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The Role of Acculturation and Acculturation Fit in Finding Full Employment and Career Satisfaction: A Study of Highly Skilled Asian Migrants to New Zealand

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ABSTRACT

The process of cultural change and adjustment within the context of skilled migrants finding employment has been an under researched area. A further shortfall in research is that acculturation and 'acculturation fit' theory, and the concept of career satisfaction have been neglected by psychologists in the context of skilled migrants' finding employment. The present research attempted to fill this gap in research by testing a model based on the theory of acculturation and 'acculturation fit' and the concept of career satisfaction during the process of skilled Asian migrants finding full employment (i.e. proximity to full employment) in New Zealand. Proximity to full employment was hypothesised to partially mediate the relationship between psychological acculturation and career satisfaction, and the relationship between 'acculturation fit' and career satisfaction. Significant differences in mean scores of proximity to full employment and career satisfaction amongst acculturation styles were expected. Postal or electronic questionnaires were completed by 153 skilled Asian migrants and 30 experienced recruitment agents and human resource personnel in New Zealand. Measures included the 'Acculturation' measure (adapted from Mace, 2004), 'Rank Order Acculturation Style' measure (adapted from Mace), 'Guttman scale' for measuring proximity to full employment (adapted from Mace; Tharmaseelan, 2005), 'Under-Over employment' measure of employment status at present (adapted from Tharmaseelan), and the 'Overall Career Satisfaction' measure (adapted from Tharmaseelan). Regression analyses showed that employment status at present partially mediated the relationship between adapting to New Zealand culture and career satisfaction without controlling for the influence of age and duration in New Zealand. New Zealand acculturation directly predicted proximity to full employment. Significant differences in mean proximity to full employment and

career satisfaction amongst acculturation styles were found before controlling for 'other' variables. No significant relationships were found when 'acculturation fit' was the independent variable. Limitations included the snowballing and networking sampling techniques utilized, which could explain the reason for obtaining a large proportion of employed Asian migrants. Despite limitations, findings indicated the importance of adapting to New Zealand culture and the major role of employment status at present in predicting career satisfaction of skilled Asian migrants in New Zealand.

This thesis is dedicated to Ammi, Thathi,

and to the loving memory of Chumpa Aunty

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