

Tracing Hopes of Racist-Free and Multicultural-Friendly Campuses: A Phenomenological Exploration on the Lived Experiences of Blacks in the National Capital Region Universities (Philippines)

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Abstract - *In the Philippine campuses nowadays, the presence of foreign students is a common sight, making our academic communities one of the most culturally diverse universities in the world. This requires us to provide necessary local environment appropriate and ready to attend to multicultural sensitivities. Thus the research aimed to look at how well-prepared Philippine universities are in terms of having multi-cultural friendly campuses. Through in-depth interviews and phenomenological method, the researcher explored the lived experiences of Black African students in their respective campuses. The results showed that (a) the participants' decision to study in the Philippines was based on factors such as the hassle-less application process, cheaper yet of quality education and the image of Filipinos as being friendly and kind (b) the common, though very light, concern was not racism nor discrimination, but speaking in the local language in their presence made them feel sometimes isolated or insulted and (c) that racism and discrimination against blacks were not an institutional reality, though unfriendly encounters with Filipinos were also recorded, those were not seen as serious cases of racist behavior. The study suggested that since blacks' experiences are generally devoid of racism and discrimination, school administrations do not tend to formulate explicit policies and enough activities to ensure racist-free campuses and inter-cultural inclusiveness among Filipinos and the blacks. In any case, the black students were determined to obtain their degrees here no matter what and such a goal was made easier because of the kind of tertiary academic communities their respective schools offer.*

Keywords—*Black Africans, Philippine Universities, Racism*

INTRODUCTION

Philippine educational institutions have been marked by an increase in the number of foreign students seeking Philippine diploma. According to Bureau of Immigration Statistics, from 21,000 in 2011, the number has tripled in 2012, accounting 61,000 foreign students in that year. This sudden surge of international students is attributed to the rising tide of schools which are allowed by the government to admit international students, which from 104 schools in 2011, have ballooned into 2,145 in 2012. Thus, foreign students walking around Philippine campuses are now a common sight, making our academic communities one of the most culturally diverse universities in the world. This, in turn, requires us to provide necessary local environment appropriate and ready to attend to multicultural

sensitivities. But are our campuses really prepared to accept foreign students, especially blacks, into the arena of social relationships without discrimination issues? It is for this reason that the researcher has conducted this study.

Campus racial discrimination seems to be a perplexing social issue in the academic settings and environments. From different universities and colleges (and in the level of governments), the fight against this social pathology is continuing and must not stop to ensure further its total eradication in the future and for future generations. The academic communities of tertiary education, from its teaching and non-teaching personnel, must be responsible enough to pin point sources of racial discrimination in the institutional and interpersonal levels and help them gradually eliminate this social issue through a united effort and various