information or had it read to me.
- I have had the opportunity to ask and have answered all of my questions.
- I understand what is being asked of me.
- I will be taking part in a research study.
- I may freely stop or leave the research study activities at any time.
- My information may be shared outside the University of Manitoba.
- I do not waive my legal rights by participating in the study.

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Notice Regarding Collection, Use, and Disclosure of Personal Information Your personal information is being collected under the authority of The University of Manitoba Act. The University of Manitoba is committed to preserving your right to privacy. The information you provide will be used by the University to support our research. Your personal information will not be used or disclosed for other purposes, unless permitted by The Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act or The Personal Health Information Act. If you have any questions about the collection of personal information: Ph: 204-474-9462 or Email: fippa@umanitoba.ca

I agree to participate in this study.	☐ YES ☐ NO
---------------------------------------	--

Name of Participant _____ Consent Signature: _____

Date _____

Summary of Results

Please provide an email address below if you would like to be sent a summary of the study results and/or my individual results. Email address: _____ You will get a copy of the summary of the study no later than October 28, 2025

Researcher's Certification:

I certify that I have provided sufficient information and fully answered all the participant's questions to the best of my abilities.

Name of Researcher _____ Researcher's Signature: _____

Date _____

Appendix 5: Interview GuideInterview Guide: (check mark once completed)

Introduction Phase:

- ☐ Meet the participant at the lobby and introduce yourself to the participant.
- ☐ Offer the participant water, tea, or coffee and show them the nearby washrooms.
- ☐ Ask the participant what name they prefer to be addressed by and what pronouns they prefer (e.g. he or him).

- ☐ Before the interview starts, review the informed consent form with the participant and reinforce that the interview is completely voluntary and that they can end it anytime.

Furthermore, tell the participant they could also decline to answer any of the interview questions without penalty.

- ☐ Ask the participant if they have any questions or concerns before starting the interview.

Interview Phase:

- ☐ Periodically ask the participants how they are doing and whether they need a break or have concerns.

Aftercare Phase:

- ☐ After the interview, ask the participant how they felt about the interview and if there were any concerns.

- ☐ Ask the participant if there was anything the researcher could have done to improve their experience in the interview.

- ☐ Offer resources list and CMHA Mental Health Resource Guide.

- ☐ Ensure the participant has the researcher's contact information.

☐ Thank the participant for their time and offer to walk them to the lobby.

☐ Ensure the participant has the means to get home (offer bus tickets if needed).

1. Please tell me about your journey into social work education. What brought you into social work education? [Social work education is defined as an accredited social work program at a postsecondary institution in Canada.]

Use a probe question to help expand the respondent's answers:

- Can you tell me more?
- Can you elaborate on your previous statement?
- Can you expand on what you said?

If the respondent needs clarification about the question, repeat the question. Variation of the question to use if necessary to clarify:

- What inspired you to pursue training in social work education?
- Were there pivotal moments in your life that led you into social work education?
- What personal or professional experiences led you to social work education?

2. What factors helped you with your social work education?

Use a probe question to help expand the respondent's answers:

- Can you tell me more?
- Can you elaborate on your previous statement?
- Can you expand on what you said?

If the respondent needs clarification about the question, repeat the question. Variation of the question to use if necessary to clarify:

- What factors played a role in supporting your social work education?

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- What did you enjoy about your social work education?
- Were there specific resources or people that helped in your social work education?

3. What factors hindered you in your social work education?

Use a probe question to help expand the respondent's answers:

- Can you tell me more?
- Can you elaborate on your previous statement?
- Can you expand on what you said?

If the respondent needs clarification about the question, repeat the question. Variation of the question to use if necessary to clarify:

What were some challenging experiences you faced in your social work education?

- Were there policies or procedures of your program that made your social work education difficult?
- What was anything absent in your social work education that made it challenging? For example, did you encounter other Filipino Canadians in your program or the field?

4. What are your recommendations to help attract Filipino Canadians into social work education in Canada?

Use a probe question to help expand the respondent's answers:

- Can you tell me more?
- Can you elaborate on your previous statement?
- Can you expand on what you said?

If the respondent needs clarification about the question, repeat the question. Variation of the question to clarify if necessary:

- What suggestions could you provide to entice prospective Filipino Canadian students into social work education in Canada?
- What would be your advice to Filipino Canadian students starting their social work education?
- What would be your advice for a younger version of you entering a social work education?

Appendix 6: Resources

The researcher will provide individuals with physical or digital copies of the resources listed below.

Winnipeg and Manitoba Wide:

Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA) Winnipeg and Manitoba branch: is a national mental health organization in Canada with a resource website for Winnipeg and Manitoba. The CMHA resource guide for the Manitoba region can be found below along with the Winnipeg and Manitoba office phone number.

Website: <https://www.cmhaacrossmb.ca/your-mental-health/finding-help/>

Phone: (204) 982-6100

Klinic Crisis Line is a Winnipeg based community health organization that provides 24 hours/7 days week helpline and for Manitobans that provides free and confidential counselling, support, and referrals for people who are suicidal, in crisis or struggling to cope.

Phone: 204-786-8686

Website: <https://klinik.mb.ca>

Manitoba Suicide Prevention and Support Line: is a mental health service that provides 24-hour support for suicide for Manitobans.

Phone: 1-877-435-7170 | 24 hours/7 days a week helpline

Website: <https://reasontolive.ca/>

Canada Wide

Centre for Suicide Prevention is a national suicide education and prevention resource for Canadians who are concerned about suicide or for someone they know.

Website: <https://www.suicideinfo.ca/>

Phone: 1-833-456-4566 (Calls are toll-free and open 24 hours/7 days a week)

9-8-8: is a free helpline service in Canada for anyone who is thinking about suicide or who is concerned about someone they know. Connect to a responder to get help without judgment.

Website: <https://988.ca/>

Appendix 7: Search Strategy

Keywords:

Filipino Canadian	Experience	Social Work	Education
			Postsecondary
			School

Population: English-speaking Filipino Canadian adults (at least 18 years old)**Phenomenon of Interest:** The Experience of Filipino Canadians in Social Work Education**Languages:** English**Study types:** Peer-reviewed journal articles**Context:** Canada**Sources Targeted relevant databases****2004 - Present**

ProQuest [academic journals only]

- (Filipino Canadian) AND (social work) = 199 results (minimal relevant literature found)
- (Filipino Canadian) AND (experience) AND (social work) AND (education) = 644 results (minimal relevant literature found)

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- (Filipino Canadian) AND (experience) AND (social work) AND (postsecondary) = 260 results (minimal relevant literature found)

EBSCOhost - academic search complete [academic journals only]

- (Filipino Canadian) AND (social work) = 0 results (no relevant literature found)
- (Filipino Canadian) OR (experience) OR (social work) = 27 605 results (minimal relevant literature found)
- (Filipino Canadian) OR (experience) AND (social work) = 10 055 results (minimal relevant literature found)

Social Work Abstracts [academic journals only]

- (Filipino Canadian) AND (social work) = 0 results (no relevant literature found)
- (Filipino Canadian) OR (social work) = 7 269 results (minimal relevant literature found)
- (Filipino Canadian) OR (experience) OR (social work) = 11 585 result (minimal relevant literature found)

Appendix 8: Search Strategy Themes

Keywords:

Filipino Canadian	Mental Health	Self-Reflection	
Filipino Canadian	Pathway	Social Work	Education
Filipino Canadian	Journey	Social Work	Education
Filipino Canadian	Process	Social Work	Education
Filipino Canadian	Barrier		
Filipino Canadian	Family	Cultural	Influence
Filipino Canadian	Family		
Filipino Canadian	Cultural		
Filipino Canadian	Educational	Experience	
Filipino Canadian	Learning	Experience	
Filipino Canadian	Academic	Experience	

Population: English-speaking Filipino Canadian adults (at least 18 years old)

Phenomenon of Interest: The Experience of Filipino Canadians in Social Work Education

Languages: English**Study types:** Peer-reviewed journal articles**Context:** Canada

Sources Targeted relevant databases**2004 - Present**

ProQuest [academic journals only]

- (Filipino Canadian) and (Mental Health) and (Self-Reflection) = 70 results (minimal relevant literature found)
- (Filipino Canadian) and (Mental Health) = 1 861 results (minimal relevant literature found)
- (Filipino Canadian) and (Self-Reflection) = 90 results (minimal relevant literature found)
- (Filipino Canadian) AND (Filipino Family) AND (Cultur*) AND (Influence) = 2 208 results
- (Filipino Canadian) AND (Filipino Family) = 3 490 results
- (Filipino Canadian) AND (Cultur*) = 46 308 results
- (Filipino Canadian) and (Barrier*) = 2 671 results (minimal relevant literature found)
- (Filipino Canadian) and (Educational Experience) = 2 209 results (minimal relevant literature found)
- (Filipino Canadian) AND (Pathway) AND (Social Work) AND (Education) = 779 results (minimal relevant literature found)
- (Filipino Canadian) AND (Journey) AND (Social Work) AND (Education) = 624 results (minimal relevant literature found)
- (Filipino Canadian) AND (Trajectory) AND (Social Work) AND (Education) = 15 858 results (minimal relevant literature found)

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- (Filipino Canadian) AND (Process) AND (Social Work) AND (Education) = 37 256 relevant literature found
- (Filipino Canadian) and (Learning Experience) = 1 908 results (minimal relevant literature found)
- (Filipino Canadian) and (Academic Experience) = 2,068 results (minimal relevant literature found)

EBSCOhost - academic search complete [academic journals only]

- (Filipino Canadian) and (Mental Health) and (Self-Reflection) = 0 results
- (Filipino Canadian) and (Mental Health) = 4 results (minimal relevant literature found)
- (Filipino Canadian) and (Self-Reflection) = 0 results
- (Filipino Canadian) AND (Filipino Family) AND (Cultur*) AND (Influence) = 0 results
- (Filipino Canadian) AND (Filipino Family) = 3 results
- (Filipino Canadian) AND (Cultur*) = 0 results
- (Filipino Canadian) and (Barrier*) = 2 results (minimal relevant literature found)
- (Filipino Canadian) and (Educational Experience) = 0 results
- (Filipino Canadian) and (Learning Experience) = 0 results
- (Filipino Canadian) and (Academic Experience) = 1 results (minimal relevant literature found)
- (Filipino Canadian) AND (Pathway) AND (Social Work) AND (Education) = 0 results
- (Filipino Canadian) AND (Journey) AND (Social Work) AND (Education) = 0 results
- (Filipino Canadian) AND (Trajectory) AND (Social Work) AND (Education) = 0 results
- (Filipino Canadian) AND (Process) AND (Social Work) AND (Education) = 0 results

Social Work Abstracts [academic journals only]

- Filipino Canadian) and (Mental Health) and (Self-Reflection) = 0 results
- (Filipino Canadian) and (Mental Health) = 0 results
- (Filipino Canadian) and (Self-Reflection) = 0 results
- (Filipino Canadian) AND (Family) AND (Cultur*) AND (Influence) = 0 results
- (Filipino Canadian) AND (Family) = 0 results
- (Filipino Canadian) AND (Cultur*) = 0 results
- (Filipino Canadian) and (Barrier*) = 0 results
- (Filipino Canadian) and (Educational Experience) = 0 results
- (Filipino Canadian) AND (Pathway) AND (Social Work) AND (Education) = 0 results
- (Filipino Canadian) AND (Journey) AND (Social Work) AND (Education) = 0 results
- (Filipino Canadian) AND (Trajectory) AND (Social Work) AND (Education) = 0 results
- (Filipino Canadian) AND (Process) AND (Social Work) AND (Education) = 0 results
- (Filipino Canadian) and (Learning Experience) = 0 results
- (Filipino Canadian) and (Academic Experience) = 0 results

Appendix 9: Participant Letter of Findings

Dear Participants:

I am emailing you to share some of my initial findings on the themes from the research study you participated in, which was *combined with data from other participants*.

Pathways into Social Work Education: This theme encompasses prior understanding of social work as a profession, life-changing experiences that influenced participants' decision to pursue social work, the process of career exploration for students coming from other disciplines, and career change for those transitioning from different careers into social work.

Barriers: In this theme, participants shared their experiences with limited diversity in their social work education and the profession, financial hardships, their newcomer experiences as students and as the children of newcomers, and some reported experiencing racism in their social work education.

Filipino family and Cultural Dynamics: In this theme, participants shared how family values, pressures, religion, and internalized oppression deterred them from pursuing social work. However, others shared that there were some family support and cultural values, such as a community- and helping-others-oriented mentality, that are perceived as congruent with Filipino culture and aligned with their Filipino values.

Mental Health and Self-awareness. In this theme, participants described experiences with shame, trauma, fear, self-esteem, navigating their cultural identities within the dominant culture

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and in social work education, and the limited prestige of social work in Filipino culture, all of which hindered their participation in their social work education. Things participants shared that were helpful included accessing mental health resources, being open-minded about self-reflection and understanding one's biases, and the healing process in their education.

Educational Experience. This theme explores participants' experiences adapting to a Western worldview-centric social work curriculum, navigating admissions challenges into social work, and overcoming academic difficulties. Things participants found particularly helpful were mentorship and integrating social work values into their worldview to challenge some of their pre-existing colonial mentalities.

If you have any questions or concerns, don't hesitate to reach out to me. Thank you for participating in this study. Once the final research study report is completed, I will reach out to participants who have requested a copy.

Principal Researcher

Rafael Laureano

Appendix 10: Reflection Journal Template Using Anti-Oppressive Practice*Preparation Reflection Phase (Completed before the participant recruitment phase)*

Researcher's assumptions and bias about the research study

- Do you hold any preconceptions and biases about the research study?
Refer to Personal Context of the Researcher section.
- Do these preconceptions influence how you conduct your study?
Refer to Personal Context of the Researcher section.
- Does your power and social location influence your understanding of the research study?
Refer to Personal Context of the Researcher section.
- Are there steps you can take to reduce this impact on your study?
Refer to Application of AOP Central Ideas in this Research section.

Engagement with Participants Phase (Completed after each interview)

Trust and rapport building with participants:

- How did the researcher build rapport with the participant?
Refer to Interview Arrangements section.
- Can you describe your steps to build a rapport with the participant?
Refer to Interview Arrangements section.
- Were there specific strategies you used to build rapport with the participant?
Refer to Interview Arrangements section.

Respect and Dignity for the Participant:

- How did the researcher establish respect and dignity toward the participant?
Refer to Support for Participants and Research Ethics Board section.

Reducing Power Imbalance:

- How did the researcher minimize power imbalance during the interview with the participants?

Refer to Application of AOWSR in this Research Study and Application of AOP Central Ideas in this Research section.

- What techniques did the research find most effective in reducing power balance?

Refer to Anti-Oppressive Social Work Research (AOSWR) Procedures section.

Data Analysis Phase (*Completed each iteration of the data analysis*)

Perspective on Research Study:

- Has the researcher's perspective on the research study changed? If so, what led to this change in perspective?

Refer to Final Reflections on the Research Experience section.

Challenging Assumptions and Feedback in the Research Study:

- Did the researcher challenge any of their initial assumptions in the research study?

Refer to Final Reflections on the Research Experience section.

- Did this affect the researcher's analysis? If so, please provide examples.

Refer to Final Reflections on the Research Experience section.

Has the researcher received feedback that changed their analysis of the research study?

- How did the researcher integrate this feedback into your work?

Refer to final Reflections on the Research Experience section.

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Ethical Considerations (*Throughout the research process*)

Observing Oppressive Practices:

- Did the researcher observe any oppressive practices in the research study?

No.

- If so, how did the researcher address them?

N/A.

Ethical Dilemmas:

- Did the researcher encounter any ethical dilemmas in the research study?

No.

- If so, how did the research resolve them?

N/A.

Summary of Reflection (*Completed before the defense of the research project*)

Key Insights:

- What were some core insights in your research process?

Refer to Discussion section.

Improving Anti-Oppressive Practice Framework in Future Research:

- *What would you do differently in your research to adhere to an anti-oppressive practice framework?*

The researcher might have provided more opportunities for member checking to ensure that participant interviews were faithful to the descriptions imparted in this research study.

- *Are there any specific actions you plan to take in future research?*

Refer to Recommendation section.