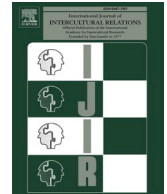




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## The influence of host receptivity and conformity pressure on the intercultural transformation of Filipino migrants in New Zealand

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### ABSTRACT

Filipinos are the second fastest-growing Asian population working in dairy farming, healthcare, construction, and other industries in New Zealand. Like other immigrants, Filipinos experience basic and advanced intercultural transformation as they communicate and interact with people in the country. Croucher and Kramer's cultural fusion theory proposes a positive relationship between host receptivity and intercultural transformation and a negative relationship between host conformity pressure and intercultural transformation. Employing a survey of 315 Filipino migrants in New Zealand, this study addresses the extent to which host receptivity and host conformity pressure affect intercultural transformation. Regression analysis is used to assess the hypotheses and research question. Results reveal both host receptivity and host conformity pressure have positive relationships with intercultural transformation. The potential role of media and Filipino values in this study are also discussed.

From the mid-19th century until the early 21st century, immigration has been identified as the primary driver of population change in New Zealand (Bedford, 2003). In the Global North, New Zealand is seen as a country of immigrants because of its favorable immigration policies (Bedford, 2003; Friesen, 2017). Immigrants from the United Kingdom and the Netherlands arrived from 1947 to 1970, while those from Australia, European countries, and the Pacific Islands settled in New Zealand between 1971 and 1974 (Bedford, 2003). Between 1991–2000, New Zealand welcomed an average of 62,335 immigrants a year, which doubled to 119,990 from 2001 to 2023 (Statistics NZ, 2023). The 2023 New Zealand Census indicates Europeans remain the largest population in New Zealand with 3,383,742, followed by Māori (887,493), and Asians (861,576) (Statistics NZ, 2024b). Chinese comprise the largest Asian ethnic group (231,837), followed by Indians (221,916) and Filipinos (72,612) (Asia New Zealand Foundation & Brunton, 2020). The 2023 New Zealand international migration records show India as the top source of immigrants (50,800 arrivals), followed by the Philippines (36,200 arrivals) (Statistics NZ, 2024a).

As the number of Filipino migrants grows, they become part of different New Zealand communities and gain various experiences in dealing with the country's multicultural environment. For any newcomer, the perception of how the host country accepts or rejects their values, beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors is an important acculturation aspect. Immigrants entering areas dominated by a larger ethnic group may encounter assimilation and adjustment problems (Roseman, 1971). Cultural assimilation occurs when one group freely accepts or is forced to accept and learn the cultural patterns of another group (Schwartz, 1971). The 'pressure cooker' concept represents the phenomenon wherein a dominant culture of the larger group seeks the assimilation of the non-dominant acculturating

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group (Berry, 2006). Later, Kim (2017) coined the term ‘host conformity pressure’ to describe the extent of a society’s expectations for a newcomer to adopt its norms and behavior. Host conformity pressure may occur in the forms of non-recognition of overseas professional education, prescribed local competency programs, changing job responsibilities, and disparity in English language accent (Collins, 2021; Lee et al., 2021).

In the absence of host conformity pressure, immigrants may feel a more supportive environment among dominant culture members through civil society, employers, and other intermediary actors (Kelly et al., 2023). Kim (2017) introduced ‘host receptivity’ as the willingness of the environment to accept and support newcomers based on racial and ethnic prejudices. Host country members with higher levels of education show a higher level of receptivity or acceptance of foreign professionals (Chang, 2023). Dominant culture members may express their receptivity to immigrants by providing counseling and financial advice, English language training, translation of media materials, and preference for employment (Collins, 2020; Alam & Nel, 2022). Newcomers may also experience host receptivity when they feel secure disclosing their gender identities and feel trusted in long-term relationships with employers (Alam & Nel, 2022; Alam et al., 2023).

The perception of how the larger society reacts to their existence in the host country can be traced from how beliefs, attitudes and behaviors of newcomers change over time. Host receptivity and host conformity pressure bring different migration experiences to newcomers since both environmental factors affect one’s cultural adaptation (Kim, 2017). The intercultural changes an individual experiences may be based on the society’s broader attitude towards them through situations of melting pot, segregation, exclusion, and multiculturalism (Berry, 2006). To understand the outcomes of the intercultural changes among immigrants, this study investigates the role of host conformity pressure and host receptivity on the intercultural transformation of Filipino migrants in New Zealand.

### Cross-cultural adaptation

Cross-cultural adaptation is “an active process of establishing and maintaining stable, reciprocal, and functional relationships with a new and unfamiliar environment” (Kim, 2001, p. 31). In Kim’s (2001) integrative communication theory of cross-cultural adaptation, host receptivity, host conformity pressure, and ethnic group strength are identified as key environmental factors that affect a newcomer’s process of adaptation. Host receptivity refers to the degree to which the host culture welcomes newcomers into its social networks and provide different forms of support for them. Host conformity pressure is the extent of society’s expectations for the newcomer to adopt its norms and behaviors. Lastly, ethnic group strength refers to the collective status and power of the ethnic group to which the newcomer belongs (Kim, 2017).

### Intercultural transformation

Intercultural transformation (IT) is a product of intercultural learning that brings self-knowledge, awareness of other individuals, values, and worldviews to an individual (Gill, 2007). It involves a process of perspective transformation or a structural change in the way individuals see themselves and their relationships that are more inclusive, discriminating, and integrative of experience (Mezirow, 1978). This happens through communication, interaction, and coping with other cultures (Liu & Morris, 2014). Peng and Wu (2019) categorized this into: (1) Intercultural Transformation Basic (ITB), which includes abilities to find directions, deal with climate, and deal with people’s staring; and (2) Intercultural Transformation Advanced (ITA), which includes understanding and respecting cultural differences, comfort in interacting with the host environment, satisfaction with the relationship and intercultural experiences with the host environment, and satisfaction with the attitudes of the host environment members toward newcomers.

A newcomer’s ITA involves three facets: an increased functional fitness in working with daily transactions, improved psychological health in interacting with the host environment, and a shift to a broader “intercultural” identity (Kim, 2001, 2017). First, functional fitness is the ability to communicate effectively following the cultural norms of the new environment, despite feeling lost or confused. In second language learning, students naturally experience intercultural transitional competence that involves multiplistic sensitivity, intrinsic proactivity, strategic flexibility, dialectic reflexivity, and relativistic inclusivity (Hang & Zhang, 2023; Shi, 2007). Second, psychological health is achieved when defense reactions are reduced and internal integration increased. Improved psychological health can be observed when, after psychological adaptation, newcomers feel less marginalized, less anxious, and have better relationships with the people in the new environment. Last, intercultural identity is the self-consciousness that situates oneself as neither totally a part of, nor apart from, a given culture (Kim, 2001, 2017). It is an extension of cultural identity that emphasizes the phenomenon of identity transformation outside the borders of an individual’s cultural identity (Kim, 2018). An individual goes beyond one’s group membership and feels they are part of a bigger group composed of multiple groups through prolonged experiences of acculturation, deculturation, and stress-adaptation-growth dynamic (Kim, 2015).

### Cultural fusion

Newcomers’ interaction with the new environment entails both communication with the dominant culture and the ethnic minority community. Thus, newcomers tend to adopt traits and behaviors of the dominant culture and retain elements of minority ethnic identity as they function in the dominant culture (Croucher, 2011; Croucher & Kramer, 2016). Aside from the likelihood of constructing new cultural identities, immigrants tend to self-affirm their identities, express strong affiliation to their home country, and aim to change the cultural values and beliefs of the host environment (De La Garza & Ono, 2015). Intercultural changes individuals experience result from their behavioral learning strategies, reflective and non-reflective orientation, cultural disequilibrium, and experiences they bring to the host culture (Taylor, 1994). Cultural fusion theory reinforces that ITA is manifested in increased

functional fitness, psychological health, and intercultural identity and supports that pressures placed on newcomers by the dominant culture influence and are influenced by the newcomers' levels of intercultural change (Croucher & Kramer, 2016). Thus, as this process commences, the dominant culture also changes because of the newcomers' cultural influence.

### Host receptivity and intercultural transformation

One of the theorems in Croucher and Kramer's (2016) Cultural Fusion Theory proposes that when there is higher IT of the newcomer and dominant culture members, there are also higher levels of host receptivity. This relationship between host receptivity and IT was suggested in several immigration studies, and the perceived receptivity of the members of the host environment had a positive relationship with the psychological health of immigrants (Cheah et al., 2013; Kim & Kim, 2022). El Boubekri and Saidi (2022) found Sub-Saharan students in Moroccan society perceived host receptivity as a key factor in their cross-cultural adaptation. Studies after the 2011 Christchurch earthquake revealed local authorities recognized the increased number of migrants as an opportunity for the city to rebuild itself (Collins & Friesen, 2022). This inclusive environment Filipino migrant workers felt through business and community groups facilitated their favorable settlement in New Zealand (Garces-Ozanne et al., 2022; Gaviola, 2020).

How newcomers effectively establish connections in the host country depends on host receptivity (Al-Haddad & Lu, 2024), which facilitates ease in establishing networks and gaining employment. The ability of Global South international students and Global North domestic students to forge cross-cultural friendships relied on the receptivity of the host country's culture (Abdulai et al., 2021). Hendrickson's (2018) study found international students in Argentina gained more host national friends by freely participating in extra-curricular activities and tutorial programs. In the U.S., a more supportive attitude toward immigrants helps increase their employment opportunities (De Jong & Steinmetz, 2004). As host receptivity is essential to migrants, increasing the host community's acceptance of migrants through resolving local issues related to crime and safety, property value, hygiene, and housing is necessary (Weng-Wai et al., 2023).

Host receptivity relates to the intercultural identity of immigrants (Cheah et al., 2013). In China, migrant workers from rural areas felt lower levels of host receptivity in wealthier southeastern coastal cities (Gu et al., 2022). The host environment's receptivity significantly impacted identity and acculturation development of Bosnian refugees in Australia (Colic-Peisker & Walker, 2003). Positive news frames in U.S. news media on immigrants facilitated the local's host receptivity (McKay-Semmler et al., 2014). Privately sponsored refugees had greater economic integration through higher employment rates than government-assisted refugees (Kaida et al., 2020). When there is no conformity pressure, immigrants are encouraged to acculturate and can determine how much they acculturate with the host environment (Sommier, 2012).

In this study, the following hypotheses are proposed to predict the influence of host receptivity on ITB and ITA:

- H1. : There is a positive relationship between host receptivity and basic intercultural transformation.
- H2. : There is a positive relationship between host receptivity and advanced intercultural transformation.

### Host conformity pressure and intercultural transformation

Croucher and Kramer's (2016) Cultural Fusion Theory posits that when there is higher IT of the newcomer and dominant culture members, there are lower levels of host conformity pressure. Dominant culture members feel less threatened when they perceive migrants as willing to acculturate (Croucher, 2013). Immigrants perceived host conformity pressures through the enforcement of uniformity and maintenance of difference (Sommier, 2012). For immigrants who value conformity, the perceived host conformity pressure is negatively correlated with their life satisfaction (Roccas et al., 2000).

Several studies on language issues relate to host conformity pressure. In Thailand, the higher a newcomer moves upward the Thai social ladder, the more they become prohibited from communicating using the Thai language (Doungphummes & Zarchi, 2022). Host nurses in New Zealand felt that migrant nurses' native language usage in front of patients and colleagues was inappropriate and disrespectful (Brunton et al., 2020). Though migrant workers in New Zealand speak English, the language barrier still exists in understanding healthcare-related information disseminated in English language only (Lee et al., 2021). New Asian migrants' children experienced challenges in sports participation due to no translation of the game rules (Liu & Liu, 2022).

The prejudice and discrimination host culture members have shown to newcomers can negatively affect the latter's adaptation outcomes (Cheah et al., 2013). Lack of receptivity to refugees results when host country members view them as competitors for low-wage jobs and the cause of unemployment (Castle-Miller, 2016). Hurricane refugees in the US felt less receptivity among the host country locals when they experienced resource depletion and less well-being support (Kristjánsdóttir & DeTurk, 2013). Benchekroun et al. (2024) explained how immigrant mothers with insecure immigration status experienced difficulties in seeking support from social workers, availing social housing, and qualifying for social protection. Skilled migrants in Japan felt identity threats because of the need to conform to the host country's workplace values (Xie & Peltokorpi, 2024). While the identity of Japanese-Brazilian immigrants was initially considered dominantly Japanese, they experienced political restrictions and negative perceptions in the host country (Phillips, 2007).

The following hypotheses are proposed to predict the influence of host conformity pressure on ITB and ITA:

- H3. : There is a negative relationship between host conformity pressure and basic intercultural transformation.
- H4. : There is a negative relationship between host conformity pressure and advanced intercultural transformation.

Intercultural transformation in an individual can be experienced based on the receptivity and conformity pressures of the members of the dominant culture (Croucher & Kramer, 2016; Kim, 2001; Kim, 2017). The perception of how the larger society acts and reacts to the existence of newcomers can be traced from how newcomers' beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors have changed over time. Filipinos in New Zealand experience host receptivity through ease in disclosing gender identity (Adams et al., 2022), opportunities for gaining permanent residency and citizenship with family (Alam et al., 2023), and liberty to use the Filipino languages (De Bres, 2017). However, the temporary work visa issued to Filipino migrant workers makes them vulnerable to risk (Gaviola et al., 2024). They are also paid less than other workers and need to spend a huge amount of money on immigration (MacLennan, 2018). Despite the fast-growing number of Filipinos in the country, New Zealand does not have an official language strategy for the maintenance or support of migrant languages (Buckingham, 2021) and expects the use of the English language in the workplace (Brunton et al., 2020).

These point to the significance of the perceived dominant culture receptivity and the pressure placed on newcomers to conform to the new environment's culture and its impact on the changes experienced by newcomers. Previous studies on cultural adaptation provide more research opportunities for exploring a communication-centered approach in looking at migrants' experiences in New Zealand (Separa, 2024). Thus, the research question proposed is:

**RQ:** To what extent does receptivity and conformity pressure from the dominant culture in New Zealand affect intercultural transformation among Filipino migrants?

## Method

### Participants

Study participants were 315 Filipino migrants in New Zealand, aged 18 – 68 years old. 212 (67 %) are graduates of a 4-year degree, 52 (16 %) finished a Master's/PhD degree, and 29 (9 %) completed high school. In terms of religion, 224 (71 %) are Roman Catholic, 77 (24 %) Christian, and 14 (4 %) others. 215 participants (68 %) had white-collar jobs and 100 (32 %) had blue-collar jobs. Table 1 presents demographic information.

### Procedure

After submitting a low-risk notification on ethics, the online questionnaire was distributed to the participants through the Survey Monkey platform. To maximize the reach of the questionnaire to qualified participants, the link was distributed through ethnic social networking groups using snowball sampling. The online questionnaire enabled a faster and more convenient way to reach potential participants. No incentive was given to participants who completed the survey.

An information sheet containing the consent form, study purpose, and participant rights begins the survey. The questionnaire comprises four sections: demographic profile, host receptivity scale, host conformity pressure scale, and intercultural transformation scale. The estimated time to complete the online survey is 10 minutes.

**Table 1**  
Participants' demographics.

<u>Variable</u>	<u>n</u>
Age	
18 – 19 years old	1
20 – 29 years old	40
30 – 39 years old	127
40 – 49 years old	98
50 – 59 years old	37
60 and above	12
Sex	
Male	83
Female	231
Highest Educational Level	
High School	16
2-year degree	29
4-year degree	212
Master's	52
Doctorate	6
Religion	
Roman Catholic	224
Christian	77
Muslim	3
None	11
Employment	
Blue collar job	100
<u>White collar job</u>	<u>215</u>

### Variables measured

This study measured three variables: host receptivity, host conformity pressure, and intercultural transformation.

**Host receptivity.** To measure the host receptivity of the dominant culture, the 7-item Host Receptivity Scale (Kim & Kim, 2022) was used. Four items are positively stated while three items are negatively stated. Reverse response coding was used for negatively phrased items. Lower scores indicate lower levels of host receptivity, while higher scores indicate higher levels. Sample items include “New Zealand people accept me into their society” and “New Zealand people have a positive attitude toward me.” Items use a 5-point Likert scale with endpoints 1 = *strongly disagree* and 5 = *strongly agree*. CFA using host receptivity showed acceptable fit:  $\chi^2(9) = 29.24$ ,  $p < 0.001$ , CFI = 0.87, SRMR = 0.06, RMSEA = .15, with deleted item 7. Using 6 items on the scale, the internal consistency of the scale has a ( $\alpha$ ) value of .74.

**Host conformity pressure.** To measure host conformity pressure, the 8-item Pressure Scale (Croucher, 2013) was used. Lower scores indicate lower levels of host conformity pressure, while higher scores indicate higher levels. Sample items include “I am interested in becoming more New Zealander” and “I am motivated to be a New Zealander.” Items use a 5-point Likert scale with endpoints 1 = *strongly disagree* and 5 = *strongly agree*. CFA using host conformity pressure also showed excellent fit:  $\chi^2(5) = 18.79$ ,  $p < 0.001$ , CFI = 0.97, SRMR = 0.05, RMSEA = 0.15, with deleted items 1, 3, 8. Using 5 items on the scale, the internal consistency of the scale has a ( $\alpha$ ) value of .83.

**Basic and advanced intercultural transformation.** To measure intercultural transformation, the 8-item Intercultural Transformation Basic and Advanced Scale (Peng & Wu, 2019) was used. Three (3) items measure basic intercultural transformation (ITB) while five (5) items measure advanced intercultural transformation (ITA). Sample items include “I am able to find my way around” and “I can understand and respect cultural differences” for ITB and ITA, respectively. It uses a 5-point Likert scale with endpoints 1 = *strongly disagree* and 5 = *strongly agree*. The internal consistency of the scale has reliabilities ( $\alpha$ ) of .68 on ITB and .91 on ITA. CFA using IT presented excellent fit:  $\chi^2(19) = 60.50$ ,  $p < 0.001$ , CFI = 0.95, SRMR = 0.03, RMSEA = 0.8.

### Data analyses

The mean, standard deviation, and correlation coefficient of variables are derived to summarize and prepare data for statistical analyses. The mean and standard deviation determine the normal distribution of data (Field, 2009). The correlation coefficient measures and quantifies the strength of the linear association between two variables (Field, 2009; Hayes, 2018). Before running statistical analyses, a confirmation factor analysis was performed using AMOS statistical software to ensure the validity and reliability of all measures used (Field, 2009). CFA also helps evaluate which model fits the data and which is the most plausible given the data (Goretzko et al., 2024). Multiple regression modeling was then performed using ITB and ITA as criterion. The predictors consisted of age, sex, education, host receptivity, and host conformity pressure. Age, sex, and education were entered as the first block of predictors, followed by host receptivity and conformity pressure. This analysis allows the simultaneous investigation of the role of multiple influences on a criterion (Hayes, 2018).

### Analysis and results

To answer the research question and hypotheses, two multiple regressions were created using ITB and ITA as criterion. Research has shown sex, age, and education differ in IT. For instance, previous studies found females acculturate more than men (Engberg & Fox, 2011). Schwarzenthal et al. (2017) pointed out older individuals have higher levels of adaptation. Higher levels of education are positively related to successful acculturation (Choi et al., 2020). In the initial analysis, massive positive skewness was present at  $-.82$  in host conformity pressure ( $M = 5.79$ ,  $SD = 1.16$ ). To minimize skewness, five items with extreme values were deleted from the sample. Succeeding analysis was then made to the remaining sample ( $n = 310$ ).

#### Hypotheses Testing

The four hypotheses on the relationship of host receptivity and host conformity pressure on ITB and ITA were tested among the remaining sample.

#### Hypothesis 1

The first hypothesis posits that there is a positive relationship between host receptivity and ITB. Consistent with this theoretical prediction, the result shows a positive correlation between host receptivity and ITB ( $r = .33$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ). Thus, H1 is supported. This finding suggests that the higher level of host receptivity of the dominant culture, the more likely newcomers have greater level of ITB.

#### Hypothesis 2

The second hypothesis states that there is a positive relationship between host receptivity and ITA. The result of the correlational analysis clearly supports H2 ( $r = .47$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ). This finding proposes that the higher level of host receptivity of the dominant culture, the more likely newcomers have greater level of ITA.

#### Hypothesis 3

The third hypothesis states that there is a negative relationship between host conformity pressure and ITB. Contrary to the hypothesis, the results show a positive correlation between host conformity pressure and ITB ( $r = .33$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ). Thus, H3 is not supported. This finding proposes that the higher level of host conformity pressure from the dominant culture, the more likely newcomers have greater level of ITB.

#### Hypothesis 4

The fourth hypothesis posits that host conformity pressure has a negative association with ITA. In contrast to this hypothesis, results

show that there is also a positive relationship between host conformity pressure and ITA ( $r = .36, p < 0.01$ ). Thus, H4, is also not supported. This finding reveals that the higher level of host conformity pressure from the dominant culture, the more likely newcomers have greater level of ITA. Table 2 presents the correlation analyses of variables.

### Research question

The RQ asked to what extent receptivity and conformity pressure from the dominant culture in New Zealand affect intercultural transformation among Filipino migrants. The results of the two regression analyses are presented in Table 3. In model 1, sex, age, and education were entered as predictors ( $R^2 = 0.01$ ). In model 2, host receptivity and host conformity pressure were added as predictors ( $R^2 = 0.28$ ). This model was a significant improvement over model 1 ( $\Delta F = 58.39, p < 0.01$ ), and is thus the final model for analysis. The demographic characteristics, sex, age, and education were not significant predictors of IT. In models 1 and 2, there is a difference in IT between males and females with the latter having better IT, but the difference is not significant.

Participants' scores are positive on both the Host Receptivity Scale ( $M = 3.89, SD = .51$ ) and the Host Conformity Pressure Scale ( $M = 5.79, SD = 1.15$ ). They also scored an average of 4.07 on the Intercultural Transformation Scale ( $SD = .50$ ). With lower scores indicating a lower level of IT and higher scores indicating higher IT, these results show participants have higher levels of IT. As host receptivity and host conformity increase, the level of IT also increases.

### Discussion

The purpose of this study was to explore the extent to which receptivity and conformity pressure from the dominant culture in New Zealand affect intercultural transformation among Filipino migrants. After creating two regression models using demographics, host receptivity, and host conformity pressure as predictors and ITB and ITA as criterion, three key points were revealed.

First, demographic characteristics were not related to predicting IT. In terms of sex, this study found the relationship between sex and IT is not statistically significant. Unlike previous studies that show females acculturate more than men as they are more appreciative of other cultures (Ouarasse & van de Vijver, 2005), have higher intercultural competence (Haskollar & Kohli Bagwe, 2023), and are more effective in adaptation (Leong, 2007; Zlobina et al., 2006), in this study Filipino migrants' level of IT is not in any way linked to their sex. Other studies also reveal sex is not a predictor of acculturation and adaptation (Huff et al., 2021; Tatarko et al., 2020).

As regards age, this study found the relationship between age and IT is not statistically significant. Previous works point to the advantage of age in acculturation and adaptation (Ouarasse & van de Vijver, 2005; Schwarzenhal et al., 2017). The results of these previous studies do not apply to Filipino migrants in New Zealand as age does not affect their abilities to adapt to a host culture. Regardless of age, Filipino migrants' have the same opportunity of experiencing IT.

As to education, this study found the relationship between education and IT is not statistically significant. Filipino migrants with different levels of education have the same prospects for IT. Previous works on acculturation (Adebayo et al., 2021; Ouarasse & van de Vijver, 2005) and adaptation (Tatarko et al., 2020) also confirm the insignificant relationship between education and IT. Although these studies support the findings of the present study, it is also important to note that the works of Choi et al. (2020) and Zlobina et al. (2006) reveal educational level has a positive effect on levels of acculturation.

Second, host receptivity plays a significant role in the ITB and ITA of Filipino migrants in New Zealand. Host receptivity serves as a pull factor for Filipinos that contributes to their feeling of belongingness in the host environment. This validates Croucher and Kramer's (2016) cultural fusion theory that the greater the host receptivity, the greater the IT of the newcomer. Filipinos are an essential part of the dairy farming, healthcare, construction, and other sectors of New Zealand industries (Townsend, 2017). In addition, the Philippines is considered a close ally and opportunity for New Zealand in defense and security, trade, investment, and aid programs (Whyte, 2024). New Zealanders have found warmth in the Philippines' friendliness for years (Asia New Zealand Foundation, 2023) and do not consider the Philippines a threat (Asia New Zealand Foundation, 2024). The welcoming environment in New Zealand can also be felt by the Filipino queer community which appreciates how New Zealanders influenced other Filipinos on being open-minded about sexuality (Adams et al., 2022).

Third, host conformity pressure enables IT. For Filipinos, host conformity serves as a push factor that supports their adaptation to the dominant culture in New Zealand. This finding does not support the third and fourth hypotheses based on Croucher and Kramer's (2016) cultural fusion theory that host conformity is negatively correlated with IT. Although previous studies in Western Europe, Israel, Japan, New Zealand, and the U.S. that show host conformity pressure has a negative effect on IT (Cheah et al., 2013; Croucher, 2013; Lee et al., 2021; Roccas et al., 2000; Xie & Peltokorpi, 2024), the context of Filipino migrants shows otherwise.

Filipinos in New Zealand consider host conformity pressure as an enabler of IT because of three things: opportunity, proximity, and

**Table 2**

Means, standard deviation, reliability coefficients, and correlations.

Variable	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	$\rho$	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
(1) Host receptivity	3.89	.51	.75	-			
(2) Host conformity pressure	5.79	1.16	.82	.35 **			
(3) Basic intercultural transformation	3.91	.66	.67	.33 **	.33 **		
(4) Advance intercultural transformation	4.22	.60	.68	.47 **	.36 **	.47 **	-

\*  $p < 0.01$  (1-tailed)

**Table 3**  
Regression model for intercultural transformation.

Regressor	Model 1	Model 2
Intercept	4.20	2.06
Sex	- 0.90	- 0.90
Age	0.01	.01
Education	0.02	.05
Host receptivity		.37 **
Host conformity pressure		.26 **
<i>F</i>	.79	24.01 **
$\Delta F$	58.39 **	
$R^2$	.01	.28
$R^2_{adj}$	.01	.27

\*\* $p < 0.01$ .

resilience. Holding on to opportunities is one reason for agreeing to conformity pressure. For the Japanese, psychological security is attained when dealing with conformity pressures (Abe & Wisemen, 1983). Although some Filipinos lack the qualifications to perform certain jobs their employers demand, they agree to do these jobs to retain employment and to avoid employers' threat of deportation (Bonnet, 2019). Another reason for the positive outlook of Filipinos on conformity pressure is their intention to gain psychological proximity among New Zealanders. When the first Filipino representative to the Members of Parliament (MP) Paolo Garcia delivered his maiden speech in three languages – Filipino, Te Reo, and English, he intended to declare one's pride in being a "Kiwinoy", a term that represents an identity that is a fusion of Kiwi and Filipino heritage (Teng, 2023). Similarly, the guiding principle of the then-Philippine Ambassador to New Zealand Virginia Honrado Benavidez was based on the Māori saying, "He Tangata", which refers to people as the most important thing on earth (Embassy of the Philippines Wellington, 2011). These scenarios can be attributed to the affirmation of their identities while reconstructing their cultural identities (De La Garza & Ono, 2015) according to the norms of New Zealand's dominant culture. Acknowledging conformity pressure in New Zealand is also a way for Filipinos to measure their abilities and resiliency based on the New Zealand structures and systems. Filipino students' strong interest in studying in New Zealand (New Zealand Education, 2023) shows a willingness to conform to the educational system and experience the sojourner life. By not having household helpers they used to have in the Philippines, Filipino migrant women in New Zealand feel a sense of achievement in managing both the workload inside and outside their homes (Sevillano, 2017).

The acceptance of both host receptivity as a pull factor and host conformity pressure as a push factor to IT can be attributed to how media has framed New Zealand as an ideal place to live for Filipinos. Narratives on how Filipino families, language, culture, education, and employment flourish in New Zealand are featured in both host and ethnic media. The New Zealand-based media, Filipino Migrant News, publishes community events that enrich the cultural identities of Filipinos in New Zealand. *Stuff*, a national media outlet, released a story about Filipino migrants motivated to live in New Zealand and experience the Kiwi lifestyle (Do, 2016). The Philippine media also highlights New Zealand as an ideal education destination where Filipino postgraduate students can avail of scholarship programs (Agoot, 2023).

The media also publishes stories about how the Philippines can be partners with New Zealand and how New Zealanders can positively contribute to the IT of Filipino migrants. New Zealand journalists established a connection with the Philippine Presidential Communications Office to mitigate potential misinformation about Filipinos in New Zealand media (Presidential Communications Office, 2024). The Philippines and New Zealand governments entered into a bilateral agreement to develop existing cooperation and explore other potential areas for development (Filipino Migrant News, 2024). The theatre review of Longshaw-Park (2019) on the first multilingual Filipino-Kiwi play emphasized how it shows the complementarity of Māori and Filipino culture in terms of language and sense of whānau. The financial hardships of the families of those Filipino construction workers who are owed thousands of dollars in wages by their New Zealand employers are featured in local news to serve as a wake-up call for the government's accountability on migrant workers (Xia, 2023).

### Implications

The findings of this study provide a new perspective on host receptivity and host conformity pressure. These environmental factors of cross-cultural adaptation refer to opposite approaches to dealing with newcomers – willingness to accept newcomers and expectations from newcomers to adopt norms and behavior (Kim, 2001). Croucher and Kramer's (2016) cultural fusion theory strengthened the dichotomy of these constructs in the theorems: (1) the greater the host receptivity, the greater the IT of the newcomer; and (2) the greater the host conformity pressure, the lesser the IT of the newcomer. Though the results do not coincide with the second theorem, it is important to consider the role of the host and ethnic media in publishing neutral to positive material on Filipino migrants in New Zealand. This leads to a potential hypothesis from the cultural fusion theory that may be considered for future empirical analysis – that is, a mixture of host interpersonal and mass communication facilitates IT (Croucher & Kramer, 2016).

From a methodological perspective, future research on the IT of members of the dominant culture is recommended. Using the lens of cultural fusion, it is important to investigate how members of the dominant culture experience IT. With the continuous movement of people from rural to urban or from home country to host country, the changes that occur with dominant culture members may affect how they express receptivity and conformity pressure to the newcomers. The empirical analysis of the dispositions of the host sheds

light on understanding conditions that make host receptivity and host conformity pressure positively and/or negatively related to IT.

The practical implication of this study points to a deeper understanding of the growing migration rate of Filipinos, not only in New Zealand but in other countries as migrant workers. Aside from the confirmation that host receptivity helps Filipinos thrive in a multicultural environment, results also suggest the resiliency of Filipinos in dealing with conformity pressure. The Filipino cultural value, “pakikisama”, which means harmonizing the self with a group (Zialcita, 2020), may play a significant role in how expectations from the members of the dominant culture is managed. When adapted in the workplace, this becomes a trait that is close to the concept of group loyalty (Giray et al., 2021).

### Limitations and future research

This study has three limitations. First, data collection was done through convenience sampling/snowball sampling. Only those Filipinos connected to the social networks and contacts of other Filipinos participated in the survey. Second, the responses were collected through an online survey only. Potential participants who did not have access to the survey link were not given the opportunity to respond. Last, only the English version of the survey is used in this study and no Filipino translation was provided. Although English is one of the official languages in the Philippines and the mode of instruction in schools, differences in the interpretation of the survey items are still possible.

This is the first quantitative research exploring the perceived host receptivity and host conformity pressure and their relationship with the IT of Filipino migrants in New Zealand. Results reveal that host receptivity and host conformity pressure are positively associated with IT. Though host receptivity and host conformity pressure are opposite reactions of members of the dominant culture, both are seen as contributing factors to the intercultural changes Filipinos undergo as they communicate and interact with other individuals, understand and appreciate cultural differences, and establish efficient and effective relationship-building in communities. To know how Filipinos deal with IT, it is worth exploring their predispositions as individuals in future research.

### CRedit authorship contribution statement

**Angela Feekery:** Writing – review & editing. **Georgeta M Hodis:** Writing – review & editing. **Lenis Aislinn C Separa:** Writing – review & editing, Writing – original draft, Visualization, Validation, Software, Project administration, Methodology, Investigation, Formal analysis, Data curation, Conceptualization. **Stephen Croucher:** Writing – review & editing, Validation, Supervision, Methodology, Formal analysis, Data curation.

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