

Conceptualization of Chavez Cross-Cultural Community Extension Theory

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Received: February 15, 2022 Accepted: August 11, 2022 Published: January 20, 2023

doi:10.5296/jsr.v14i1.20825 URL: <https://doi.org/10.5296/jsr.v14i1.20825>

Abstract

This study intends to conceptualize the conglomeration of cultures between the villagers of a Zambian community and the missionary-educators. With the missionary-educators extending their activities in the village for more than a decade, the village people were positively responding. Thus, there was a gradual cultural adaptation. With the constant challenges in basic needs, language -communication between missionary educators and the villagers, cultural differences, and education. The missionary educators strategically intervened the incumbent lives of the villagers in order to update them with the world trends. The activities and effort of the missionary educators were designed formally through projects and programs intervention. The researchers conceptualized the theoretical abstract of the merging cultural practices between villagers and the missionary-educators. Though strategically intentional programmed and created, the missionary learned and the adapted particular cultures of the villagers which maximize their realization about cross-culture.

Keywords: community, cross-culture, culture, immersion, cultural adaptation

1. Introduction

People's perspectives about the missionary-educators extending their missionary activities to villages are in insolation of their daily followed culture and religious identities (Jamal, 2015). Unlike non-Catholic states, within Catholic states, the missionary-educators extending their beliefs to villages is rampant even in cities (Adamczyk & Cheng, 2014). Yet, because the religious landscape is infused with Catholic ideology, there is a question that stands as a barrier between religion and culture (del Castillo et al., 2021). That is the reason why these missionary-educators are existing because cultures and religions is in need to get fully understood by all because this is already a part of the life (Cohen et al., 2016). Religion is important in the daily lives of the people as it turns to be the foundation of their character (Berggren & Bjørnskov, 2010).

Teaching Christianity to people is very important especially to students. For the reason that, students are in need to get trained in other disciplines interested as well (Barker, 2012). The missionary educators in Kandundulo Village, Solwezi, Zambia have been thriving over the decade. The dynamics of the village life are crucial and critical which worth to be taken note of. Missionaries believe that through sending Christianity to fellowmen, they can bring about change and development in life (Tam, 2010). In a Mercedarian organization, the missionary educators work as lay missionaries and teach values to couples and women in the village to form them through the track of Couples of Christs. Further, the lay missionaries teach livelihood projects to alleviate poverty, empower women to value themselves with dignity. The approach to these villagers is evangelization through love and service for the renewal of the families to be Christians. This renewal shall create the Christian families by working with the poor, social justice and respecting life. The religious organization, Couples for Christ, started in 1981, Manila, Philippines. Driven with spiritual vision, it has grown globally and has reached its 30 years of existence. Yet, despite the spreadness of Christianity, there are still some people who doesn't even choose a religion and remains to be an atheist (Agli et al., 2014). Also, even though religious traditions and beliefs can spread from community to community, people of different cultures may have very different experiences with the same religion (Sasaki & Kim, 2011).

In the Philippines, Catholic missions served as institutions for building a state, expanding the reach of the colonial state and enhancing governance in the periphery. The seculars of the colonial government in the capital were able to accumulate economic wealth while allowing missions to handle the actual business of colonial expansion, and this arrangement was the result of a bargain between the missionaries and the colonial government. Missionaries were able to convert the local population (Dulay, 2022). Yet, in behalf of the church, they think that they are not receiving enough acknowledgment or appreciation from the government. For the reason that, traditional Catholic teachings on family and sexual morality seems to be unenforced strictly by the government where almost of the population of the church servants thinks that politics wasn't able to make decisions morally as required by the Christianity (Bautista, 2010). But, because of the missionary-educators, some places in the Philippines have been educated biblically and professionally especially at Calapan, Oriental Mindoro and vice versa. Mangyan pastors in ICCP were able to learn Tagalog and English, which helped

them understand and implement typical evangelical worship and song teaching practices in Mangyan churches (Kwon, 2010).

Even in Africa, missionaries educating people in villages is very prominent and that led them to have cultural dualism (Arowolo, 2010). Teaching Christianity gives positive effect in Africa, it gave them the knowledge to be more engaged into religion (Montgomery, 2017). Yet, there is a huge difference about the productivity of Catholic missionaries between a Catholic and non-Catholic states whereas, in non-Catholic states, there were lesser missionary activities (Gallego & Woodberry, 2010).

However, in Zambia, for more or less three decades of existence, the organization has established its name among the people where it has extended and grown. Promotion of peace and understanding between religions is a must to study about (Fischer et al., 2010). To strengthen its existence, it is of best action to explore and analyze its activities and programs. Writing the works of the missionary educators and establishing concept of its mobilization is essential to the organization. It can be the basis for the organization for its basis of its operations and mobilization to make their programs and activities successful. Establishing the literature of the cross-culture community extension can build up the better foundation of the organization for its mission, vision and goals.

2. Theoretical Framework

Cross-cultural communication is clearly exposed and explained, giving us a vision of how to interact in the different situations we may face. However, despite all the different types of intercultural communication, the main margin is respect for the other person even without knowing their cultural traits. Unfortunately, an individual is constantly confronted with the clash between his original culture and the majority culture that he is exposed to daily. Cultural clashes occur as a result of individuals believing their culture is better than others (MasterClass, 2022).

Chavez cross-cultural community extension theory draws from five specific theories: functionalism, conflict theory, symbolic interactionism, cross-cultural communication theory and co-cultural theory.

According to Lumen Learning (2020), functionalism considers a culture as an interrelated whole, not a collection of isolated traits in other words, society is a system of interconnected parts that make the whole function efficiently. Functionalists view society as a system in which people functions all together to create society as a whole and examined how a particular cultural phase is interrelated with other aspects of the culture and how it affects the whole system of the society. Cultural norms function to support the fluid operation of society, and cultural values guide people in making choices. Just as members of a society work together to fulfill a society's needs, culture exists to meet its members' social and personal needs. While conflict theorists believe that a society's system of material production has an effect on the rest of culture. Where functionalists would see the purpose of culture—traditions, folkways, values—as helping individuals navigate through life and

societies run smoothly, conflict theorists examine socio-cultural struggles, including the power and privilege created for some by using and reinforcing a dominant culture that sustains their position in society (Conerly et al., 2021). However, cross cultural communication theory implies the idea of how a culmination of individuals with conflicting traits interact together and how their culture impacts said interaction such as the use of body language, gestures and language to find a common ground between two or more individuals. Finding the balance and compromise between cultural differences makes it possible to communicate effectively and efficiently with each other, which can only assist in coherent dialogue (Bartley, 2020).

On the other hand, symbolic interactionism theory conceptualizes human interaction as a continuous process of deriving meaning from both objects in the environment and the actions of others that serves as a means for people to represent and communicate interpretations of these meanings to others. Symbolic interactionists perceive culture as dependent on how meaning is interpreted and how individuals interact when conveying these meanings (Conerly et al., 2021).

Having membership in a culture, a subculture, or a counterculture brings camaraderie and social cohesion and benefits the larger society by providing places for people who share similar ideas.

Additionally, co-cultural theory centralizes the lived experiences of co-cultural group members and focuses on instances when cultural difference is regarded as salient which engaged in the communication of co-cultural groups defined through race, ethnicity, gender, socioeconomic status, disability, and sexual orientation. A co-cultural theoretical approach provides a lens to understand how traditionally underrepresented group members communicate within societal structures governed by cultural groups that have, over time, achieved dominant group status (Orbe & Lambert, 2021).

3. Domain of Inquiry

The study explores the beliefs and practices of the villagers of Kandundulo altered gradually with the immersion of the missionary-educators. Further, this intends to conceptualize the cross-culture merging to establish a theoretical abstract.

4. Approach, Informants, Settings, Data Collection and Analysis

Approaching the observations and responses from the key informants, we implemented a semi-ethnographic qualitative approach. A number of villagers were sought for their ideas, beliefs and practices which revolve around their family as well as the community in Kandundulo Village, Solwezi, Zambia. From the findings, a theory has been proposed which shall explain pros and cons in their life. Considering the challenges in their life and the presence of the missionary-educators, we can notice the acculturation process occurring gradually. Though an unorthodox manner of analysis,

5. Results and Discussion: Transpirations of a Culture

5.1 Voluntarism (Community Extension Worker)

Volunteers are able to create another opportunity or path to those people they aim to educate. For the reason that, Christianity or religion brings a different type of effect to a person's life. Religion is conceived as a subsystem of a society (Koehrsen, 2015). Religion plays a huge part to the whole self of an individual (Svensson & Nilsson, 2018). Even in Nigeria, daughters or sons may not inherit their parents' properties if they have different beliefs or they are in a different religion like their parents (Udoh et al., 2020).

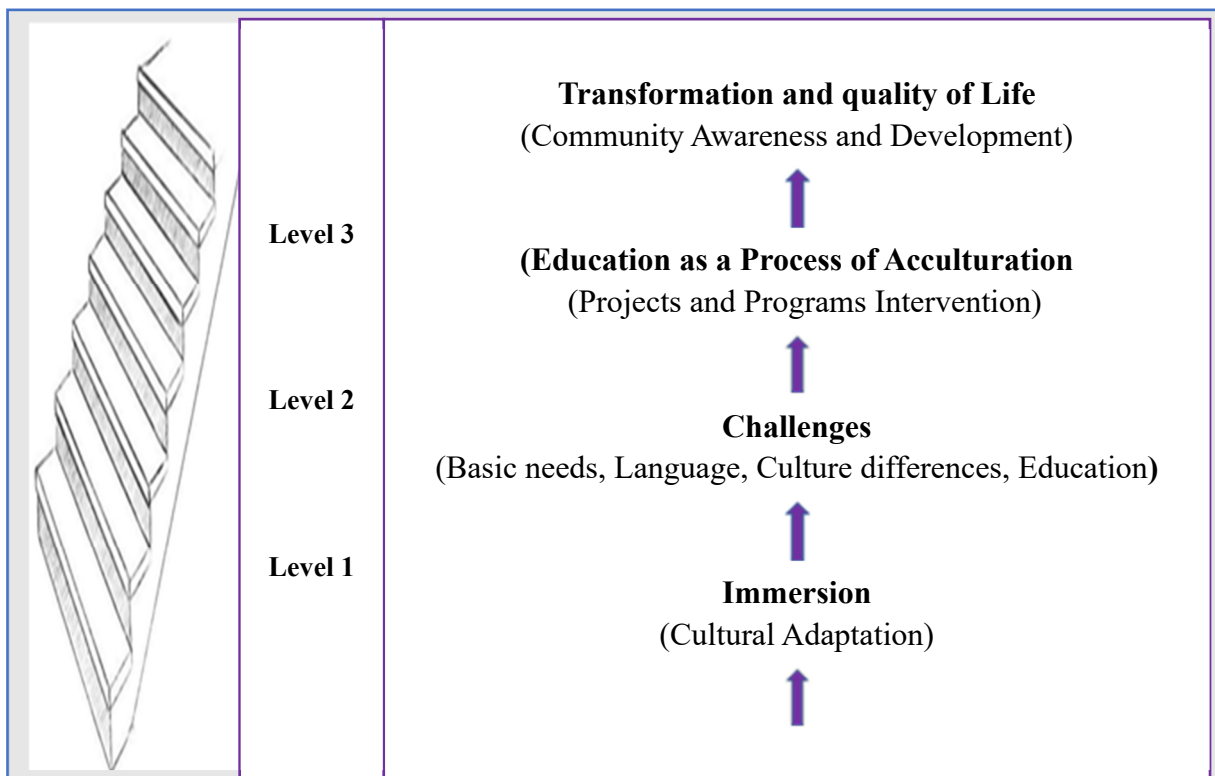


Figure 1. Chavez Cross Cultural Community Extension (4C) Model

Usually, the dynamics on extension services, engages every volunteer and partner individual, group, organization, or industry to help improve and sustain the lives of any targeted individual or group of people by providing technical assistance, education, skills training or entrepreneurial abilities, values formation and any other programs, projects, or activities to uplift the lives of families in the communities which contributes a lot to nation-building. As we might imagine, voluntarism in a cross-cultural context has a lot to do with where that worker serves and in what capacity. Questions that always linger in my mind, and yes, there are thrills and goosebumps on how it happened, but it profoundly points to God’s orchestration and grace. I mean who are we to question His well and plan for us, all we do is just say “Yes” to His call. I just do my best and God will do the rest, as the saying goes. When you are a Christian, you are expected to have integrity at all cost and at any moment because Christians believe that God is always watching (Mercier et al., 2018). Religion is

something that is under the responsibility of the believer (Barak-Corren & Bazerman, 2017). Religion and tourism seems to be interconnected (Raj & Griffin, 2018). Yet, there was a sigh of relief when we established a close relationship with them. It felt like we were no longer foreigners and there seemed no cultural differences. It felt like home, and everything is normal. As an educator, we cannot help but extend our assistance to them and share our time, talent, and skills. The conducted community services that we had had was not all about the learned skills and expertise but more on relationship, of caring and uplifting one another. The group of women in the village are their refuge and strength. They are now women oriented, responsive to issues affecting people's existence, adaptive to change, and developed through process.

I remembered the sharing, from one of my Filipina American friends who also served as Peace Corps volunteer in Zambia. We invited her to stay in our place for a couple of days and I asked her how her voluntarism experience in the village was. She said, and I quote the most successful volunteers in Zambia are extremely flexible and adaptable and have a passion for inspiring others. Indeed, I cannot agree more for without that passion, I do not think it can sustain for long.

On the matter of spiritual and values formation as the core components of the programs of HOLD which impacted among the women's spirituality whose mission is to rekindle the FIRE (Faith in God, Integrity, Responsibility, and Excellence) of God's Love through evangelization by providing a responsive, quality, and Christian education among others. For now, the neighboring parishes wanted me and my husband to conduct the Christian life program on their respective churches. If given a chance again after this pandemic to continue my voluntarism, it would be a great pleasure and honor to serve our brothers and sisters in a foreign land and share the good news, the love and mercy of Jesus Christ regardless of race, color, creed, religion, sex, gender, languages, and background for He loves us without measure. Dialogue with cultures comes from the dialogue of God with his Creation and Humanity. God painted his creation in different colors and tones, all filled with beauty and harmony. These tones speak to us of the beauty of the creator. And God saw everything he made was very good. (Gen. 1:31).

5.2 Immersion (Cultural Adaptation).

Culture shock as a sense of confusion and uncertainty sometimes with feelings of anxiety that may affect people exposed to an alien culture or environment without adequate preparation or the feeling of disorientation experienced by someone who is suddenly subjected to an unfamiliar culture, way of life, or set of attitudes (Oxford Dictionary). Immersion was the hardest part of my journey. I must admit, I was afraid, I believed that was a natural feeling, but as I go along the journey, it developed confidence and trust from one another. If we let our culture of fear turn us, we will not be able to fully adapt or integrate into the culture we are in. Zambians are good people, and their culture is not wrong nor bad, it is just different from our own. I remember, somebody discouraged me not to go on the remote areas in the village because they were afraid, I might be kidnapped, but then for a long time that I was with them, I felt safe and secure. In fact, there was an unforgettable experience we had, when

our car got stuck in the mud due to heavy downpours on a secluded place. Sister Norma and I were helpless to solve the situation at hand. Then suddenly three big black men approached and helped us by lifting the car. I just rewarded them with slices of my banana cake, and they laughed.

The group of women has this mentality to see is to believe. It is very hard for us to convince them if we are not walking with our talk. What I did was to immerse myself in whatever activity they had. I tried to make bricks in building the church, cooked *nshima* every visit at the farm, and ate their food except the worms, using bare hands in eating and drink *monkoyo*, their usual drink made from extract juice of corn. I wore *chetinge*, sang and danced, cried, and laughed with them. We went together in planting and harvesting crops, making the fishpond, and harvesting and marketing the fishes. I supported them by buying their harvested crops like cassava, sweet potato, ground nuts, banana, cabbage, red and white beans. I patronized also in buying their dressed and village chicken to help their market. Over the years we, the group of women have built a very strong relationship with one another along with the collaborative effort with our partner in the mission of CFC and HOLD on its Global mission in bringing glad tidings to the poor plus the commitment of MMB. I felt honored and blessed to be able to work alongside them.

6. Challenges ((Basic needs, language, culture differences, education))

Challenges are part of the journey. It is the part that adds color and flavor that creates real strength inside of you. When I decided to respond the call by saying “yes” to the mission I knew for a fact that it is not always a walk in the park. In fact, I experienced rejection and discrimination in this journey, I almost gave up and it took me a while to process and understand the situation. But then again, I learned and moved on and continued my serving the flock that God entrusted to us. It is very clear to me that I served not to please everybody, not because of my accomplishment either, but to please our God who deserves our praises and thanksgiving for the many accomplishments, blessings, graces, and mercy. He bestowed upon us despite our weaknesses and shortcomings. It is only by His grace that I maybe pleasing to Him, by serving with gladness among brothers and sisters in the peripheries. I responded the challenges and made choices that affected the people around me in a more positive way. To live a life with meaningful intention, to decide with consideration that I must learn and gain from overcoming these challenges. A concept that was easier said than done. Looking back, I had so many questions in my mind. I was mentally exhausted trying to navigate life in a new context. Nothing was familiar, plus bombarded with new tastes, sounds, and smells. Feeling that you were an outsider, struggled in trusting people, lack friends, and struggled with where you belong. Home sickness, that sense of loss from leaving your loved ones, familiar setting, and compounded with entering a foreign context cannot be understated. That feeling that you were lost, confused, and unsettle were real emotions as you moved and settled to unfamiliar places. That was before, but now we felt at home.

6.1 Basic Need

Challenges on basic needs and poverty were very visible. The housing that the company provided us was very huge, gated, with electric fence, CCTV cameras, and guards roaming around. Facilities and services were provided be in sports, education, health, food, and leisure. But looking outside the fences was the opposite. Isn't it ironic? but this is the way it is. People settled with no enabling environment to assist them, which created negative impact to their well-being. High food prices coupled with penury; families spent their income on basic food needs as their priority. I usually talked and interviewed them every time I jog around, and it was heart breaking to know their situation. But I always shared them the positive outlook in life, thereby giving them hope and inspiration. Three kilometers outside the housing gate, located an orphanage of children who are homeless orphans, disabled, impaired affected by the different disease that are common in the locality. We managed and visited three orphanages bringing some toys, school supplies and goodies donated from our friends and neighbors. These orphanages were managed by churches and others privately. It takes the whole community to be able to help this institution, and I still believed in humanity that have grown their faith and commitment to provide for these vulnerable and orphaned children to sustain their daily needs.

In Kandundulo village, one of the challenges in the group is their irregular attendance, but then again this was due to health problems and lack of food. I knew it from their sharing, that was why, I made sure there was food to share every after-prayer meeting and I believed it keep them motivated to come and attend the meeting by then. Women lives have been changed, a community was beginning to transform although it was a long process and still work in progress. Struggling children were given a chance to attend the community school located nearby.

Looking back Zambia 10 years ago, there is huge differences than today. There is constant economic growth and development, and fastest growing of populations and huge number of inhabitants, especially the place where we are at because of the booming copper smelter that contributed a lot in the country. People are coping though still struggling. Most families with financial inabilities rely always on volunteer helping hand, with continued help from God and the community, who knows what the future may hold in this area.

6.2 Language Learning

This was the most challenging part for me and the villagers too. Missionaries were unable to communicate upon their arrival. Even if we were competent and intelligent, we need to learn how to speak and communicate in a new context. This country has 73 tribes and has their own languages too. The reason why their language is English is because tribes are not united and wont' agree as to what language among the seven dominant tribes to represent as their national language. People in the village came from different tribes, tradition, and mixed culture. It was difficult to express our thoughts and share our ideas verbally because of language barrier. Most member of the group were refugees, coming from other neighboring countries due to genocide, war, and famine. Bringing their own native language and cannot understand nor speak English. But these challenges did not take long for we found a local

interpreter or translator. The only problem was when we delivered the message or conduct training, it took us many hours in just one setting because of translation from Kaonde, Bemba to English and vice versa. But we were then used to it, and what was important was that the informants understood and got the messages.

6.3 Basic Education

Their Education was so behind. Villagers did not know how to read and write nor speak English language. The women wanted me to teach them, but I did not know their language either. We had planned but it was not pushed through due to pandemic. The female illiteracy rate fluctuated substantially in recent years 1999-2018 period ending 65.4% in 2018(source: world data atlas>Zambia) Recently, I noticed some of them can speak English during our bible sharing. They were so proud of themselves if they can speak two to three words, a long way to go.



Image 12. Distribution of School Supplies to the Pupils

The St. Augustine church supported by the Diocese organized a community school near the church. The community came together to form a school with informal and untrained teachers to teach them. Children slowly received some basic learning, like English reading, writing and became numerate and literate. Pictures being provided showed when we gave some school supplies and snacks for the school children and teachers after their class. You noticed of their black board which was just painted on the wall. I also donated a soccer ball for their team because they were just using plastic cellophane wrap around to make just like a ball. These two male teachers were volunteers too and they did not even finish grade 12. Some volunteer teachers were the youth and parents. Classrooms were not enough for all the children. One room was for preparatory children ages five to seven, another room for ages seven to nine and nine to eleven years old. The three rooms were so small and were not conducive to learning. There were around 40 children inside the class especially in the

preparatory with no tables and chairs, they just sat down on the floor. Watching this scene my heart bled. I asked permission from the teacher to take some photos on them. I shared the photo to my virtual prayer group and without hesitation, they agreed to send cash donation for the renovation of one classroom to make it bigger and wider and conducive to learning. When the funds arrived, we immediately contacted our brothers in the CFC to spearhead the renovation. Me and my husband donated tables and chairs for the three classrooms. This community school was of great help for the children, but some parents needed convincing too because some of them did not want their children to go to school. They wanted their days spent on the fields. They were initially skeptical that their children would learn anything from the school especially that teachers were just volunteers. Although the school lacked trained teachers and materials, this was free of charge, and was good enough that children were productive rather than just playing around and had nothing to do. Through the collaborative effort from the community plus other stakeholders, I believe this community has a long way to go soon.

6.4 Cultural Differences

Culture plays a consequential role in unifying people's identity and aspirations, in laying down foundations for their survival, livelihood and dignity. Religion impacts a person's attitude and it can also be a start of a conflict between two people coming from different religion (Alvarez & Juang, 2010). Even though, under secular law, religious organizations are free to establish private schools. In point of fact, the role of private schools, which in the Philippines are typically and primarily religious in nature, is explicitly acknowledged by the Constitution (Pangalangan, 2010). Politics seems to be the undying barrier between Christianity and morality among people (Merz, 2012). The Catholic Church is a social institution that serves as a symbolic center for religious and linguistic identity, as well as for interactions between subgroups that strengthen community ties (Fresnoza-Flot, 2010). Yet, there are still no studies that have comprehensively discussed and studied the adaptation or interventions of both culture and religion (Worthington, Jr. et al., 2010). In relation to that, we conducted certain projects. When we conducted the livelihood projects, there were certain beliefs and customs that we needed to correct. A bit challenging though because we respected their culture that were quite laid back. Like for example, they believed that a certain plant called 'Gabi' Taro in English was poisonous. Plenty of it grew around the vicinity. No wonder why they did not care even touching it. For them not to be offended, I brought my Gasulete burner and taro plant that I harvested from my back yard. I demonstrated on how to cook the taro and ate it in front of them. They were shocked and that was the time they believed that it was not poisonous. I further explained to them that if they do not have food to eat, they can just boil this root crops for this are rich in carbohydrates and good for our body.

During the conduct of evangelization, bringing the gospel of Christ to others was the hardest part of the journey. Since the evangelization was open to all denominations, some conflicts arose during the process. Our charism was anchored from the Catholic Faith, and we believed that we were just steward in His vineyard, and by bringing Christ to others without expecting anything in return and did everything out of Love for He first loved us. We allowed the Holy spirit to work on us and always leaning and clinging to His divine intervention, mercy, and

grace. Religion is a big thing in Zambia, I witnessed that every time the gospel was presented to any denomination present, there were always arguments and other misconceptions. At times it was quite difficult to handle especially some of them knew too much about the Bible, plus we differed also in the kind of Bible being used because different denominations have their own Bibles too. I and my husband had a hard time in dealing with these challenges, and which enabled us to read and study the Bible and our manuals. Often, this was also the challenges met by other missionaries. Discussing the basic truth about Christianity inevitably collides with myths and the predominant worldview on the host culture. Worldview presents a variety of significant challenges and obstacle to all missionary works plus several traditional beliefs often blended with Christian values. They said, to acknowledge belief in the gospel especially coming from other parts of the world, for them signifies rejection of what has been practiced and believed for thousands of years. The apostle Paul reminded the Christians in Ephesus that ‘our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers of this darkness, against evil, spiritual forces in the heavens’ (Eph.6:12). When religion and tradition and culture is mixed people would get confused. I remembered when I brought rosary and rosary guide as my gift for them from my vacation, I explained what rosary was, what all the decades meant, and why we pray using the rosary. I told them that it is all about contemplative prayer and devotion reflecting on the life journey of Jesus from womb to tomb, etc. When I asked them, why you were always wearing rosary every day? They answered, ‘protection from evil and witchcraft sister’. Well, that is their belief also, I must respect that nor to argue with it.

The first time we went to the village, I counted the churches built both sides along the road, around 20 on both sides and near each other. Some are big, some are small; some are just newly built. I asked why there are so many churches in this place, and they said that Zambia is a Christian Nation, Christianity is our official religion, and we could build churches and named it of your own if we wanted it.

Zambia’s Constitution on the Freedom of Religion.

*Article 19: Protection of Freedom of Conscience, state that:
Except with his own consent, no person shall be hindered in the enjoyment of his freedom of conscience, and for the purposes of this article the said freedom includes freedom of thought and religion, freedom to change his religion or belief, and freedom, either alone or in community with others, and both in public and in private, to manifest and propagate his religion or belief in worship teaching, practice and observance, (Zambia 1991(rev. 2016).*

I discovered that the Christian denominations in this country included Protestant Christianity as the highest share of population for this was the first religion which arrived in this country. It was followed by Roman Catholic, Anglican, Methodist, Branhamism, Seventh Day Adventist, Presbyterian, New Apostolic, Pentecostal, Jehovah’s Witness, Lutheran, Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, Islam, and other Evangelical churches. Church attendance

was usually a colorful and festive affair with lively singing and dancing and folks were usually well-dressed for the occasion. I and my husband visited some of these churches mentioned, as wedding sponsors among his co-workers either garden wedding, or inside the church.

7. Education as a Process of Acculturation (Projects and Programs Intervention)

“Tell Me and I forget; Teach Me and I May Remember; Involve Me and I learn Forever” (Confucius, 450 BC). In line with that quotation, not only that I taught them, but I also involved them in every project for they always said ‘*Komona ko kwiitabila*’ which means to see is to believe. But on the process of acculturation, not only they have learned from me, but I also learned from them a lot, especially in dealing with life’s adversaries. I have encountered the most generous people were those who have no money, the wisest are those who have no education, and the bravest and kindest were the ones who were hurt the most. Their names were written in my heart. Indeed, the process of acculturation in education is a two-way process or vice versa. It is an effort to shape the behavior and attitude of someone constituted by knowledge and skills so that everyone can play their respective roles. Thus, the measure of success in learning the concept of acculturation is a change in behavior, change of heart, and outlook in life.

Among the projects implemented, the women were motivated in making bricks for the construction of the St. Augustine parish inaugurated last 2018. Other interventions and projects were the following: cooking and baking, recycling, sewing, vegetables and crops farming, fish farming and renovating one classroom on their community school. Programs implemented were the CFC and HOLD Small Christian Community, attached in the parish. The HOLD members wanted us to conduct another Christian Life Program intended for couples, they wanted their husband to join on the said program. “The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few.” (Luke 10:2).

8. Transformation and quality of life (Community Awareness and Development)

Church and community transformation is an approach to community development that enables people to see the power that they must transform their own lives’ using the skills and resources they already have, and by putting their faith into action. ‘Do not deceive yourselves by just listening to His word; instead, put it into practice ‘that person will be blessed by God in what he does.’ (James 2:22) The main objectives of community development programs and projects was to improve the standard of living of village people and their social skills by interacting with people from diverse backgrounds. It was a process but with collaborative effort, coming together to take collective action to generate solutions to common problems. It enabled them to consider the perspective of the people and understand how he or she reacts to different situations. Villagers grew their own food and sold vegetables at the market, and another new project will be springing up soon. Women from being passive became active members in the community. They were encouraged to participate in the church and in

community affairs, attended assembly meetings regularly so that they were informed, contributed to the discussions, especially on matters affecting their welfare and development of the community. Women were no longer claiming that they were poor for they now can afford the things they needed especially on basic foods. Hunger for them is a thing of the past. Below are the narratives of some women in the village:

‘Na yadile mooba apita, pano nji bulongo, Nkambo wakwasha! Njina sopo wakuovwa suiki Yami nsansa nemafuto yanukila, ke lombazha kiteng mambo napota kyami’.

“I suffered a lot before but now I’m ok, God helped me! I have shampoo for my hair, I can put perfume, I don’t borrow chitenge for I bought my own”. says Josephine, a member of HOLD.

‘Nji mutumwa was Lesa mukwalulula byambo bynaji, nasekelemo kutanwa mumingilo yanji’.

“I am a messenger of God, by way of translating his words. I am happy to be a part of His mission.” Says brother Theotim, a volunteer catechist.

‘Soona pakubika mutwe Inge walala ne bivwalo bimo potesha, kwikala kwakubula kajo kemambo ne’.

“I sewed my own pillows and dress; some sold in the market. No food no problem.” Says Loveness, a member of the choir.

‘Anweba bafuma mubyalo tukwashai me kwitufundisha kuba amba kwashe me kufudisha banyike nabo kyantu tu’.

“You foreigner help and teach us, so I also help and teach the children too for free.” Says Nely, a volunteer teacher in their community school.

So humbling, knowing that my little initiatives are now bearing fruits. However, I cannot take full credit but grateful to the MMB for the chances and allowing me to be a partner on their mission. Once, women were empowered, be it be physically, mentally, emotionally, and spiritually. But better transformation, changes, and results were being expected. I have witnessed these women’s potential development and capabilities, and their appreciation of life as they embraced the teaching and learning on the process of acculturation. It was so humbling and fulfilling experience on the part of the researcher to be a part of their success stories, that they can now live happy and have a normal life. Some women have been self-actualized while others were challenged to grow to her self-actualization. Experiences is the best teacher indeed, a continuous process of experiencing and of revising or organizing, it may take place anywhere, anytime, be it be formally or informally to enable the individual to grow and desire specific experiences. Because these beliefs both mediate and moderate the relationship between religious involvement and self-esteem, it appears that religious involvement only benefits self-esteem to the extent that it encourages beliefs in a supportive relationship with a higher power (Schieman et al., 2017). However, being a Christian does

not mean that a person is always kind and humble. There are still some instances that he or she might feel bad or have triggered feelings of anger towards God (van der Merwe et al., 2010). Yet, believing that God is in control is an advantage for the people to at least have fear towards Him (Landaua et al., 2018).

One of the most unforgettable experiences we had was during the Christian Life Program (CLP) spiritual and values formation among couples. Before reaching talk number 9, we encouraged the eight couple informants to be wedded inside the church for free, this was a part of the program before their dedication rites. But then when we discussed this proposition, the men strongly argued that they will not avail on it because their belief base on their culture was that if they are wedded inside the church, they are no longer free. Most of them do not believe in marriage. I and my husband had a hard time convincing especially for the men, even the parish priest and nuns told us that it takes a thousand angels to change their minds. We just offered a prayer on it and leave it to God if He wills it. They dedicated from the CLP last December 8, 2018. But lo and behold, after the Christmas break, we received an invitation from one of our household head to attend the upcoming wedding day of eight couples. The women had big smiles on their faces that they finally wedded inside the church. We surprised each couple with free cake and wine. It was a revelation and affirmation from above.

Another most unforgettable experience in the journey when my husband got severe covid, and at that time I was in the Philippines. I was helpless, scared, and worried, and trusted God's will, plan, glory, and leaned into His grace. He was confined in the isolation facility for one month and had a fifty-fifty chance of survival. In my absence, it was the bishop and nuns who monitored his condition. Surmounted by a lot of prayers from our brothers and sisters in the community, who interceded for his fast recovery. It took him three months before he was able to go back to his work for, he underwent physical therapy. God revealed to us His divine intervention. Why do bad things happen to good people? If one has faith, all things have meaning. But why would a Loving God allow us to suffer? I asked for strength and God gave me difficulties to make me strong. I asked for wisdom and God gave me problems to solve. I asked for courage and God gave me dangers to overcome. I asked for love and God gave me troubled people to help. My prayers were answered. That is according to a priest in a trial we witnessed.

All these experiences in life humbled and transformed us to be a better version of ourselves, though it is still a work in progress, but our priorities in life are clearer than before. After the ordeal of my husband and travel restrictions was a bit normal, I came back to Zambia. Although there was always fear because of the virus, still it did not stop us in continuing our service with our brothers and sisters in the community.

Aside from the village, we went to another town to conduct team building among the members prior to their upcoming CLP. This was an hour travel via airplane and two hours travel commute via bus before you arrive the destination. God did not stop in surprising us; in fact, we met a Filipino missionary priest serving in the remote areas for 23 years. All the people we met in this journey gave us so much inspiration from learning their story, amazing God.

9. Personal Insights of the Researchers

The word “Volunteer” is quite familiar since my teaching days. Supervisor would ask ‘would you like to volunteer first in one of the remote areas in the district?’ and I said “Yes”. Joining in the community of CFC since 1994 as a Singles for Christ then got married and move to Couples for Christ, served in Gawad Kalinga (GK), Answering the Cry of the Poor (ANCOP), all these were “volunteerism”, working with the poor. Prior to be sent on a mission not because we were commissioned, but God’s plan. We were already honed with this community to share not only our Time and Talent but most especially our Treasure. This is free and voluntary without expecting any return. No compensation nor allowances. It is about doing work without being forced or paid. It is a freewill, not paid but making a difference to the neighbors and other people’s lives. One inactive member asked, “Are you still serving the community?” “What have you gained?” I never answered him because we were in hurry, but back in my mind, I said “Well, God never ceased in giving us His blessing, so why stop serving”, then I remember this saying “Once a man was asked, ‘What did you gain by regularly praying to God? The man replied, “nothing” but let me tell you what I lost, anger, ego, greed, depression, insecurity, and fear of death. Sometimes, the answer to our prayers is not gaining but losing, which ultimately is the gain according to a philosopher I once studied.

The opportunity of my husband to work in this country has given us deeper purpose and meaning. It brought out the best and better version of ourselves. Along with the blessings, there were also number of hurdles, but we learned the hard way and moved forward, turning challenges into opportunities. Volunteerism led us to meet other brothers and sisters serving in other countries too. Because of pandemic and series of lockdowns we did not meet our members and leaders in person, but God was able to connect us through the power of digital connectivity, such tools as zoom, google met or messenger. Merging leaders serving in Africa and Europe connected us easily through the series of teachings and trainings done virtually. It gave us wider perspective on volunteerism, that it boiled down with the same purpose of selflessly contributing our skills and knowledge for the common good of society, done with compassion and empathy towards self and others. Our involvement in community organization drove positive and lasting changes in the villagers and to us as volunteers. It was a two-way process, we gave but we also received, not with material things but relationships, connections, social networks, and lasting friendships. It gave a sense of purpose of our existence. So, get involved and experience the joy of serving which cannot be bought by money.

Working with MMB and CFC gave me wonderful learning experiences. It helped me understand other cultures in different perspectives within the world we live. It helped me dispel negative stereotypes and personal biases and helped me recognized and respect “ways of being” that we can learn from one another. I strongly believed in humanity, that everybody can contribute to social development through volunteering if really, we want to bring a positive change to the society. Serving the women villagers was always a privilege and a blessing to me. No need to go to distant places to do it, just look around us, be sensitive and do not wait for others to take the initiative. Step-up, be bold, be counted, and be blessed.

Missionaries all over the world are welcome in most countries in African continent. These people are just ordinary and very much human, sacrificially serving an extraordinary God. Their hearts are broken for people who do not know Christ. People who do not know how empty life is without their Creator. Choose to engage sorrow, walk by faith, and live in community who desperately needs transformation and love people especially those who are lost, the least, and the last. Maybe years go by without the evidence of their works, sweat, and prayers, but always prayed and pleaded for the impossible. Trusting God to accomplish what only they can and clinging and leaning only by His grace and divine intervention. Continuous learning and leaning into grace as they do, always trusting God for results. It is pursuing a kingdom and calling that some people would understand. They are not superhuman, but they serve a supernatural God.

The most important lessons I have learned in journeying this wonderful people working in His vineyard was that being a follower of Christ I must be proactive in renewing my mind, through constant connection and dedication in cultivating my faith. By letting my mind and heart be renewed so that I can be more receptive to His voice. As a result, I will be able to strengthen my faith, manifesting it through devotion and obedience. There is no greater joy in this world than to see Christians walk in the footsteps of Christ. “This is what God asks of you, only this: to act justly, to love tenderly and to walk humbly with your God.” (Micah 6:8).

10. Epilogue

The purpose of the study was to explore on the researcher’s personal experience as a volunteer missionary educator on the process of acculturation particularly among the women in the village of Solwezi, Zambia for this (S.Y) 2020-2021. It described the learning outcomes from the projects and programs implemented that have motivated the women to integrate in the new culture that helped and contributed poverty alleviation. The focus of the study was the missionaries residing in foreign country, engaging acculturation in two aspects may it be religious orientations and sojourner (a person who resides temporarily in a place) acculturation. To be able to draw conclusions about the researcher learning strategies, I have looked at the experiences of five selected informants who have successfully acculturated themselves.

This study made use of autoethnography, which focused on the researcher’s subjective own exposure and experience of a culture or phenomena rather than that of others’ beliefs and practices. The researcher was the main observer, informants, and informant of this study. And I as the main researcher acted as narrator and storyteller. In the conduct of this study, I made use of recall and recollection to present the most important detail of every experience as much as possible. Then my stories were analyzed using Spradley’s four levels of analyzing autoethnography. Informants have been asked to provide detailed information about their engagement and integration process, the learning strategies, the rewards, and the circumstances that stood at the foundation of their acculturation through education. The findings that resulted from semi-structured interviews have been interpreted using the

“Empirical level-up 4C’s Model theory” and concepts that described in detail in the theory generation chapter.

The key findings of the study were: education through the process of acculturation, specifically focus on learning from the projects and programs that took place more effectively among the women that were driven intrinsically and internalize the extrinsic rewards that they expect upon completion of their goals. The learning outcome of the five selected informants meant for a successful completion and proved the effectiveness of acculturation with positive impact among the women and the researcher.

The key results and its implications of education through the process of acculturation study showed that the motivation behind acculturation processes can lead to varying outcomes, intrinsic or internalized factors leading to better results and more effective learning initiatives. To form better strategies and action steps in an organizational program, these findings can be put into practice to school management in terms of building linkages as one of the Key Result Areas (KRA) for school heads, and its implication, and implementation on extension program and to different school culture. These results may emphasize on schools in the development of character among students, through the study of community issues, actions to address these issues, and reflections on the experiences. Public and private schools applied this process and earned good impact, many schools are moving students from voluntarism to service-learning initiatives within the curriculum so that students at all levels can develop cooperation, empathy, citizenship, and self-esteem. It can also be brought to the knowledge of migrants and sojourners. Even teachers who are looking for a successful integration, can make them aware on how their choices and goals are working those apparently unrelated that can impact the outcome on their integration efforts. The findings can be recommended and looked at through the lens of its shortcomings like the experiences of five selected informants. A longitudinal study looking at cultural elements that integrated individual retained from their home culture and are perpetuated to future generations could bring better understanding to the differences between the term’s integration and adaptation of the new culture.

11. Conclusion

Being a missionary- educator is a quite challenging duty because of the different people you met with different characteristics, values, culture and religion that you want to educate. However, there are still people who are eagerly to learn and to be educated despite on the fact of our differences. We are looking forward to a new version of people in Zambia that is confidently to differentiate, inculcate, integrate and adapt new cultures from other countries or town and be globalize. Acculturation is a very important matter to be engage in other’s culture and learn their culture as well. It is another way process to be a global citizen and be recognize to other foreign country as well. It is somehow like marketing or merchandising your own culture towards another culture to be recognized and be adapted. It is an assimilation process wherein you connect other learnings from other culture to your culture. It will definitely increase your ideas and creativity to improve your self and economic status through adapting other’s culture which you think that would make yourself and society and

community to be on a betterment situation of your lives. It is not about dumping or abandoning own's culture but to integrate, adapt and educated from other's ideas, beliefs and strategies to become successful. Moreover, it is how you connect and reconnect then conceptualized each other's beliefs and traditions to learn from each other.

12. Reflection

To write this dissertation, I had to read many books, articles, and papers. Reading all the materials relevant to acculturation, ethnography, immigrants' education, volunteerism, missionary educator, community extension services, and cultural adaptation which helped me gain a better view of various factors affecting education. My persistence for following my educational dreams had positive effects of my two sojourner Filipino friends in Zambia and my two sisters-in-law, who are now aware of their own potential and on their way too for pursuing higher education. Helping them with the process of applying to various universities made me realize how important it is to share our experiences and to encourage each other to move forward even this time of pandemic. While writing this dissertation, seemed to be just a requirement for obtaining a Doctor of Education degree (Ed. D), it turned out to be a much more meaningful experience in my life. In fact, writing this dissertation helped me grew intellectually and developed personally and professionally. It recognized my potentials and gained more knowledge and wisdom in volunteerism. I realized then that there was so much power in giving our time to others, and everything I did are not wasted, it was all worth it. It impacted on my health too through socializing, it relieved stress, loneliness, depression, strengthen my immune system, boosted my heart, mind, body and spirit. It was helping them that also helped you without you knowing it. The best realization I had, was I thought I was the one educating the women, but it was the other way around. They were the ones who taught me that it was not about what I have accomplished but what God accomplished in me through His chances of blessing, mercy, love, and grace. Nobody is so poor that has nothing to give, and nobody is so rich that has nothing to receive. Nothing is too insignificant that it cannot be used for God's purpose. We must be ready and be part of the change. We must go and share our ideas, knowledge, experiences, and passion, and enjoy what we do. I cannot wait to see you doing it. Don't worry about anything but pray about everything, tell God what you need and thank Him for all He has done (Philippians 4:6) I do care education, I do care children without food, I do care people with hopeless situations and poor in spirit, I do care missionaries, I am a teacher by profession but "I am a volunteer" and that's all that matters. I started this study with a quote so I ended with a quote from Stephen Grellet's I shall pass through this world but once. Any good therefore that I can do or any kindness that I can show to any human being, let me do it now. Let me not defer or neglect it, for I shall not pass this way again.

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<https://doi.org/10.17744/mehc.32.1.t3677072811j864>

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