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**The Motivation to Migrate, Acculturation, and Finding
Employment: The case for African Migrants in New Zealand.**

**A thesis presented in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the
degree of
a Master of Arts
in
Psychology**

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Abstract

The present study tested a model whereby Psychological Acculturation mediated the relationship between the Psychological Motives to Migrate and the Employment Outcome of African migrants in New Zealand. These concepts had not been previously studied together. Job search strategies, interview behaviours, qualifications and duration of time in the host country are principally known as predictors of employment outcome; therefore, their impacts were also taken into consideration. One hundred and five African migrants completed a questionnaire, which included a number of reliable measures used to assess the concepts of: (a) Psychological Motives to Migrate (Tharmaseelan, 2005), (b) Psychological Acculturation preferences (Ward & Rana-Deuba, 1999) and (c) Employment Outcome (Mace, 2004; Tharmaseelan, 2005). Job search strategies and interview behaviours were assessed with Mace's (2004) measures. Multivariate analyses showed that over and above demographic migration categories (economic, family, humanitarian, student and visitor), psychological motives to migrate (financial betterment, family building, exploration and escaping) predicted acculturation preferences. Specifically, voluntary migrants (those motivated by 'family building' and 'exploration') preferred to adapt to New Zealand culture, while less voluntary migrants (those motivated by 'escaping') had a higher preference to maintain their culture of origin. Acculturation preferences were not found to mediate the relationship between motives to migrate and employment outcome. The predicted

links to employment outcome were not supported. Duration of time in New Zealand was correlated with acculturation preferences. Implications of the findings point to the fundamentality of assessing reasons to migrate from a psychological perspective, and also provide important linkages between motivational theory and acculturation theory. The implication must however be interpreted cautiously as per the limitations of the study. It was recommended that future researchers test the same model with improved measures and with a larger sample. In addition, future researchers could assess and compare the acculturation preferences and employment experiences of the 1.5 generation and their adult parents.

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“Stay Hungry. Stay Foolish”
- Whole Earth Catalog, Stewart Brand (1974) -

Dedication

To my late grandma, Mama Wacu – you left us who love you too early, but you have left a mark in my heart and in my life. To you I dedicate this thesis. From you, I have learnt that life is nothing without commitment and determination but most important of all, through you I have learnt the power of prayer and positive thought.

Ndagukunda kandi ndagukumbuye Mama Wacu.

Nyirabahinde Pulcherie

Rest in Peace

September, 1925 - November, 2007

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Human migration has been defined as “the process of going from one country, region or place of residence to settle in another” (Bhugra & Becker, 2005, p.18). Yet, this definition does not capture that what motivates people to migrate varies from one individual to the next. International migration is motivated by many factors usually driven by either economic needs or social reasons (Knipscheer & Kleber, 2007). In particular, some migrants freely choose to leave their home country in pursuit of achieving specific goals, while others have little choice and may be forced to leave their country for a number of varying reasons such as escaping from war violence (Kunz, 1973; Ward, Bochner & Furnham, 2001). It has been argued that the degree of choice of whether or not to migrate play an important part in the migrants’ negotiation of cultural mores (Horgan, 2000; Porter, 2006). In addition, this negotiation process has been found to be related to finding suitable employment (Mace, Atkins, Fletcher & Carr, 2005; Nekby & Rudin, 2007; Ward et al., 2001).

The present study will explore the role that the motivations to migrate have on migrants’ subsequent settlement into life (acculturation) and work (employment outcome), in one particular setting, New Zealand, and from one particular continent, Africa.