

ACCULTURATIVE STRESS AND COPING AMONG BURMESE WOMEN MIGRANT WORKERS IN THAILAND

Maria Belen Vergara and Sai Han Noom
Webster University Thailand

Abstract

This study examined the psychological acculturation experience of Burmese women migrant workers in Thailand by looking into their acculturative stressors, levels of acculturative stress, and coping responses, and identifying the predictors of acculturative stress. The descriptive-correlational design was employed. Fifty-seven participants completed measures of culture shock, coping responses, and a checklist on acculturative stressors. Situational and personal-relational stressors were found to be positively correlated with high levels of acculturative stress. Avoidance coping responses such as acceptance and emotional discharge were negatively correlated with acculturative stress. Situational and personal-relational stressors, acceptance, and emotional discharge were significant predictors of acculturative stress. Suggestions for promoting positive acculturative experiences of migrant workers and future research directions are discussed.

Keywords: migrant workers, coping responses, Burmese, Thai, culture shock

บทคัดย่อ

งานวิจัยชิ้นนี้ ศึกษาสถานะทางจิตวิทยาของลูกจ้างชาวพม่าเพศหญิงที่มาทำงานในประเทศไทย โดยศึกษาปัจจัยที่ก่อให้เกิดความเครียดในการปรับตัวให้เข้ากับสังคมไทย ระดับความเครียด และการปรับตัว นอกจากนี้ยังตรวจสอบปัจจัยที่ก่อให้เกิดความเครียดในการปรับตัว การวิจัยนี้ใช้สถิติแบบสหสัมพันธ์กลุ่มตัวอย่างจำนวน 57 คน ตอบแบบสอบถามเกี่ยวกับการประสบสิ่งที่ไม่คาดคิดทางวัฒนธรรม การปรับตัว และรายการที่ก่อให้เกิดความเครียด ผลการวิจัยพบว่าความเครียดจากสถานการณ์ และเรื่องส่วนบุคคลมีความสัมพันธ์ทางบวกกับความเครียด กลยุทธ์ที่ใช้จัดการกับความเครียดโดยหลักเชิงลบ เช่น การยอมรับสภาพและหาที่ปลดปล่อยอารมณ์มีความสัมพันธ์ทางลบกับความเครียดในการปรับตัว ปัจจัยทางด้านสถานการณ์และเรื่องส่วนตัว การยอมรับสภาพ และการปลดปล่อยอารมณ์ เป็นปัจจัยที่สามารถทำนายระดับความเครียดได้อย่างมีนัยสำคัญ ผู้วิจัยเสนอให้จัดสภาพแวดล้อมให้เกิดประสบการณ์การปรับตัวให้เข้ากับสังคมแบบในทางบวกให้กับลูกจ้าง

คำสำคัญ: ผู้พหุพ, การปรับตัวเข้ากับสังคม, พม่า, ไทย, การรับมือกับความเครียด

INTRODUCTION

Migration has become an increasingly common experience for many people throughout the world. In fact, an estimated 214 million individuals worldwide are considered to be international migrants (International Organization for Migration, 2013). Migrants voluntarily or involuntarily leave their home countries to settle in their new host countries and are typically classified into subgroups such as immigrants, refugees, asylum seekers, and sojourners (Schwartz, Unger, Zamboanga, & Szapocznik, 2010). Migrant workers are subsumed under sojourners because the length of their stay in host countries is limited by their employment contracts (Schwartz et al., 2010). Economic deprivation along with displacement due to armed conflicts, persecution, or natural disasters are reasons which compel Asian migrant workers to seek greener pasture abroad (Amnesty International, 2005). In mainland Southeast Asia, Thailand's economic growth has made it a major destination among workers from neighboring countries (International Organization for Migration, 2013). Workers from Myanmar (Burma), Laos, and Cambodia comprised 1.3 million of two million migrant workers in Thailand (Fujita, Endo, Okamoto, Nakanishi, & Yamada, 2010). Of the migrant workers from Thailand's neighboring countries, 82% were Burmese who worked in the agriculture, fisheries, manufacturing, construction, domestic, restaurants, and hotel sectors of the Thai industry (Fujita et al., 2010). These statistics on Burmese migrant workers in Thailand show that this subgroup of migrants merits attention because of their increasing numbers, the circumstances surrounding their migration, and the challenges that define their acculturation experiences (United Nations Department of Public Information, 2010).

Migrants, regardless of subgroup classification, go through the process of acculturation which involves psychological and cultural changes that result from their intercultural encounters (Berry, 1997). Contemporary theories on acculturation have deemed the process to be inherently stressful because migrants are expected to cope immediately and effectively with new and unfamiliar intercultural experiences (Zhou, Snape, Topping, & Todman, 2008). They are under tremendous stress from having to struggle with adequately adjusting to a new culture, a new pace of life, and a new

language while trying to sustain satisfactory performance to keep their jobs (Rudmin, 2009). While stress and coping are natural and inevitable aspects of acculturation, stressors which have been unsuccessfully dealt with produce high levels of acculturative stress which in turn impacts negatively on the health and wellbeing of migrants (Berry, 1997, 2005, 2006; Winkelman, 1994).

These theoretical assertions on the process and outcome of acculturation have strong empirical support from the existing body of research that yielded a vast array of variables related to stressors, acculturative stress, and coping responses. The distressing life events brought about by intercultural interactions are considered to be stressors (Berry, 2005). These stressors have been categorized in various ways with reference to their nature and sources such as environmental, social, familial, and attitudinal stressors (Fuentes & Westbrook, 1996) and to the circumstances surrounding migration such as conflicts that prompted migration which are labelled as pre-migration stressors and conflicts related to relocation, communication/language, mental and physical health which are considered as post-migration stressors (Yakushko et al., 2008). Moreover, migrants who have experienced prolonged and repeated exposures to numerous acculturative stressors reported high levels of acculturative stress which is defined as negative cognitive, emotional, and behavioral reactions to cultural experiences in the host countries (Berry, 2006). High levels of acculturative stress have been found to produce debilitating outcomes in various dimensions of adjustment such as emotional and psychological (Paukert, Pettit, Perez, & Walker, 2006; Sandhu & Asrabadi, 1998; Wei et al., 2007), relational and social (Duru & Poyrazli, 2007; Poyrazli, Kavanaugh, Baker, & Al-Timimi, 2004), and physiological wellbeing (Greenland & Brown, 2005; Williams & Berry, 1991; Ye, 2005). Furthermore, migrants' efforts to manage acculturative stress have likewise been the focus of empirical attention which has consistently placed under favorable light approach coping responses (e.g., problem-solving) as buffer against the debilitating impact of acculturative stress (e.g., Heberle, 2010; Jibeen & Khalid, 2010; Rohde, 2010; Torres, 2010) when compared with avoidance coping responses which have been known to sustain and even escalate the levels of acculturative stress (e.g., Berry, 2005; Crockett et

al., 2007; Torres & Rollock, 2004; Wong, 2006).

This present review has brought to light a conspicuous emphasis that recent studies on acculturation have placed on immigrants and international students. The bulk of studies examined in this review mainly focused on the experiences of Asian, Latino, and Scandinavian immigrants to North America and Europe (e.g., Aragona et al., 2013; Bhugra, 2004; Faur, 2008; Mui & Kang, 2006) as well as international students (e.g., Abbasian & Shakiri, 2013; Crockett et al., 2007; Horn, 2008; Kim & Omizo, 2005; Mejia & McCarthy, 2010). Apart from Magaña and Hovey's (2003) study on Mexican seasonal farmworkers in the U.S. and Rohde's (2010) study on low-income Latino workers, very little attention has been directed to migrant workers which are identified as a special population due to the difficult life circumstances that they face in their host countries (Fujita et al., 2010; United Nations Department of Public Information, 2010). Such is the case of Burmese migrant workers in Thailand which several status reports have disclosed to be contending with harsh working conditions, low income, heavy indebtedness, substandard living conditions, susceptibility to illness, very limited access to health care, and high risk of being victims of human trafficking (Amnesty International, 2005; Fujita et al., 2010; Karen Human Rights Group, 2010; Pichai, 2010; United Nations Department of Public Information, 2010). In addition to these overwhelming stressors, Burmese women migrant workers are forced to make do with lower wages and longer working hours than their male counterparts (Fuji et al., 2010).

Moreover, there is a need to steer research directions toward various types of migrants because the quality of their acculturation experiences vary according to the circumstances surrounding their migration (Schwartz et al., 2010) and that migrants who contribute to the economy and culture of the host country are more likely to experience acceptance as compared to refugees who are considered a drain to the host country's resources may suffer from perceived discrimination and rejection (Steiner, 2009). Exploring the acculturative experiences of people within their unique context of migration as well as their ability to deal with problems of daily life can provide valuable insights toward the understanding of psychological acculturation (Berry, 1997; Zhou, 2014).

Therefore, this study represents an attempt to expand empirical focus to include Burmese women migrant workers whose unique migration circumstances complicate their acculturation experience and place them at a high risk of serious maladjustment. This study seeks to cast light on the acculturation experiences of Burmese women migrant workers by (a) examining their acculturation-related stressors, levels of acculturative stress, coping responses; and (b) identifying predictors of acculturative stress. By exploring the psychological acculturation process of Burmese women migrant workers as they attempt to deal with the multiple demands of living and working in a foreign country, this study aims to contribute to the existing body of empirical literature on acculturative stress, and to identify potentially fruitful avenues for future research. Finally, this study hopes to furnish professionals in the health and welfare disciplines, socio-civic organizations, and government institutions with valuable insights into the plight of Burmese women migrant workers in Thailand so that developmental, remedial, and rehabilitative efforts can be directed toward this valuable segment of the society whose commitment of lives and energies push the frontiers of economic development.

LITERATURE REVIEW

A more detailed review of relevant literature and studies on acculturation is presented in this section and organized according to topics such as stressors from acculturation, acculturative stress, and coping responses.

Stressors from Acculturation

Migration is a major life event that requires people to engage in stressful cultural adjustment (Berry, 1997). The process of psychological and cultural changes that migrants go through as a result of contact with culturally dissimilar people and social influences is known as acculturation (Berry, 2005). Migrants are people from one country who settle in a host or receiving country and are typically categorized as (a) immigrants who leave their homelands by choice for economic opportunities, marriage, or to join family members who have previously immigrated; (b) refugees who are displaced

by natural or manmade disasters, (c) asylum seekers who escape persecution and violence, and (d) sojourners whose residence in the host country is purpose-bound and time-limited such as international students, seasonal workers, and corporate executives whose organizations send them overseas for career development (Berry, 2006; Schwartz, Unger, Zamboanga, & Szapocznik, 2010).

Studies have shown that the process of acculturation results in distressing life events which migrants have reported as sources of stress (stressors). Notwithstanding the varied ways by which acculturation researchers have classified stressors, this review elects to use the terms situational and personal-relational as two general categories which appear to be broad enough to encompass the wide array of acculturation-related stressors. To clarify these general categories, situational stressors refer to disturbing life events that occur in the physical environment such as living and working conditions, and socio-political and economic climate of the host country whereas personal-relational stressors refer to distressing events that occur within the personal and interpersonal aspects of functioning of migrants in the context of cross-cultural encounters. Studies have focused on situational stressors such as rigid working conditions that are characterized by difficult physical labor, long hours, low wages, and very limited access to health care which force migrant workers to make do with substandard living conditions, and place them at a high risk of illness and of being victims of human trafficking (Fujita et al., 2010; Magana & Hovey, 2003; Pichai, 2010). On the other hand, studies on personal stressors have pointed to negative emotions and psychological disturbances such as culture shock (Aragona, Pucci, Mazzetti, Maisano, & Geraci, 2013; Mumford, 1998), homesickness (Sandhu & Asrabadi, 1994; Sedikides, Wildschut, Routledge, Arndt, & Zhou, 2009), anxiety and worry about status as migrants (Mejia & McCarthy, 2010; Sonderegger, Barrett, & Creed, 2004), depression (Cavazos-Rehg & De Lucia-Waack, 2009; Choi, Miller, & Wilbur, 2009; Park 2009), suicidal ideation (Hovey & Magana, 2003; Kiang, Grzywacz, Marin, Arcury, & Quandt, 2010; Mui & Kang, 2006), and psychosis (Bhugra, 2004; Devlyder et al., 2013). Other studies on acculturation have examined relational stressors such as communication problems related to lack of flu-

ency in the language of the host country (Abbasian & Sharifi, 2013; Neto, 2002), difficulties in social adaptation (Duru & Poyrazli, 2007; Kim & Omizo, 2005), perceived discrimination (Horn, 2008; Sandhu & Asrabadi, 1994), and harassment by police and immigration officers (Karen Human Rights Group, 2010; Pichai, 2010), and marital concerns (Choi, Miller, & Wilbur, 2009; Heberle, 2010). This review on acculturation-related stressors suggests that studies have given a lop-sided focus on stressors that are commonly reported by immigrants and international students, and have given meager attention to stressors that are significant predictors of acculturative stress in migrant workers.

Acculturative Stress

Culture shock is the accumulated effects of unfamiliar encounters that are experienced by migrants in their host or receiving countries (Zhou, 2014). Shock as a term suggests that acculturation is a stressful process that is characterized by the following aspects: (a) Strain due to effort required to make necessary psychological adaptation; (b) A sense of loss and feelings of deprivation in regard to friends, status, profession, and possession; (c) Being rejected by and/or rejecting the members of the new culture; (d) Confusion in role, role expectations, values, feelings, and self-identity; (e) Surprise, anxiety, disgust, and indignation after becoming aware of cultural differences; and (f) Feelings of impotence due to not being able to cope with the new environment (Taft, 1977).

Over the years, the growing body of literature on acculturation has seen the emergence of the term "acculturative stress" as synonymous to culture shock (Zhou, 2014). Closely linked to Lazarus and Folkman's (1984) psychological model of stress as a response to environmental stressors, acculturative stress is defined as a reaction to life events (stressors) that are brought about by the experience of acculturation (Berry, 1997). Acculturative stress is anchored on the premise that this kind of stress is likely to exist at low levels and produce positive effects when acculturative stressors are successfully dealt with. Studies on acculturative stress have explored its effects of various dimensions of adjustment of migrants. High levels of acculturative stress have been shown to have mild to moderate debilitating effects on the

emotional and psychological (Paukert, Pettit, Perez, & Walker, 2006; Sandhu & Asrabadi, 1998; Wei et al., 2007), relational and social (Duru & Poyrazli, 2007; Poyrazli, Kavanaugh, Baker, & Al-Timimi, 2004), and physiological dimensions of adjustment (Greenland & Brown, 2005; Williams & Berry, 1991; Ye, 2005). Low levels of acculturative stress have also been associated with self-efficacy (Kim & Omizo, 2006), language (English) proficiency (Duru & Poyrazli, 2007), competence in intercultural interactions (Torres & Rollock, 2004), and meaning in life (Pan, Wong, Chan, & Joubert, 2008). This review on acculturative stress has shown consistent findings that equate this variable with negative outcomes and echoes the invitation by theorists in the field for researches to explore specific migration circumstances that can bring out the potential of acculturative stress to become a positive, life-enhancing experience among migrants.

Coping Responses to Acculturative Stress

Coping refers to "the cognitive and behavioral efforts to master, reduce, or tolerate the internal and external demands that are created by the stressful transaction" (Folkman, 1984, p. 840). Moos (1993) made an effort to present a multidimensional model of coping responses that emphasizes the focus and the method of coping. The focus of coping refers to the individual's orientation towards the problem (approach versus avoidance). Under the focus perspective, people can make active efforts to resolve the problems and adapt themselves to stressors (approach coping) or try to avoid the problem and concentrate efforts on managing the emotion generated by the conflict (avoidance coping). The method of coping refers to cognitive and behavioral efforts that an individual makes in order to master or resolve stressors. Under the method perspective, people can employ cognitive or behavioral efforts to approach or avoid the stressor. The combination of two types of focus of coping (approach versus avoidance) and two types of method of coping (cognitive versus behavioral) forms eight coping response strategies. Approach Coping includes: (a) Logical Analysis which involves gaining insight on a stressor; (b) Positive Reappraisal which requires positively reframing perception of a stressor; (c) Seeking Guidance which entails obtaining support from significant

others and advice from professionals; and (d) Problem Solving which pertains to goal-setting and implementing plans to solve the problem. Avoidance Coping, on the other hand, subsumes the responses: (a) Cognitive Avoidance which refers to avoiding thinking about the stressor; (b) Acceptance or Resignation which involves accepting that one has no control over the situation; (c) Seeking Alternative Rewards which is engaging in alternative pleasurable activities; and (d) Emotional Discharge which involves letting off steam by shouting or taking it out on people. Moos's (1993) model of coping which includes all eight specific strategies scales formed the framework of a standardized instrument that have been widely used to assess coping responses to a variety of stressful situations (Chinaveh, 2013; Eyles & Bates, 2005; Kirchner, Forn, Munoz, & Pereda, 2003).

In the face of significant levels of acculturative stress, migrants are forced to recognize that they are experiencing problems from their cross-cultural interactions and are compelled to engage in strategies that attempt to deal with these acculturative stressors (Berry, 1997; 2005; 2006). Studies have shown that approach coping responses (e.g., problem solving) have been found to serve as a protective measure against occupational burnout (Rohde, 2010) and depression (Torres, 2010) among low-wage earning Latino immigrants, and psychosomatic illnesses among Asian American immigrants (Jeong, 2009). Approach coping responses have also been shown to promote adaptive adjustment among Pakistani immigrants in Canada (Jibeen & Khalid, 2010) and resiliency and cultural identity among Japanese women migrants in America (Heberle, 2010).

On the other hand, avoidance coping responses are found to be ineffective in mitigating the effects of stress (Torres & Rollock, 2004) as these responses have been shown to be related to high levels of acculturative stress and low levels of adjustment when compared to active coping responses (Berry, 1997; Crockett et al., 2007; Wong, 2006). However, several studies have shown contrasting findings that point to the effectiveness of avoidance coping responses in minimizing the levels of frustrations from stressful situations that cannot be managed by approach coping responses (e.g., Akram, 2006; Carver, 1989; Jiben & Khalid, 2010), and the adequacy of cognitive avoidance as self-protective measure against recall of stressful, in-

trusive memory (Lemogne et al., 2009). Furthermore, some studies highlighted the value of flexibility in utilizing approach and avoidance coping responses as an indicator effective adaptation among persons who manage severe and pervasive stressors (Kholmann, 1993; Moos, 1993). Avoidance coping responses (i.e., acceptance/resignation, cognitive avoidance, emotional discharge) when used in conjunction with approach coping responses (i.e., logical analysis, seeking guidance) have been linked with effective management of acculturative stress among international university students (Vergara, Smith, & Keele, 2010). This review on coping responses to acculturation has reinforced the effectiveness of approach coping responses and has brought to light an open avenue of research into the usefulness of avoidance coping alone or in combination with approach coping for the effective management of acculturative stress.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK AND HYPOTHESES

This study relies on Berry’s (1997) model of stress, coping, and acculturation which emphasizes the psychological acculturation and adaptation as its framework for explaining the hypothesized relationships of acculturative stress (dependent variable) with situational and personal-relational stressors, and coping responses (independent variables)

and to potential of latter variables as predictors of acculturative stress among migrant workers. Figure 1 illustrates the conceptual framework of this study.

According to Berry (1997), psychological acculturation refers to the adjustment that happens within the individual as a result of interactions with aspects of the new culture (Berry, 1997). The acculturation experiences of migrant workers create life events that place considerable demands on them. These life events may be situational stressors (e.g., harsh working conditions, substandard living conditions) or personal-relational stressors (e.g., problems with homesickness, communication/language, and perceived discrimination). These stressors can either seriously undermine their chances of a successful acculturation or become life – enhancing opportunities. The impact of these stressors is determined by the individual’s accurate appraisal of the degree of difficulty of these stressors and the effectiveness of their coping responses. Moreover, migrant workers who judge their acculturative stressors as manageable are likely to have low levels of acculturative stress, employ approach coping responses effectively, and experience acculturation as a life – enhancing opportunity. Migrant workers may be successful at their attempts at gaining insight about their stressful situation (logical analysis) or positively reframing their perception of their stressful situation (positive reappraisal). In addition, they may be effective in implementing useful plans to man-

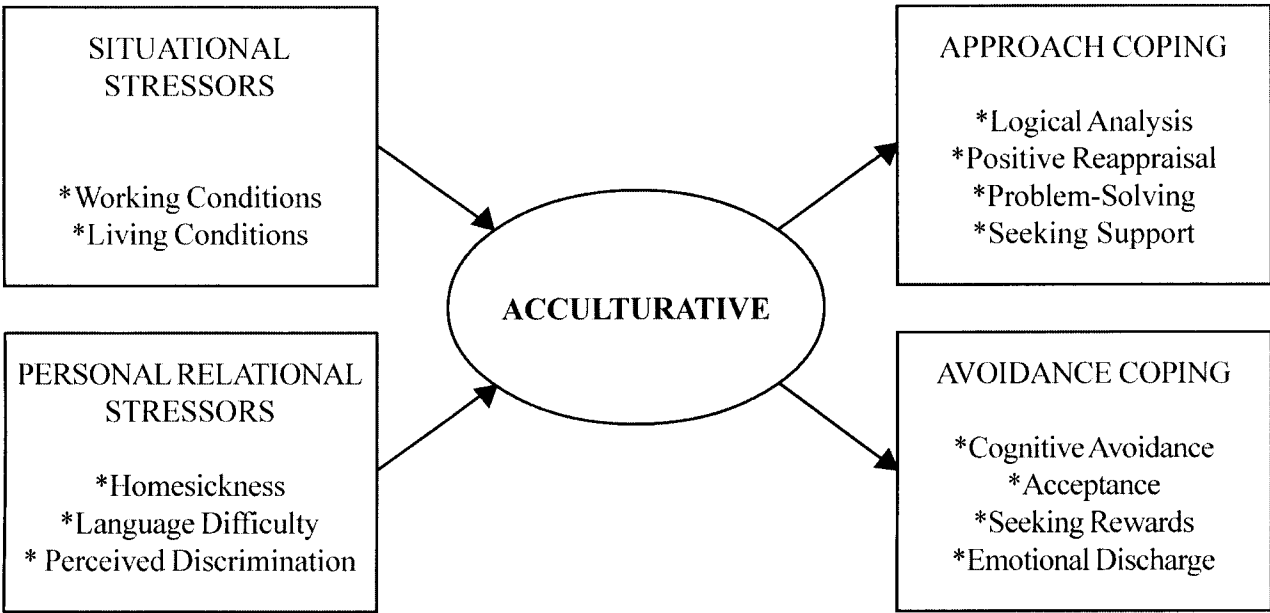


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

age their problems or in obtaining helpful advice from significant others and professionals. On the other hand, migrant workers who appraise their stressors as overwhelming are likely to suffer from moderate to high levels of acculturative stress, employ avoidance coping responses that are ineffective in minimizing stress, and experience acculturation as detrimental to their health and wellbeing. Migrant workers may resort by avoiding thinking about the stressful situation (cognitive avoidance) and accepting their powerless over the situation (acceptance or resignation). Migrant workers may likewise vent their emotions by yelling or shouting (emotional discharge) or seeking alternative sources of pleasure (seeking alternative rewards).

Based on this framework, the following hypotheses are made:

H1: High frequency of situational stressors predicts high levels of acculturative stress. When migrant workers have more situational stressors, their levels of acculturative stress are high.

H2: High frequency of personal-relational stressors predicts high levels of acculturative stress. When migrant workers have more personal-relational stressors, their acculturative stress levels are high.

H3: Approach coping responses predict low levels of acculturative stress. When migrant workers use approach coping responses, their acculturative stress levels are low.

H4: Avoidance coping responses predict high levels of acculturative stress. When migrant workers use avoidance coping responses, their acculturative stress levels are high.

METHODOLOGY

This study employed a descriptive-correlational design to determine (a) acculturation-related stressors, (b) levels of acculturative stress, (c) coping responses, and (d) predictors of acculturative stress among Burmese women migrant workers in Thailand.

Participants

There were 57 Burmese women migrant workers with the following demographic characteristics: (a) living in Thailand at the time of study; (b) from 18 to 38 years old ($M=28.8$, $SD=4.4$); (c)

single or unmarried; (d) working as domestic helper (72%) or in a clothing or plastic factory (28%); and (e) documented workers possessing valid work permit and other required legal documents. The participants were limited to (a) female Burmese workers because studies (e.g., Fujita et al., 2010) noted that there may be gender-based differences in the living and working conditions of migrant workers; and (b) single or unmarried women workers because family support has been demonstrated to be associated with acculturative stress and depression (Jon, 1998). Considering the lack of information concerning accurate population size and the subsequent lack of opportunity to conduct probability sampling, the participants should be considered as the population of Burmese women migrant workers and caution should be exercised in the interpretation and generalization of findings.

Instruments

The measures used were the Culture Shock Questionnaire (Mumford, 1998), Coping Responses Inventory (Moos, 1993), and a checklist to identify acculturative stressors and to gather demographic information from participants. All these measures were translated into Burmese and then back translated into its original English form by two college graduates with comparable competency in English and Burmese languages.

Acculturative stressors were identified using a checklist of situational and personal-relational stressors. Situational stressors include problems with working and living conditions. Personal-relational stressors are problems with homesickness, language or communication, and perceived discrimination. Inclusion of these stressors in the checklist is based on studies which identified such factors as resulting from cross-cultural encounters (e.g., Fuji et al., 2010; Snodgrass, 2007). Participants were asked to tick under the yes column if they are presently experiencing a given stressor. Participants were likewise encouraged to provide a brief explanation of their daily life situation where the stressor was felt by including this in the instruction and providing space in the checklist to write down their explanation. The total frequency of yes answers reflects the acculturative stressors experienced by participants.

Acculturative stress was measured using the Culture Shock Questionnaire (Mumford, 1998)

which is a 7-item Likert scale. The items of the questionnaire were derived directly from the six aspects of culture shock as delineated by Taft (1977) which are as follows: (a) Strain due to effort required to make necessary psychological adaptation; (b) A sense of loss and feelings of deprivation in regard to friends, status, profession, and possession; (c) Being rejected by and/or rejecting the members of the new culture; (d) Confusion in role, role expectations, values, feelings, and self-identity; (e) Surprise, anxiety, disgust, and indignation after becoming aware of cultural differences; and (f) Feelings of impotence due to not being able to cope with the new environment. Each item is worded in question form (e.g., "Do you feel generally accepted by the local people?") and rated using a 3-point response format that ranges from "0 = not at all" to "2=most of the time". Total scores range from 0 to 14. High total scores suggest high levels of culture shock. Specifically, scores from 0 to 4 suggest low levels, scores from 5 to 9 suggest moderate levels, and scores from 10 to 14 suggest high levels of culture shock. The instrument is a valid measure of acculturative stress as it accurately differentiated the degrees of culture shock across persons experiencing acculturation as shown by significant correlation between Culture Distance Index which was .50 with core culture shock items and .58 with interpersonal stress items. The Cronbach's alpha for the sample used in this study is .71.

Coping responses were measured using the Coping Resources Inventory - Adult Form (Moos, 1993) which is a 48-item Likert measure of eight different types of coping responses to stressful life circumstances based on focus (approach versus avoidance) and method (cognitive and behavioral). Approach Coping is defined by: (a) Logical Analysis which involves gaining insight on a stressor; (b) Positive Reappraisal which requires positively reframing perception of a stressor; (c) Seeking Guidance which entails obtaining support from significant others and advice from professionals, and (d) Problem Solving which pertains to goal-setting and implementing plans to solve the problem. The second set of four scales measures Cognitive Avoidance Coping which include responses such as Cognitive Avoidance which refers to avoiding thinking about the stressor and Acceptance or Resignation which involves accepting that one has no control over the stressor. The Behavioral Avoid-

ance Coping is composed of responses such as Seeking Alternative Rewards which is engaging in alternative pleasurable activities and Emotional Discharge which involves letting off steam by shouting or taking it out on people. Each item is worded in a sentence form (e.g., I think of different ways to deal with the problem) and scored using a 4-point response format which ranges from "0=not at all" to "3=fairly often". Raw scores are converted to standard scores where scores of 45 and below are interpreted as below average use of coping response, and scores of 55 and above as above average. The eight indices of coping responses are moderately and positively correlated (average $r_s = .29$ for men and $.25$ for women) and are stable over time among both men and women (average $r_s = .45$, and $.43$, respectively for the eight indices). The Cronbach's alpha for the sample used in this study is .78.

Procedures

Owing to the difficulty of gathering Burmese women migrant workers, some of whom disclosed their caution in interpersonal interactions as such may inadvertently lead to legal problems and subsequent deportation, it was not possible to conduct systematic sampling. Thus, it was deemed essential to solicit the assistance of two individuals who were known to the researchers and were likely to be perceived as trustworthy by migrant workers. These two individuals who served as research assistants for recruiting participants were (a) a Burmese female long-time resident of Thailand by virtue of marriage to a Thai national and who had been working as an aide for processing legal documents of Burmese migrant workers; and (b) a well-esteemed Buddhist monk at a temple in Bangkok who generously volunteered his help. In order to gather research participants, the monk who was fluent in Burmese stayed for 8 hours at the temple on weekends (Saturday and Sunday) when migrant workers typically come to the temple to worship. An orientation was provided to the research assistants to ensure understanding of the purpose of the study and the measures used, and uniformity of instructions to solicit research participation. Participants were gathered by purposive sampling of persons whom the two research assistants came in contact within the duration of the three-month data gathering period which ran

from September to November, 2010 in Bangkok, Thailand.

Analysis of data on acculturative stressors was done by recording the frequency of the stressors that were endorsed by participants. It should be noted that some participants indicated more than one stressor. Scores for acculturative stress and coping responses scores were obtained following the scoring and interpretation requirements of their corresponding measures. Descriptive statistics (means and standard deviations) were obtained and used to describe the levels of acculturative stress and self-esteem, and to identify the degree of reliance on specific coping responses. Multiple Regression was used to determine whether stressors and coping responses are significant predictors of acculturative stress. Hypotheses on prediction were tested using .05 level of confidence. Statistical analyses were accomplished using the Statistical Package in Social Sciences (SPSS, version 17).

RESULTS

Burmese women migrant workers reported both situational and personal stressors which they associated with their acculturation experience in Thailand. As shown in Table 1, harsh working conditions (33.3%) were the most frequently reported stressors whereas perceived discrimination (15.3%) and harassment by police and immigration officers (15.3%) were the least reported stressors. Overall, Burmese women migrant workers reported more situational stressors (52.7%) than personal-situational stressors.

As shown in Table 2, both situational ($r=.36$, $p < .01$) and personal-relational ($r=.50$, $p < .01$) stressors have a significant positive relationship with high levels of acculturative stress ($M=11.4$, $SD=1.76$). These findings show that high frequency of reported situational and personal-relational stressors significantly contributes to high levels of acculturative stress among Burmese women migrant workers.

To evaluate whether both situational and personal-relational stressors were necessary to predict acculturative stress, a stepwise multiple regression was conducted with the results shown in Table 3. At step 1 of the analysis, personal-relational stressor entered into the regression equation and was significantly related to acculturative

stress ($F [1, 55] = 18.51$, $p < .01$). The multiple correlation coefficient was .50, indicating that 25% of the variance of acculturative stress could be accounted for by personal-relational stressor. At step 2, situational stressor entered into the equation and was significantly related to acculturative stress ($F [1, 54] = 16.97$, $p < .01$). The multiple correlation coefficient was .65, indicating that situational stressor further explained 17% of the total 43% variance of acculturative stress that could be accounted for by personal-relational and situational stressors taken together. These results provide support for Hypotheses 1 and 2 that situational and personal-relational stressors are significant predictors of acculturative stress.

As shown in Table 2, Burmese women migrant workers reported above average use of approach coping responses such as logical analysis ($M=56.49$, $SD=8.45$), positive reappraisal ($M=62.04$, $SD=5.46$), seeking guidance ($M=62.77$, $SD=8.56$), and problem solving ($M=61.11$, $SD=10.68$). They also reported above average use of avoidance coping responses such as cognitive avoidance ($M=59.74$, $SD=8.99$) and seeking alternative rewards ($M=60.81$, $SD=7.17$), and below average use of acceptance/resignation ($M=35.70$, $SD=5.34$) and emotional discharge ($M=35.72$, $SD=5.24$).

Acceptance/resignation ($r=.78$, $p < .01$) and emotional discharge ($r=.63$, $p < .01$) which are avoidance coping responses have a significant negative relationship with high levels of acculturative stress ($M=11.4$, $SD=1.76$) as shown in Table 1. These results indicate that below average use of the avoidance coping responses of acceptance/resignation and emotional discharge contributes to high levels of acculturative stress.

To evaluate whether both acceptance/resignation and emotional discharge were necessary to predict acculturative stress, a stepwise multiple regression was conducted with the results shown in Table 4. At step 1 of the analysis, acceptance/resignation entered into the regression equation and was significantly related to acculturative stress ($F [1, 55] = 84.14$, $p < .01$). The multiple correlation coefficient was .78, indicating that 61% of the variance of acculturative stress could be accounted for by the avoidance coping response of acceptance/resignation. At step 2, emotional discharge entered into the equation and was significantly related to acculturative stress ($F [1, 54] = 8.24$, $p < .01$).

Table 1: Frequency and Percentage of Stressors Reported by Participants

Stressors	Description	f	%
Situational	Harsh working conditions	24	33.3
	Difficult living conditions	14	19.4
Personal-Relational	Communication/language problems	12	16.7
	Perceived discrimination	11	15.3
	Harassment by police and immigration officers	11	15.3

Table 2: Mean, Standard Deviation, and Correlation with Acculturative Stress

Variable	M^a	SD	r
Situational Stressors	0.67	0.48	.36*
Personal-Relational Stressors	0.60	0.49	.50*
Acculturative Stress	11.19	1.76	1.0
Approach Coping - Logical Analysis	56.49	8.45	.18
Approach Coping - Positive Reappraisal	62.04	5.46	.15
Approach Coping - Seeking Guidance	62.77	8.56	.07
Approach Coping - Problem-Solving	61.11	10.68	.08
Avoidance Coping - Cognitive Avoidance	59.74	8.99	.01
Avoidance Coping - Acceptance	35.70	5.34	-.78*
Avoidance Coping - Emotional Discharge	35.72	5.24	-.63*
Avoidance Coping - Seeking Alternative Rewards	60.81	7.17	.14

Note: Stressor scores of 0=stressor is not present, 1=stressor is present. Acculturative Stress scores of 0-4=low, 5-9=moderate, 10-4=high. Coping scores of 44-54=average use of coping response. n=57.

*p < .01.

Table 3: Stepwise Multiple Regression of Stressors as Significant Predictors of Acculturative Stress

Predictor/Stressors	R	R²	F	Ba	SEb	t
Personal-Relational	.50	.25	18.51*	1.97	.37	5.36*
Situational	.65	.43	16.97*	1.58	.38	4.12*

a value of constant for regression equation =8.96.

*p. < .01.

The multiple correlation coefficient was .81, indicating that emotional discharge further explained 4% of the total 65% variance of acculturative stress that could be accounted for by acceptance/resignation and emotional discharge taken together. These results provide support for Hypothesis 4 that avoidance coping responses predict high levels of acculturative stress. Hypothesis 3, however, is not supported by the findings which showed that approach coping responses are not significant predictors of acculturative stress.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

This study has shed light on the acculturation experience of Burmese women migrant workers in Thailand. These women migrant workers who were employed as factory workers and domestic helpers described their situational and personal-relational stressors which contributed significantly to and predicted their high levels of acculturative stress. Moreover, they reported above average use of approach coping responses such as logical analysis, positive reappraisal, seeking guidance, and problem-solving in their unsuccessful attempts to minimize their acculturative stress levels. They also reported above average use of avoidance coping responses such as cognitive avoidance and seeking alternative rewards which also did not reduce their acculturative stress levels. However, their below average use of the avoidance coping responses of acceptance/resignation and emotional discharged significantly predicted their high levels of stress.

Burmese women migrant workers described the situational stressors they were experiencing as harsh working conditions characterized by long hours, low wage, and no provision for sick days, holidays, and health care. Substandard living conditions which were marked by crowded and dirty living spaces with inadequate ventilation, frequent illness with very little access to adequate health

care, lack of resources (time and money) for socialization and for visit to temples for worship. Personal-relational stressors were identified as homesickness, communication problems from lack of proficiency in the Thai language, perceived discrimination (e.g., subjective feeling that one is looked down upon for doing work that may be considered dirty, dangerous, or demeaning) and harassment from police and immigration officers (e.g., having to pay large sums of money when confronted about living in Thailand despite having legal work documents). These findings resonate with observations from previous studies that migrant workers have to endure poor working and living conditions as they strive to adapt to their new culture (Fujita et al., 2010; Neto, 2002) and to meet the host country’s requirements for individuals with migrant worker status (Karen Human Rights Group, 2010; Mejia & McCarthy, 2010). Perceived discrimination which was a commonly reported stressor among Burmese women migrant workers was likewise reported in previous studies (Faur, 2008; Sandhu & Asrabadi, 1994) on the exacerbating influence of this stressor on migration experience. It is most unfortunate that these women migrant workers who contribute to the economy and culture of the host country have suffered from perceived discrimination which negates previous findings that migrants are more likely to feel acceptance as compared to refugees who may suffer from perceived discrimination and rejection because of the tendency of people from their host country to see them a drain to the country’s resources (Steiner, 2009; Williams & Berry, 199). Other stressors related health and socialization needs can be attributed to various subjective experiences of culture shock (Berry, 1997; Organista, Organista, & Kurasaki, 2003).

The findings further demonstrated that Burmese women migrant workers suffered from high levels of acculturative stress. They described their condition as characterized by feelings of shock or disgust with aspects of the host culture (Kim &

Table 4: Stepwise Multiple Regression of Coping Responses as Significant Predictors of Acculturative Stress

Predictor/Coping	R	R2	F	Ba	SEb	t
Acceptance/Resignation	.78	.61	84.14*	-.203	.032	-6.34*
Emotional Discharge	.81	.65	8.24*	-.094	.033	-2.87*

avalue of constant for regression equation = 21.79.

*p. < .01.

Omizo, 2005); feelings of lack of acceptance from others (Faur, 2008; Horn, 2008; Kiang et al., 2010); homesickness (Choi, Miller, & Wilbur, 2009; Mui & Kang, 2006; Sedikides et al., 2009), helplessness, and wish to escape from the current situation (Sandhu & Asrabadi, 1994); strain from the pressing demands to adjust quickly and adequately to the new situation, and subsequent confusion about roles and identity (Heberle, 2010). It is worth mentioning that although the self-reported culture shock experience of the Burmese women migrant workers were accompanied by symptoms of maladjustment, acculturative stress is considered a normal human response to an alien cultural environment, which can be disabling in some individuals (Berry, 2006; Mumford, 1998; Rudmin, 2009). In the absence of information on the length of stay in the host country which is an obvious limitation of this study, the high levels of acculturative stress that were reported by Burmese women migrant workers may be related to the length of time that they had been exposed to acculturative stressors. Given that acculturative stress is conceptualized in literature as following the “U” curve in the classic description of positive adaptation in relation time (Berry, 1997), this could mean that low levels of acculturative stress may be experienced in the early phase of adaptation which is followed by an escalation of stress in the middle phase, and finally culminating in more positive long-term adaptation. It could be that these women migrant workers are currently in the middle phase of the “U” curve of positive adaptation so distress from high levels of acculturative stress is an expected experience which would eventually lead to effective coping and positive long-term adaptation.

Efforts to cope with the experience of acculturative stress have been demonstrated by Burmese women migrant workers who used both approach and avoidance coping responses to manage acculturative stress. In their attempts to buffer the distress from acculturation, Burmese women used approach coping responses where they tried to use reason to understand their stressors (logical analysis), reframe their perception about the stressors (positive reappraisal), seek guidance from others (seeking guidance), and carried out plans to solve their problems (problem-solving). However, their above average reliance on approach coping responses did not affect their high levels of acculturative stress. This finding contradicts ex-

isting literature on the effectiveness of approach coping in managing stress (e.g., Jeong, 2009; Rohde, 2010; Torres, 2010) and suggests that this type of coping may not be suitable for the situational and personal-relational stressors that these migrant workers were trying to manage. Akram (2013) noted that avoidance coping was preferred by women patients who were experiencing stress from serious health issues over approach coping. Serious health concerns as a stressor created frustration and powerlessness among women patients so that keeping their minds off the problem and venting out negative emotions to friends, family, and health specialists provided them with the much needed desired break worries over their illness. This may be true in the present study in that Burmese migrant workers may not have experienced relief from stress despite their active use of approach coping responses. Furthermore, some women migrant workers in this study mentioned the lack of opportunity for socialization and prayer or worship as personal-social stressors. This may suggest when these needs are met, they could serve as resource-based and culture-sensitive coping strategies that are based on social support (Poyrazli, 2004; Torres & Rollock, 2004) and creative, meaning-focused, and existential (Wong, 2006).

Above average dependence on avoidance coping responses were also expressed by Burmese women migrant workers. They attempted to manage their stressors by avoiding thinking about their problematic situation (cognitive avoidance) and found ways to distract themselves with pleasurable activities (seeking alternative rewards) but these avoidance coping responses had no effect on the high levels of acculturative stress that they experienced. However, below average use of avoidance coping response of acceptance/resignation and emotional discharge contributed to maintaining their high levels of acculturative stress. Burmese women migrant workers rarely resorted to recognizing that their stressors were overwhelming and accepting that they were powerless over their situation (acceptance/resignation). They also rarely engaged expressing their emotions in the face of situations that triggered their anger and frustration (emotional discharge). Below average reliance on avoidance coping responses has sustained the high levels of stress and strain that Burmese women migrant workers suffer from as a result of having to adjust to the culture of their host country. Con-

versely, when these avoidance coping responses are more often resorted to wholeheartedly by accepting difficult situations and expressing frustrations, then acculturative stress can be managed adequately. This finding clearly shows the usefulness of avoidance coping responses in managing acculturative stress which affirms previous studies that pointed to their self-protective function (Akram, 2006; Carver, 1989; Jiben & Khalid, 2010; Lemogne et al., 2009). A closer look at how the approach and avoidance coping responses have influenced the levels of acculturative stress of women migrant workers in this study could likewise imply that a dynamic combination of these approaches in managing this type of stress may be potentially useful as shown in previous studies (Crocket et al., 2007; Folkman, 1997; Jeong, 2009; Jibeen & Khalid, 2010; Torres & Rollock, 2004; Vergara et al., 2010; Yuen, 2008).

Although the findings of this study contributed to the understanding of the acculturation experience of Burmese female migrant workers in Thailand, there are several limitations which suggest that these findings should be viewed with caution. The small number of participants considerably restricted the generalizability of the results. Moreover, the wide age range of participants suggests a lack of homogeneity in the experiences and demands of daily living. Reliance on measures of variables that were developed for non-Asian participants coupled with the use of English-Burmese translation may have reduced the accuracy of reporting of the experiences of participants. Finally, the absence of pretest measures of length of stay in the host country, pre-existing stress, anxiety, depression, and other alarming life events (e.g., illness or death of a loved one) may have compounded the participants' experience of acculturative stress.

Future research can consider exploring factors that may serve as competing hypotheses in explaining the acculturation experience of migrant workers. Factors such as the migrant workers' pre-migration circumstances, attitude toward and length of stay in host country, education, ethnicity, gender, marital status, and status of mental health can contribute to establishing a clear and accurate representation of the acculturation experience of migrant workers. The conduct of qualitative studies to allow for an in-depth exploration of the phenomenological experiences of this special popula-

tion can yield valuable information for establishing constructs, building theories, and developing instruments that can authentically capture the reality of migrant workers. Longitudinal studies can demonstrate the pattern of acculturation and adaptation among migrant workers, and identify the development and function of a range of coping responses over time. Counseling process and outcome studies to examine suitable therapeutic approaches for managing acculturation can equip mental health professionals with effective techniques for empowering migrant workers with a wide repertoire of appropriate and efficacious coping responses. Finally, the results of this study can encourage governments and socio-civic organizations to galvanize their efforts in establishing and implementing regulations and mechanisms that can effectively protect the rights, welfare, and wellbeing of migrant workers. Migrant workers' persevering commitment of talents, strength, and life make them valuable contributors to the economic development of their host countries.

References

- Abbasian, F., & Sharifi, S. (2013). The relationship between culture shock and socio-linguistic shock: A case study of non-Persian speaking learners. *Open Journal of Social Science Research*, 1(6), 154-159. doi: 10.1266/ojssr.09.07.2013.
- Amnesty International. (June, 2005). *Thailand: The plight of Burmese migrant workers*. Retrieved December 16, 2010, from <http://www.amrc.org.hk/taxonomy/term/list/89>
- Akram, F., & Mahmood, K. (2006). Gender differences in coping strategies and life satisfaction among cardiac patients. *Interdisciplinary Journal of Contemporary Research in Business*, 5(2), 537-552.
- Aragona, M., Pucci, D., Mazzetti, M., Maisano, B., & Geraci, S. (2013). Traumatic events, post-migration difficulties and post-traumatic symptoms in first-generation immigrants. *Ann I^a Inta Sanita* 2013, 49(2), 169-175. doi: 10.4415/ANN_13_02_08
- Berry, J. W. (1997). Immigration, acculturation, and adaptation. *Applied Psychology*, 46, 5-68.
- Berry, J. W. (2005). Living successfully in two cultures. *International Journal of Cultural Re-*

- lations, 29, 697-712.
- Berry, J. W. (2006). Contexts of acculturation. In D. L. Sam, and J. W. Berry (Eds), Handbook of acculturation psychology (pp.27-42). New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.
- Bhugra, D. (2004). Migration, distress, and cultural identity. *British Medical Bulletin*, 69, 129-141. doi:10.1093/bmb/ldh007.
- Cavazos-Rehg, P. A., & DeLucia-Waack, J. L. (2009). Education, ethnic identity, and acculturation as predictors of self-esteem in Latino adolescents. *Journal of Counseling and Development*, 87, 47-87.
- Choi, J. W., Miller, A., & Wilbur, J. (2009). Acculturation and depressive symptoms in Korean immigrant women. *Immigrant Minority Health*, 11, 13-19.
- Crockett, L. J., Iturbide, M.I., Stone, R.A., McGinley, M., Rafaelli, M., & Carlo, G. (2007). Acculturative stress, social support, and coping: Relations to psychological adjustment among Mexican-American college students. *Cultural Diversity and Ethnic Minority Psychology*, 13, 347-355.
- Devylder, J., Oh, H., Yang, L. H., Cabassa, L. J., Chen, F. P., & Lukens, E. P. (2013). Acculturative stress and psychotic-like experiences among Asian and Latino immigrants to the United States. *Schizophrenia Research*, 1, 223-228. doi: 10.1016/j.schres.2013.07.040.
- Faur, A. (2008). A qualitative analysis of cultural discrimination stress. *Dissertation Abstracts International: The Sciences and Engineering*, 69, 674.
- Fuertes, J. N., & Westbrook, F. D. (1996). Using the Social, Attitudinal, Familial, and Environmental (S. A. F. E.) Acculturation Stress Scale to assess the adjustment needs of Hispanic college students. 29, 67-76.
- Folkman, S. (1984). Personal control and stress and coping processes: A theoretical analysis. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 46(4), 839-852.
- Folkman, S. (1997). Positive psychological states and coping with severe stress. *Social Science and Medicine*, 45, 1207-1221.
- Fujita, K., Endo, T., Okamoto, I., Nakanishi, Y., & Yamada, M. (2010). *Myanmar migrant laborers in Ranong, Thailand*. Japan: Institute of Developing Economies, Japan External Trade Organization.
- Greenland, K., & Brown, R. (2005). Acculturation and contact in Japanese students studying in the United Kingdom. *Journal of Social Psychology*, 145, 373-389.
- Heberle, K. (2010). Tsurakeredomo ganbaru: Japanese women's journey through acculturation. *Dissertation Abstracts International: Humanities and Social Sciences*, 70, 3638.
- Horn, K. A. (2008). The relationship between acculturative stress, perceived discrimination, coping, and multiculturalism in academic environments: A study among international students. *Dissertation Abstracts International: The Sciences and Engineering*, 68, 6965.
- Hovey, J. D., & Magaña, C. G. (2002). Exploring the mental health of Mexican migrant farmworker women in the Midwest: Psychosocial predictors of psychological distress and suggestions for prevention and treatment. *Journal of Psychology: Interdisciplinary and Applied*, 136, 493-513.
- Hovey, J. D., & Magaña, C. G. (2003). Suicide risk factors among Mexican migrant farmworkers women in the midwest United States. *Archives of Suicide Research*, 7, 107-121.
- International Organization for Migrants. (2013). Facts and figures. Retrieved August 8, 2013, from <http://www.iom.sk/en/about-migration/facts-figures>
- Jeong, J. Y. (2009). Cultural coping as moderator between stress and psychosomatic illness in Asian Americans. *Dissertation Abstracts International: The Sciences and Engineering*, 69, 5781.
- Jibeen, T., & Khalid, R. (2010). Predictors of psychological well being of Pakistani immigrants in Toronto, Canada. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 34, 452-464.
- Jon, S. H. (1998). Consequences of acculturative stress and social support on depression among adult Korean immigrants. *Dissertation Abstracts International: The Sciences and Engineering*, 58, 3558.
- Karen Human Rights Group (February, 2010). Abuse between borders: Vulnerability of Burmese workers deported from Thailand. Retrieved March 10, 2011, from <http://www.khrg.org/khrg2010/khrg10f1.html>
- Kiang, L., Grywacz, J. G., Marin, A. J., Arcury, T. A., & Quandt, S. A. (2010). Mental health in

- immigrants from non-traditional receiving sites. *Cultural Diversity and Ethnic Minority Psychology*, 16, 386-394.
- Kim, B. S., & Omizo, M. M. (2005). Asian and European American cultural values, collective self-esteem, acculturative stress, cognitive flexibility, and general self-efficacy among Asian American college students. *Journal of Counseling Psychology*, 3, 412-449.
- Kohlmann, C. W. (1993). Rigid and flexible modes of coping: Related to coping style. *Anxiety, Stress, and Coping*, 6, 107-123.
- Kuo, B. C., & Roysircar, G. (2004). Predictors of acculturation for Chinese adolescents in Canada: Age of arrival, length of stay, social class, and English reading ability. *Journal of Multicultural Counseling and Development*, 32, 143-154.
- Lazarus, R. S., & Folkman, S. (1984). Stress, appraisal, and coping. New York, NY: Springer Publishing.
- Lemogne, C., Bergouignan, Pascale, P., Jouvent, R., Allilaire, J. & Fosati, P. (2009). Cognitive avoidance of intrusive memory and autobiographic memory: Specificity, auto-noetic consciousness, and self-perspective. *Memory*, 17, 1-7
- Magaña C., & Hovey, J. D. (2003). Psychosocial stressors associated with Mexican migrant farmworkers in the midwest United States. *Journal of Immigration Health*, 5(2), 75-86.
- Mejia, O. L., & McCarthy, C. J. (2010). Acculturative stress, depression, and anxiety in migrant farmwork college students of Mexican heritage. *International Journal of Stress Management*, 17, 1-20.
- Moos, R. H. (1993). Coping responses inventory: Professional manual. Lutz: FL: Psychological Assessment Resources.
- Mui, A. C., & Kang, S. Y. (2006). Acculturation stress and depression among Asian immigrant elders. *Social Work*, 53, 243-255.
- Mumford, D. (1998). The measurement of culture shock. *Social Psychiatry*, 33, 149-154.
- Neto, F. (2002). Social adaptation difficulties of adolescents with immigrants backgrounds. *Social Behavior and Personality*, 30, 335-346.
- Organista, P. B., Organista, K. C., & Kurasaki, K. (2003). The relationship between acculturation and ethnic minority mental health. In K. Chu, P. Organista, and G. Marin (Eds.), *Acculturation: Advances in theory, measurement, and applied research* (pp. 139-161). Washington, DC, USA: American Psychological Association.
- Pan, J., Wong, D. F., Chan, C. L., & Joubert, L. (2008). Meaning of life as a protective factor of positive affect in acculturation: A resilience framework and a cross-cultural comparison. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 32, 505-514.
- Park, W. (2009). Acculturative stress and mental health among Korean adolescents in the United States. *Journal of Human Behavior in the Social Environment*, 19, 626-634.
- Paukert, A. L., Pettit, J. W., Perez, M., & Walker, R. L. (2006). Affective and attributional features of acculturative stress among ethnic minority college students. *The Journal of Psychology*, 140, 405-419.
- Pichai, U. (2010, February 24). Halt abuse of migrant workers in Thailand. Retrieved September 29, 2010, from <http://www.mizzima.com/news/regional/3572-halt-abuse-of-migrant-workers-in-thailand-hrw-.html>
- Poyrazli, S., Kavanaugh, P.R., Baker, A. & Al-Timimi, N. (2004). Social support and demographic correlates of acculturative stress in international students. *Journal of College Counseling*, 7, 73-82.
- Rohde, D. (2010). Occupational and economic acculturative stress, job related outcomes, and personal resources among low-wage earning Latinos. *Dissertation Abstracts International: The Sciences and Engineering*, 71, 2084.
- Rudmin, F. (2009). Constructs, measurements and models of acculturation and acculturative stress. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 33, 106-123.
- Sandhu, D.S., & Asrabadi, B.R., (1994). Development of an acculturative stress scale for international students: Preliminary findings. *Psychological Reports*, 75, 435-448.
- Schwartz, S. J., Unger, J. B., Zamboanga, B. L., & Szapocznik, J. (2010). Rethinking the concept of acculturation: Implications for theory and research. *American Psychology*, 65(4), 237-251. doi: 10.1037/a0019330.
- Sedikides, C., Wildschut, T., Routledge, C., Arndt, J., & Zhou, X. (2009). *Buffering acculturative stress and facilitating cultural adaptation: Nostalgia as a psychological resource*. New

- York: Psychology Press.
- Snodgrass, C. (2007, June 13). *Burmese Migrant Workers in Thailand*. Retrieved October 22, 2010, from Burma Digest: <http://burmadigest.wordpress.com/2007/06/13/burmese-migrant-workers-in-thailand/>
- Sonderegger, R., Barrett, P. M., & Creed, P. A. (2004). Models of cultural adjustment for child and adolescent migrants to Australia: Internal process and situational factors. *Journal of Child and Family Studies*, 13, 357-371.
- Steiner, N. (2009). *International migration and citizenship today*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Taft, R. (1977) Coping with unfamiliar cultures. In N. Warren (Ed). *Studies in cross-cultural psychology*, Volume 1, pp. 121-153. London: Academic Press.
- Torres, L. (2010). Predicting levels of Latino depression: Acculturation, acculturative stress, and coping. *Cultural Diversity and Ethnic Minority Psychology*, 16, 256-263.
- Torres, L., & Rollock, D. (2004). Acculturative distress among Hispanics: The role of acculturation, coping, and intercultural competence. *Journal of Multicultural Counseling*, 32, 155-167.
- United Nations Department of Public Information (December, 2010). Crossing boundaries: Protecting the rights for migrant women domestic workers. Retrieve March 10, 2011, from <http://www.un.org/wcm/content/site/dpingorelations/home/events/briefings/2dec2010>
- Vergara, M. B., Smith, N., & Keele, B. (2010). Emotional intelligence, coping resources, and length of stay as correlates of acculturative stress among international university students in Thailand. *Procedia Social and Behavior Sciences* 5, 1498-1504.
- Wei, M., Heppner, P. P., Mallen, M. J., Ku, T. K., Liao, Y., & Wu, T. (2007). Acculturative stress, perfectionism, years in the United States, and depression among Chinese international students. *Journal of Counseling Psychology*, 54, 385-394
- Williams, C. L., & Berry, J. W. (1991). Preliminary prevention of acculturative stress among refugees: Application for psychological theory and practice. *American Psychologist*, 46, 632-641.
- Winkelman, M. (1994). Culture shock and adaptation. *Journal of Counseling and Development*, 7, 121-217.
- Wong, P. T. P., Reker, G. T. & Peacock, E. (2006). The resource-congruence model of coping and the development of the Coping Schemas Inventory. In Wong, P. T. P., & Wong, L. C. J. (Eds.), *Handbook of Multicultural perspectives on stress and coping*. New York, NY: Springer.
- Yakushko, O., Watson, M., & Thompson, S. (2008). Stress and coping in the lives of recent immigrants and refugees: Considerations for counseling. *International Journal for the Advancement of Counseling*, 30, 167-178. doi: 10.1007/s10447-008-9054-0
- Ye, J. (2005). Acculturative stress and use of the internet among East Asian international students in the United States. *Cyber Psychology & Behavior*, 8, 154-161.
- Yuen, J. P. (2008). The impact of acculturation on the gender role development of second-generation Chinese-American women. *Dissertation Abstracts International: The Sciences and Engineering*, 68, 8431.
- Zhou, Y., Snape, D. J., Topping, K., & Todman, J. (2008). Theoretical models of culture shock and adaptation in international students in higher education. *Studies in Higher Education*, 33 (1), 63-75. doi: 10.1080/03075070701794833.

About the authors:

Maria Belen Vergara obtained a PhD in Counseling Psychology (with distinction) from De La Salle University, Philippines. She is currently the Counseling Psychologist and Managing Director of Creative Genius Montessori Learning Center in Quezon, Philippines. She can be reached at dr.marialen@gmail.com.

Sai Han Noom graduated with a BA in Psychology from Webster University (Thailand). He currently teaches elementary English in Myanmar. He can be reached at harnoom@gmail.com.