



Heritage Culture Detachment Predicts Hope and Well-Being of Filipino Migrant Workers: A Study of Low- and Semi-skilled Filipino Workers in Macau

Allan B. I. Bernardo¹ · Mary Angeline Daganzo¹ · Jasmine Frances C. Burgos¹

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Abstract Heritage culture detachment occurs when migrants tend to distance themselves from their own cultural norms and values as they engage their host culture; research suggests that this approach to acculturation is often associated with psychological distress. We explore heritage culture detachment and well-being among Filipino migrant workers in Macau. Participants ($N = 249$) were recruited to answer a questionnaire that inquired into heritage culture detachment and several measures of well-being. The relationships between well-being and heritage culture detachment were examined by testing two structural equation models: Model 1: well-being predicts heritage culture detachment; Model 2: heritage culture detachment predicts well-being. The results show better fit between the data and Model 2; in particular, heritage culture detachment positively predicted satisfaction with life, external-peer locus-of-hope, but also negative self-esteem, and goal disengagement. Heritage culture detachment also negatively predicted external-spiritual locus-of-hope. The results are interpreted as possibly indicating how heritage culture detachment reflects efforts to adjust and cope in a new sociocultural environment. Unlike other migrants, international migrant workers may see their foreign work environment as temporary contexts and circumstances, wherein subordinating their cultural norms may have some utility. The discussion highlights how sources of well-being need to be understood within the specific temporal and sociocultural context of individuals' life experiences.

Keywords Hope · Well-being · Heritage culture detachment · Acculturation · Migrant workers

Introduction

International migrant workers comprise approximately 5% of the global workforce (International Labour Organization, 2021), and many of these workers come from economically developing countries seeking better-paying work in other countries; in doing so, they sometimes find themselves in very vulnerable social situations that cause harm to their physical and mental health (Habtamu et al., 2017). But as with other migrants, international workers have to adapt to the norms and practices of their host culture; and this process of acculturation can involve different approaches that exemplify various ways of engaging the culture of their host country and also preserving one's own cultural heritage (Berry, 2003). In this study, we explore how the acculturation approach of heritage culture detachment relates to the well-being of Filipino migrant workers in Macau. While previous research suggests that this acculturation approach tends to be associated with psychological distress (Eyou et al., 2000), we investigate how it relates to a range of well-being measures, with the aim of contributing to some understanding of how Filipino migrant workers' well-being might reflect their attempts to adjust to the new culture where they work.

Acculturation Approaches and Well-Being Among Migrants

The acculturation styles of migrants are a result of intercultural contact with a host majority cultural group. These

✉ Allan B. I. Bernardo
allan.bernardo@dlsu.edu.ph

¹ Department of Psychology, De La Salle University, 2401 Taft Avenue, 1004 Manila, Philippines

styles describe the process of psychological change and adaptation to the culture that they find themselves in (Berry, 2003). Many factors come into shaping a migrant's acculturation. The interactionist perspective posits that the process may be iterative in how migrants socialize and relate to the host majority cultural group (Bourhis & Montreuil, 2013). Acculturation may also be shaped by economic mobility and integration into the host culture (Gibson, 2001). On the individual level, this can involve adapting one's psychological processes and behavior. There are five acculturation styles migrants may endorse (Berry, 2003): separation, integration, assimilation, marginalization, and individualism.

Two dimensions are typically considered in characterizing these acculturation styles: heritage culture maintenance and heritage culture detachment. Heritage culture maintenance involves maintaining one's heritage culture and is most clearly expressed in separation (i.e., interest to maintain one's own culture rather than adopting the host culture) and integration (i.e., interest to both maintain their own culture and host culture). On the other hand, heritage culture detachment is the tendency to distance oneself from their own cultural norms and values and is expressed in assimilation (i.e., interest to adopt host culture and ignore one's own cultural heritage), and marginalization (i.e., no interest in either culture).

Previous studies examined the relationship of these orientations of acculturation with different well-being and coping outcomes. Specifically, heritage culture detachment related to more negative well-being outcomes and maladaptive coping (Berry et al., 2006; Ward & Kennedy, 1994). This is especially true for marginalization, which has consistently been associated with low levels of psychological adaptation (Phinney et al., 2001), mental health and behavioral problems (Kvernmo & Heyerdahl, 2003), deviance, and psychosomatic stress (Berry, 1970). A meta-analytic study (Yoon et al., 2013) examined the associations between negative mental health outcomes (depression, anxiety, psychological distress, and negative affect), positive mental health outcomes (self-esteem, satisfaction with life, and positive affect) and acculturation strategies across 325 empirical studies, and marginalization was found to be the most consistently associated to the least favorable outcomes. Marginalization was associated higher scores for negative mental health and lower scores for positive mental health.

The link between assimilation and negative outcomes is not so straightforward. When individuals assimilate to the host culture, this alienates them from their own cultural group which may cause psychological distress (Eyou et al., 2000). However, studies report inconsistent findings of the links between this orientation and psychological adjustment. In a study comparing the four acculturation

strategies, assimilation was associated with enhanced sociocultural adaptation but also to diminished psychological well-being (Ward & Kennedy, 1994). In contrast, other studies found that although assimilation was linked to significantly lower subjective well-being than integration, there was no significant difference in this variable between assimilation and the two other strategies (Zheng et al., 2004). Assimilation seems to rank between integration and marginalization when looking at several other outcomes like self-concept, psychosocial functioning (De Domanico et al., 1994), and life satisfaction (Verkuyten & Kwa, 1994); but this means that it is still less positively associated with well-being than the heritage culture maintenance acculturation approaches.

Well-being and Mental Health of Filipino Migrant Workers

Most of the studies reviewed in the previous section involve individuals who have permanently migrated to their host country and who have decided (not always by choice) to leave their heritage culture. But there is currently a large number of migrant workers who are temporarily migrating to other countries for employment, and who envisage different futures in their host country of work. According to the International Labour Organization (ILO, 2021), there were about 169 million international migrant workers in different parts of the world, representing close to 5% of the global work force. According to the official estimates of the Philippine government, there were about 2.2 million Filipinos who worked in a foreign country in 2019 (Philippine Statistics Authority, 2019). The number of migrant Filipino workers is always difficult to estimate because of the significant number of undocumented migrant Filipino workers.

In recognition of international migrant workers as a vulnerable population, recent research has explored the well-being of international migrant workers in terms of their physical health and poor mental health stemming from unfavorable working conditions, stress, and inadequate support among other things (Hall, Garabiles, et al., 2019; Hall, Pangan, et al., 2019; Hall, Yip, et al., 2019). These studies point out unfavorable consequences such as poor quality of life and social isolation (Anjara et al., 2017). Some studies highlight that the stress from being a migrant worker is related to high prevalence of depression (Nadim et al., 2016), suicidal ideation (Habtamu et al., 2017), and poorer mental health for women migrant workers compared to local women workers (Cayuela et al., 2015). Psychological distress of migrant workers also manifests through somatic complaints like headaches, sleep problems, hand tremors, and functional impairment (Habtamu et al., 2017).

There are some recent studies that focused on the experiences of Filipino migrant workers and how these relate to their well-being and mental health, as these issues have been emphasized by organizations working on the welfare of Filipino migrant workers (Bernadas & Pioccos, 2019). Notably, most of these studies focused on mental health issues that relate to experiences of abuse, discrimination, poor living, and working conditions, among others. Filipino migrant workers in Israel were vulnerable to abuse in the form of both work-related abuse and work-related injuries, and these forms of abuse result in increased emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and burnout (Ayalon, 2008). Among Filipinos in Macau, poor working conditions and health risk factors (i.e., hypertension, chronic pain, diabetes, poor sleep), mental health problems (i.e., depression, anxiety), and addictive behavior (i.e., gambling, alcohol misuse) were common stressors among the workers (Hall Garabiles, & Latkin, 2019; Hall, Garabiles, et al., 2019; Hall, Pangan, et al., 2019; Hall, Pangan, et al., 2019; Hall, Yip, et al., 2019; Hall, Yip, et al., 2019). Abusive supervision which Filipino migrant workers encountered in the workplace was linked to a lower sense of self-esteem and maladaptive acculturation styles (Bernardo et al., 2016). Among Filipino migrant workers in Japan, strains in their family relationships were found to be more pronounced than the strains due to work and living conditions (Ohara-Hirano, 2000). These well-being issues are exacerbated by barriers to healthcare and lack of resources (Hall Garabiles, & Latkin, 2019; Hall et al., 2019; Hall, Yip, et al., 2019; Pioccos et al., 2021).

There are a few studies that focus on Filipino migrant workers' well-being instead of mental health concerns. Studies of Filipino migrant workers in Hong Kong, for example, point to social networks and employer support as sources of health and well-being (Pioccos et al., 2021) and related to positive character strengths (Nalipay et al., 2021). Similar observations of social network support were shared by Filipino migrant workers in Japan (Ohara-Hirano, 2000; Paillard-Borg & Hallberg, 2018) and Australia (Maneze et al., 2016). However, social network support may not be sufficient to buffer the effects of stress among Filipino migrant workers. Rather than being a protective factor, greater social network support was linked to higher anxiety, depression, and somatization in workers with greater post-migration stress among Filipino migrant workers in Macau (Mendoza et al., 2017).

There are very few published studies that empirically inquired into the relationship between acculturation and well-being of Filipino migrant workers. One quantitative study found that heritage culture detachment relates with self-esteem and perceived experiences of abusive supervision (Bernardo et al., 2016). There are qualitative studies that have documented the motivations to integrate within

the host culture while seeking to maintain Filipino cultural practices. For example, Filipino migrant workers in Madrid make efforts to congregate so that they can enjoy Filipino food, chat about using the Filipino language, and engage in other social activities that affirm their Filipino identity (Calara, 2008). Among Filipino migrant workers in Macau, being able to hang out with other Filipino friends and cook Filipino food was described as a leisurely activity that helps in building a sense of community and also contributes to their quality of life (Choe et al., 2020). But these qualitative studies also indicate efforts to integrate with the host culture that are seen to help improve their adjustment in their host country. For example, some Filipino migrant workers in Madrid felt some discrimination when they speak in Filipino and report that learning the Spanish language seemed to reduce these feelings of discrimination (Calara, 2008). In a similar way, Filipino migrant workers in Macau who learn Cantonese and try to interact or appreciate the cultural practices of the Chinese and other ethnic cultures in Macau report that these help in reducing their sense of alienation and feelings of discrimination (Choe et al., 2020). While these studies do not directly measure acculturation orientations or well-being, they suggest how these psychological processes and functions may be associated in the lived experiences of Filipino migrant workers.

The Current Study

This study explores the specific dimensions of well-being and acculturation in a sample of Filipino migrant workers in Macau. While there are various studies that show the various forms of mental health concerns experienced by Filipino migrant workers in Macau, only one investigation has made an indirect link to the migrants' acculturation style. Heritage culture detachment was identified as being associated with abusive supervision and lower self-esteem in one study (Bernardo et al., 2016). In this study, we explore how heritage culture detachment relates to a range of well-being variables to get a multidimensional view of the well-being of Filipino migrant workers in the territory that is a Special Autonomous Region of China.

While we acknowledge that much of the previous research on acculturation styles of migrants indicate that heritage culture detachment is associated with impaired well-being (Ward & Kennedy, 1994), we do not pose specific hypotheses regarding how this acculturation approach relates to the well-being of Filipino migrant workers. This is because unlike the migrants in most previous acculturation research, international migrant workers are not necessarily permanently leaving their heritage culture, as they might be engaging with the host culture of work temporarily. As such, the specific implications of

heritage culture detachment might not necessarily result in deep alienation from one's cultural identity that was typically implicated in previous research (Eyou et al., 2000). And so, we thought it best to keep an exploratory approach in studying the relationships between well-being and heritage culture detachment, and also to explore a wider range of well-being variables.

Among these variables, we included the migrant workers' subjective well-being, which is a global assessment of an individual's satisfaction with life (Diener et al., 1985) that is known to be associated with many positive psychological functions and outcomes. We included two sets of variables that focus on future-oriented well-being: hope and coping strategy. Hope represents a future goal-focused character strength (Snyder, 2002), that involves positive thoughts related to how one will attain important life goals through one's own personal agency and/or with the support of significant others and of a spiritual being (Bernardo, 2010). Specifically, we measured four locus-of-hope dimensions: internal, external-family, external-peer, and external-spiritual. We studied control-related coping strategies according to Lechner et al.'s (2016) conceptualization, which is based on Heckhausen et al.'s (2010) motivation model of development. Two general coping strategies are defined; the first is goal engagement, which refers to strategies that aim to change the sources of stress in their environment to keep their focus on attaining one's goals; and the second is goal disengagement, which refers to strategies that aim to protect the individual's self-esteem in the face of obstacles by distancing oneself from difficult goals. Both hope and coping reflect well-being-related psychological processes that are oriented toward the individual's important life goals. Finally, we also measured self-esteem, which is a measure of self-worth that is associated with numerous indicators of positive psychological functioning and well-being (Taylor & Brown, 1988).

We explored the relationships among these well-being variables and heritage culture detachment in a cross-sectional survey, and as such, we are unable to determine the directionality of the relationships among these variables. However, using structural equation modeling, we tested alternative models and explored whether well-being predicts heritage culture detachment or whether heritage culture detachment predicts well-being. Briefly, the research questions we explored in this study are:

- (a) Are there relationships among different well-being variables and heritage culture detachment in Filipino migrant workers in Macau?
- (b) Which of two simple predictive models better fits data on well-being and heritage culture detachment in Filipino migrant workers in Macau?

Method

Research Design

We used a descriptive cross-sectional research design to explore the relationship among well-being and heritage culture detachment. We attempted to include a range of background variables as possible covariates of well-being and heritage culture detachment, but because many participants did not wish to disclose personal information, we were able to use only three control variables: sex, number of years working in Macau, and years as a foreign worker.

Ethical Considerations

The procedures and measures in the study were evaluated and approved by the relevant university ethics review committee. Aside from the principles of informed consent, the researchers had to take extra precaution to ensure and reassure confidentiality of all responses of the participants. As temporary residents of Macau, participants were very concerned about their status in the territory and had legitimate interests in ensuring that no information they share might be disclosed and used in a way that would jeopardize their status in the territory. To assure utmost confidentiality, participants were not asked to indicate any information that can identify them personally; they were also told that they can opt not to answer any question for any reason.

Data-Gathering Procedures

A non-random purposive sampling procedure was adopted, where trained research assistants recruited Filipino migrant workers in various areas in Macau (e.g., workplace, residence, and other common gathering places like places of worship and community fellowship). After introducing themselves and giving a brief description of the study, research assistants asked participants to read an informed consent form, and those who gave their consent in writing were given the survey to answer during their free time. Some answered in the presence of the research assistants and some on their own. Research assistants collected the questionnaires right after or at a later date, as was convenient for the participant, and gave each participant a supermarket voucher for their participation. To help in recruiting more participants, the research assistants also asked for referrals from those who have participated.

Participants

To determine the target sample size, we assumed a small effect size (0.10), and power of 0.95, with maximum 12

predictors; using G*Power, we computed a minimum sample size of 245. We obtained responses from 253 Filipino migrant workers who participated in the study, but only 249 provided complete responses on the main variables. The survey indicated that responses to personal and background information were optional; thus, not all participants indicated their age but among those who did, the average age of the participants was 35.41 years ($SD = 8.86$; *range*: 20 to 59) and majority (61.2%) were females. There were also some who did not provide other background information, but among those who provided these details, some of their characteristics are summarized as follows. For civil status: 33.2% were single, 53.1% were married, 10.0% were separated, 3.7% were widowed, and 64.0% had children in the Philippines. For highest educational attainment: 26.8% completed high school or lower, 34.7% had some college education, 35.1% completed a college degree, and 3.3% had a postgraduate degree. As regards years working in a foreign country, the responses ranged from a few months to 48 years ($M = 7.33$, $SD = 7.77$), and for years working in Macau, the responses ranged from a few months to 37 years ($M = 4.05$, $SD = 5.47$). Approximately 52% identified their occupation as domestic helpers or household staff; others were security guards, building assistants, workers in the hotel and food industry, in the airport, and in wholesale and retail stores. All respondents possessed a “Non-resident Worker’s Identification Card” (informally called the *blue card*), and have an “Authorization to Stay for Non-resident Workers” (or *green stamp*) attached to their passport as the mark of their legal work status in Macau. Officially, the Macau government refers to the participants as non-resident workers; the authorization to stay is valid only if the migrant is working for the employer and authorization expires as soon as the work contract is terminated.

Measures

Except for the hope scales, all the measures were originally in English and were translated into Filipino. To ensure linguistic and conceptual equivalence with the original English scales, graduate research assistants fluent in both English and Filipino translated and back-translated the items in the scales. The internal consistency (Cronbach’s α) of each scale was computed for the current samples and reported in Table 1.

Heritage Culture Detachment

Eight items from the Immigrant Acculturation Scale (IAS; Berry, et al., 1989) were used to measure heritage culture detachment. The items were the assimilationism, marginalization, and individualism subscales of the IAS

that referred, and were adapted to refer to Filipino and Macau Chinese culture, customs/values. All items expressed the intention to reject or to detach oneself from Filipino culture while working in Macau (e.g., I wish to give up my Filipino culture for the sake of adopting Chinese culture). Respondents indicated their agreement with each item using a scale from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*). The other items in the IAS that indicated either the goal of keeping the norms of Filipino culture or that focused on personal qualities rather than group ascriptions were also included in the survey but were not analyzed.

Satisfaction with Life

The 5-item Satisfaction with Life Scale (Diener et al., 1985) was used to assess the participants’ global assessment of their life satisfaction (e.g., “I am satisfied with my life”). Participants had to indicate their agreement using a scale from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*).

Locus-of-Hope

The Short Form of the Locus-of-Hope Scale (Bernardo & Estrellado, 2014) was used to assess the four locus-of-hope (LOH) dimensions. The scale had four subscales with four items each: internal LOH (e.g., “I can think of many ways to get out of a problem”), external-family LOH (“My family has lots of ways to help me attain my goals”), external-peer LOH (“I have been able to meet my goals because of my friends”), and external-spiritual LOH (“God has many ways of letting me attain my goals”). Respondents indicated their agreement using a scale from 1 (*strongly agree*) to 4 (*strongly disagree*).

Goal Engagement and Disengagement

The goal engagement and goal disengagement subscales measured general goal attainment strategies that represent primary and secondary control striving, respectively (Shane & Heckhausen, 2013). An example of goal engagement was persistence in goal striving (e.g., “When I encounter problems, I don’t give up until I solve them”); goal disengagement includes lowering aspirations (e.g., “To avoid disappointments, I don’t set my goals too high”). Each subscale consisted of five items that participants rated on a scale from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*).

Self-esteem

The 10-item Rosenberg Self-Esteem scale (Rosenberg, 1979) was used to measure global self-esteem. The five positively worded items were used to measure positive

Table 1 Descriptive Statistics of Control and Latent Variables

	α	M	SD	Correlations (r)												
				2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	
1. Heritage culture detachment	0.76	2.19	0.78	0.07	0.00	0.06	-0.01	-0.10 [†]	0.26**	-0.12*	0.33**	0.00	0.28***	-0.04	0.32***	
2. Years working in a foreign country	-	7.33	7.79		0.43***	-0.10 [†]	0.02	0.10	0.03	0.00	0.04	0.07	0.04	0.06	0.07	
3. Years working in Macau	-	4.05	5.47			0.02	-0.02	0.01	0.03	-0.05	-0.06	0.02	-0.10	-0.04	0.05	
4. Sex	-	-	-				0.01	-0.06	-0.06	-0.20**	0.05	-0.16**	-0.15*	-0.11*	-0.11*	
5. Internal LOH	0.60	3.56	0.40					0.03	0.00	0.03	0.01	0.05	0.12*	0.03	0.02	
6. External-family LOH	0.75	3.57	0.46						0.32***	0.48***	0.12*	0.23***	0.04	0.26***	0.05	
7. External-peer LOH	0.75	2.83	0.56							0.14*	0.05	0.15**	0.19**	0.20**	0.29***	
8. External-spiritual LOH	0.81	3.80	0.39								0.08	0.32***	0.14*	0.26***	-0.01	
9. Satisfaction with life	0.81	3.23	0.84									0.15**	0.20**	0.13*	-0.00	
10. Goal engagement	0.80	4.31	0.65										0.35***	0.33***	-0.01	
11. Goal disengagement	0.72	3.17	0.80											0.05	0.43***	
12. Positive self-esteem	0.72	4.43	0.52													-0.13*
13. Negative self-esteem	0.72	2.25	0.69													

Sex: 1 = female, 2 = male; LOH = Locus-of-hope

* $p < .05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$, [†] $p = 0.051$ to 0.060

self-esteem (e.g., “On the whole, I am satisfied with myself”), and the five negatively worded items were used to measure negative self-esteem (“At times I think I am no good at all”). Respondents indicated their agreement using a scale from 1 (*strongly agree*) to 4 (*strongly disagree*).

Data Analysis

Data were screened for missing values, and data from four participants with missing responses were excluded. Because the data were collected from a non-probabilistic sample, it was important to establish that the data meet the assumptions for conducting parametric analysis. First, to test of independence and homoscedasticity, the standardized predicted values and standardized residual scores were computed and plotted against each other. The scatterplot indicated no clear issues with the assumptions of independence and homoscedasticity. There was only one case with a standardized residual value higher than 3 and just one case with a standardized predicted value below -3. Second, regarding the normality of residuals, the normal Q-Q plot of standardized residuals indicated a good

alignment of the observed residual values and expected normal values. The Kolmogorov–Smirnov statistic = 0.048, $p = 0.200$. Overall, there is adequate support for the assumptions for conducting the planned parametric analysis.

To test the two models that explore the relationship between well-being variables and heritage culture detachment, two structural equation modeling procedures were conducted using JASP (vers. 0.16). In 1, the nine well-being variables predict heritage culture detachment, while in 2, heritage culture detachment predicts the nine well-being variables. In both models, the variables are latent factors with their respective indicators, and the residuals of the indicators were initially not covaried. Also in both models, three control variables (sex, number of years working in Macau, number of years working in a foreign country) were covariates of all the latent factors. After the initial analysis, results were evaluated and the modification indexes regarding covariances of residuals of items of factor were considered. When appropriate, covariances were added, and the SEM was again run. This process was done iteratively, but only with theoretically meaningful

covariances, until the model with the best possible fit was found. In evaluating the model fit of the two models, several fit indexes were considered: χ^2 and χ^2 to *df* ratio, RMSEA, SRMR, CFI, TLI, and IFI.

Results

Descriptive Statistics

The descriptive statistics for all the key variables are summarized in Table 1. As regards the focal variable of heritage culture detachment as an acculturation approach, we note that the mean is below the midpoint (3.0), which suggests that heritage culture detachment was not a strong acculturation preference among the Filipino migrant workers in the sample. But the responses ranged from 1.00 to 4.71 and 13.2% of the participants had mean scores above the midpoint, suggesting that there are Filipino migrant workers who report this type of acculturation approach. The correlations in Table 1 suggest that heritage culture detachment has some significant associations with well-being measures, indicating that this acculturation approach is associated in varied ways to different measures of the migrant workers' well-being.

Structural Equation Modeling

Following the SEM analysis indicated in the previous section, the best fitting models are summarized in Table 2 and in Figs. 1a and b. In both models, the control variables were mostly unrelated to the predictor and criterion variables, except for sex which was correlated with goal engagement, goal disengagement, and external-spiritual locus-of-hope. The fit indexes summarized in Table 3 indicated that neither model had a good fit with the data. The RMSEA and SRMR were adequate (i.e., < 0.08) and the χ^2/df ratio were also acceptable for both models. However, the CFI, TLI, and IFI were all below criterion. Comparing the two models, all the fit indexes for Model 2 were better; the CFI and ILI were very close to 0.90. So while the fit was not good, there is some indication of adequate fit between Model 2 and the data.

We briefly call attention to the key results of Model 2 as follows. We note that heritage culture detachment predicted two “negative” indicators of well-being: negative self-esteem and goal disengagement (see Table 2 and Fig. 1b). In relation to the latter variable, perhaps it is worth noting that there was a statistical trend where heritage culture detachment negatively predicted goal engagement ($p = 0.060$). Heritage culture detachment also predicted two positive indicators of well-being: satisfaction with life and external-peer locus-of-hope. Heritage culture

detachment negatively predicted external-spiritual locus-of-hope. Finally, heritage culture detachment was not associated with positive self-esteem, internal, and external-family locus-of-hope. In the following section, we attempt to interpret and discuss the implications of the pattern of the results of the exploratory study.

Discussion

The study was undertaken to explore how the acculturation approach that involved detachment from one's heritage culture relates to the well-being of Filipino migrant workers in Macau. Previous studies indicate that heritage culture detachment, and its more specific forms like assimilation and marginalization, are associated with impaired well-being among migrants (Berry et al., 2006; Ward & Kennedy, 1994). The results of our study suggest that in the case of Filipino migrant workers in Macau, heritage culture detachment's relationship to well-being is not a straightforward matter. In particular, the results show that heritage culture detachment positively predicted two positive well-being indicators (satisfaction with life, external-peer locus-of-hope) and two negative well-being indicators (negative self-esteem, goal disengagement) and also negatively predicted one positive well-being indicator (external-spiritual locus-of-hope).

Before we discuss the results of this exploratory study, it is important to underscore some methodological limitations of the study. The use of self-report data that were gathered at one time point raises the possibility of common method bias. Fortunately, the use of structural equation modeling procedures, where the measurement model of each of the latent factors is included in the analysis, provides some evidence for the distinctiveness and relative independence of the factors and that the residuals of the items in one factor are unrelated to those of the items in other factors. The correlations among the latent factors (see Table 1) also provide some evidence that there was no common method bias, but future research that involves multiple data sources (not just self-reports) at different time points are needed address the potential problems associated with common method bias. The sample of participants in the study was also not randomly selected, as it was difficult to undertake a random sample of a population that is in the margins and where some may be trying not to be counted in an official sense. Nevertheless, we tried to show that the continuous data from the purposively recruited sample showed independence, homoscedasticity, and normality of residuals, thus allowing for the conduct of parametric analysis.

Regarding the results of the analysis, we first note that Model 2, where heritage culture detachment predicts well-being, had a better fit with the data. Mindful of the

Table 2 Summary of Results of SEM for Models 1 and 2 (with covariates)

Path	b (SE)	95% CI	Sex	Years working in foreign country	Years working in Macau
<i>Model 1</i>			Covariate of criterion variable		
HCD			0.10 (0.09)	0.03 (0.05)	0.02 (0.05)
			Covariate of predictor		
Internal LOH → HCD	0.12 (0.15)	[− 0.17, 0.41]	−0.03 (0.08)	0.03 (0.05)	− 0.07 (0.05)
External-Family LOH → HCD	− 0.15 (0.08)	[− 0.31, 0.00]	−0.02 (0.08)	0.04 (0.04)	− 0.01 (0.04)
External-Peer LOH → HCD	0.40*** (0.10)	[0.20, 0.59]	− 0.08 (0.08)	0.01 (0.04)	0.03 (0.04)
External-Spiritual LOH → HCD	− 0.16** (0.06)	[− 0.28, − 0.04]	− 0.30** (0.10)	0.02 (0.06)	− 0.05 (0.06)
Satisfaction with Life → HCD	0.42*** (0.09)	[0.24, 0.60]	0.07 (0.09)	0.07 (0.05)	− 0.09 (0.05)
Goal Engagement → HCD	− 0.22* (0.10)	[− 0.43, − 0.02]	− 0.20** (0.07)	0.03 (0.03)	− 0.01 (0.03)
Goal Disengagement → HCD	0.21* (0.10)	[0.01, 0.41]	− 0.18* (0.08)	0.05 (0.04)	− 0.07 (0.04)
Positive Self-Esteem → HCD	− 0.08 (0.10)	[− 0.27, 0.11]	− 0.11 (0.08)	0.02 (0.04)	− 0.04 (0.04)
Negative Self-Esteem → HCD	0.47*** (0.14)	[0.19, 0.74]	− 0.06 (0.06)	0.02 (0.03)	− 0.00 (0.03)
<i>Model 2</i>			Covariate of criterion variables		
HCD → Internal LOH	− 0.08 (0.07)	[− 0.22, 0.06]	− .01 (0.09)	− 0.08 (0.05)	0.04 (0.05)
HCD → External-Family LOH	− 0.17 (0.09)	[− 0.35, 0.01]	− 0.05 (0.11)	− 0.03 (0.06)	0.09 (0.06)
HCD → External-Peer LOH	0.32*** (0.08)	[0.17, 0.47]	− 0.13 (0.08)	0.04 (0.05)	− 0.01 (0.04)
HCD → External-Spiritual LOH	− 0.27** (0.09)	[− 0.45, − 0.09]	− 0.28** (0.11)	− 0.05 (0.06)	0.031 (0.06)
HCD → Satisfaction with Life	0.26*** (0.08)	[0.13, 0.42]	0.03 (0.08)	− 0.09 (0.05)	0.048 (0.05)
HCD → Goal Engagement	− 0.08 (0.05)	[− 0.18, 0.03]	− 0.20* (0.07)	− .01 (0.04)	0.042 (0.04)
HCD → Goal Disengagement	0.27*** (0.07)	[0.13, 0.41]	− 0.25** (0.08)	− 0.07 (0.04)	0.032 (0.04)
HCD → Positive Self-Esteem	− 0.09 (0.07)	[− 0.22, 0.04]	− 0.10 (0.08)	− 0.04 (0.04)	0.022 (0.04)
HCD → Negative Self-Esteem	0.33*** (0.07)	[0.19, 0.47]	− 0.11 (0.07)	0.01 (0.04)	− 0.01 (0.04)
HCD			Covariate of predictor		
			0.15 (0.10)	− 0.01 (0.06)	0.07 (0.06)

CI Confidence interval, HCD Heritage culture detachment, LOH locus of hope

* $p < 0.05$. ** $p < 0.01$. *** $p < 0.001$

limitations of cross-sectional survey data, we clearly cannot make causal claims about possible effects of heritage culture detachment. However, the difference between Models 1 and 2 relates to which predicts what, and there is better fit between the data and the model where heritage culture detachment predicts some of the well-being factors. The specific nature of this predictive relationship will need to be further studied in research that involve longitudinal designs.

Among those variables that are predicted by heritage culture detachment was satisfaction with life. We consider this noteworthy because this acculturation approach tended to be characterized as maladaptive in the previous literature (Berry et al., 2006; Ward & Kennedy, 1994). We propose that that is because this acculturation approach is adopted by the Filipino migrant workers as associated with their attempts to their sociocultural adaptation in Macau, an association that is also noted in previous studies (Ward &

Kennedy, 1994) and that we will consider more fully below.

This preceding result stands in contrast with the positive association of heritage culture detachment with negative self-esteem and goal disengagement, which refers to coping strategies that involve distancing oneself from difficult goals in order to protect one's self-esteem when facing adversities or the possibility of failure (Heckhausen et al., 2010). Thus, the sense of orienting oneself away from one's heritage culture in Filipino migrant workers in Macau is associated with negative feelings of self-worth and attempts to protect from threats to self by dissociating from one's important goals, whatever those might be. Yet, the migrant workers also tend to report positive satisfaction with life, which suggests that goal disengagement as coping may be working for the migrant workers.

This set of associations of heritage culture detachment in Filipino migrant workers needs to be considered from the

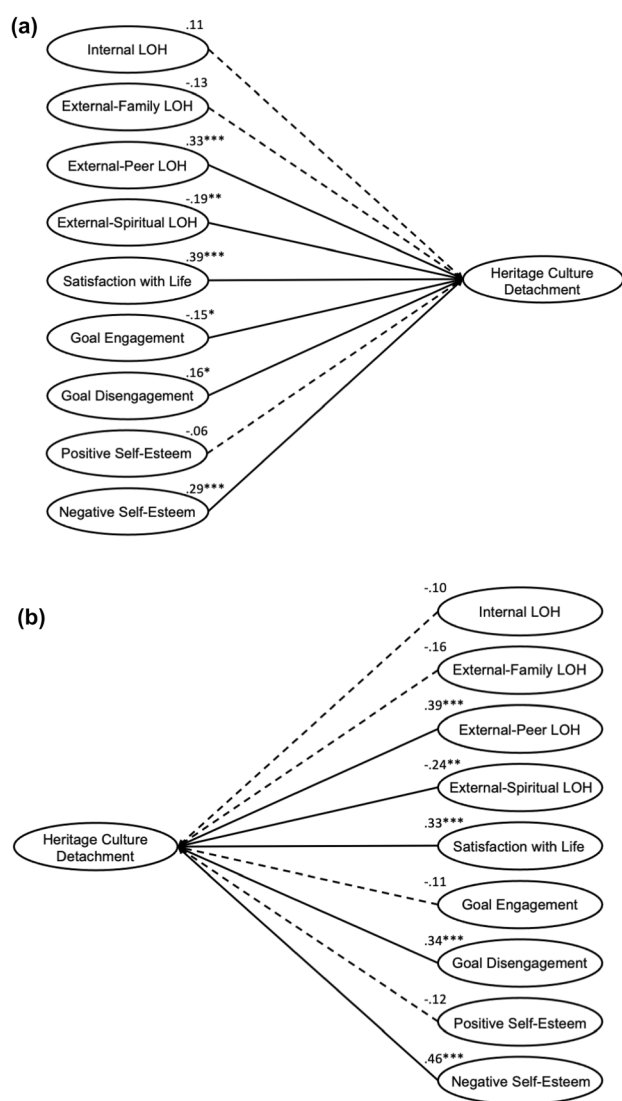


Fig. 1 **a** Schematic representation of key results of SEM of model 1 (well-being factors predict heritage culture detachment). **b** Schematic representation of key results of SEM of model 2 (heritage culture detachment predicts well-being factors). Note: For simplicity, only the latent variables are shown; manifest variables, covariations, and residuals are not included in the figure. Solid lines indicate a significant relationship and dashed lines indicate a nonsignificant relationship; * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$

perspective that unlike much of the research on the acculturation approaches of migrants, Filipino migrant workers are not permanent migrants. Their stay in the host country is temporary, even as this may be several decades. The legality of their stay in their host country is dependent on their employment status; there is no simple pathway to permanently staying in the host country, and the possibility of being asked to leave and to return to their home country is always present. Thus, unlike the migrants who were studied in most previous research on acculturation who are presumed to be permanently relocating to the host culture

(Berry et al., 2006; Eyou et al., 2000), the dynamics of acculturation among Filipino migrant workers is different. In one sense, the migrant workers' acculturation approach may not be too closely tied to cultural identity issues, and instead it might be seen as a more temporary attempt at sociocultural adjustment in line with the main purpose of being in the host country, which is employment. In this regard, previous work has shown that heritage culture detachment (i.e., assimilation) is associated with better sociocultural adjustment (Ward & Kennedy, 1994), similar to how the Filipino migrant workers refrain from speaking in Philippine languages to avoid discrimination and to adapt better in their host country (Calara, 2008).

Contrasting results were observed in relation to the hope variables. External-peer LOH was positively associated with heritage culture detachment. As defined earlier, external-peer LOH is the hopeful conviction that one's friends will support one's pursuit of important goals in life (Bernardo, 2010), which may be particularly salient among Filipino migrant workers who are away from their families, and whose source of social support may come from their fellow migrant workers. In contrast, the hopeful belief that God will support the attainment of important life goals, or external-spiritual LOH, was negatively associated with heritage culture detachment. This pattern is noteworthy as numerous previous studies involving Filipino persons find that external-spiritual LOH is consistently associated with measures of well-being (Bernardo, 2015; Bernardo Clemente, & Wang, 2018; Bernardo, Clemente, et al., 2018; Bernardo, Khan, et al., 2018; Bernardo, Khan, et al., 2018; Bernardo, Yeung, et al., 2018; Bernardo, Yeung, et al., 2018). One possible interpretation for this result is that religious beliefs and the attendant trust in the higher spiritual powers are among the heritage cultural beliefs and practices that some migrant workers detach from. While there are studies that show how religious beliefs and practices are sources of sense of community and motivation among Filipino migrant workers (Bernardo Clemente, & Wang, 2018; Bernardo Khan, & Salanga, 2018; Bernardo, Yeung, et al., 2018; Calara, 2008; Choe et al., 2020), it is possible that facing intense difficulties in the host culture might lead to the questioning of spiritual beliefs in some Filipino migrant workers. We previously discussed how the prospect of extreme difficulties and failure underlies the goal disengagement coping response; it is possible that weakened belief in the role of a supreme being is another associated response. Another possible interpretation relates to how personalized meanings of religious beliefs and practices relate to misinformation about health and well-being (see Vilog et al., 2020). This speculative interpretation needs to be studied in future research.

Table 3 Summary of fit indexes for structural equation modeling of model 1 and model 2

Fit index	Model 1	Model 2
χ^2	2002.21***	1644.70***
<i>df</i>	1189	1176
χ^2/df	1.68	1.40
RMSEA	0.05	0.04
90% CI [LL, UL]	[0.05, 0.06]	[0.04, 0.04]
SRMR	0.11	0.07
CFI	0.80	0.89
TLI	0.78	0.87
IFI	0.81	0.89

*** $p < 0.001$

Even as the definitive explanations for the relationship between heritage culture detachment and the set of well-being variables revealed in this exploratory study will have to be investigated in future research, we propose that the relationship between the acculturation approach of heritage culture detachment and well-being of Filipino migrant workers can be viewed as a form of adaptation in a sociocultural environment where they need to stay for purposes of employment. More concretely, attempts to subordinate aspects of one's heritage culture may indicate an attempt to de-emphasize beliefs, norms, and practices that do not converge with beliefs, norms, and practices in the host culture. For some Filipino migrant workers, aspects of one's heritage culture might be perceived, rightly or wrongly, as being a hindrance to more effectively engaging in their place of work, where different cultural norms are operating. Thus, detachment from aspects of one's heritage culture may be seen as having some utility for purposes of engaging the work environment, which happens to be in different culture. This interpretation is consistent with the positive association between heritage culture detachment and the migrant workers' satisfaction with life and external-peer LOH. The positive relationship with satisfaction with life suggests that heritage culture detachment somehow affirms or helps in the workers' global assessment of their subjective well-being, perhaps as a reflection of their effective sociocultural adjustment (Ward & Kennedy, 1994).

The association with external-peer LOH underscores how the positive goal-related thoughts are mainly related to their peers at work (i.e., not from their family or themselves). This point also underscores the fact that the LOH dimensions that are known to be strongly associated with well-being of Filipinos are not positively associated with heritage culture detachment. Previous research studies have consistently shown that external-spiritual LOH is the strongest predictor of subjective well-being (Bernardo,

Clemente, et al., 2018; Bernardo, Khan, et al., 2018; Bernardo, Yeung, et al., 2018; Bernardo, 2010, 2015), but it is *negatively* associated with heritage culture detachment. Internal LOH and external-family LOH are also consistent predictors of subjective well-being in the aforementioned studies, but these were not significantly related with heritage culture detachment. Instead, it is external-peer LOH, which is typically the most weakly associated with subjective well-being that predicts heritage culture detachment, highlighting how the latter seems to be adaptive mainly within the realm of the migrant workers' world of work in the foreign country. But more importantly, the results suggest a shifting from the shared agency drawn from family and one's spiritual beliefs, to shared agency deriving from one's peers, reflecting yet another adjustment in the work and sociocultural context.

But heritage culture detachment seems to also be related to some costs to well-being; it is positively associated with negative self-esteem. Thus, the acculturation style may not just be associated with attempts at sociocultural adjustment at work, but it may also reflect some doubts and questions about one's worthiness as a person. It is possible that these feelings arise as the migrant workers distance themselves from their cultural roots (Eyou et al., 2010). In this regard, we underscore that our study focused on measures of well-being, and as such, our data cannot reveal how heritage culture detachment may be associated with psychological distress and other mental health issues that have been documented in previous studies of Filipino migrant workers (Ayalon, 2008; Hall, Garabiles, et al., 2019; Hall, Pangan, et al., 2019; Hall, Yip, et al., 2019; Hall Garabiles, & Latkin, 2019; Hall, Pangan, et al., 2019; Hall, Yip, et al., 2019). So we cannot speak to how deeply the costs to well-being heritage culture detachment might have. Indeed, our focus on well-being also looked into a limited set of variables, and as such we cannot claim to present a full picture of the dynamics of the well-being of Filipino migrants in its multiple dimensions.

Before we conclude, we should note that the data gathering for the study was completed before the COVID-19 pandemic. As it was with Filipino migrant workers in many different countries (Vilog & Pioccos, 2021), many Filipino migrant workers in Macau lost their jobs as their employers left the territory (Liem et al., 2020), while those who stayed lived in conditions that made them vulnerable to contagion but were not able to avail of the same health protections provided by the government (Zuev & Hannam, 2021). It is very likely that Filipino migrant workers' thoughts related to acculturation and their well-being since the start of the pandemic are substantially different from the time that our exploratory student was conducted.

The limitations in scope of the exploratory notwithstanding, there is value in looking at specific aspects of

well-being of a vulnerable group, especially as the dynamics of their well-being reflect their agency as individuals who are also striving to flourish within their social environments. Referring specifically to how the migrant workers' satisfaction with life was the most strongly related variable with heritage culture detachment, we can see how this acculturation approach, which has tended to be associated to psychological distress in previous studies (Yoon et al., 2013), may play some role in a migrant worker's agency to cope in their new environment. The results also point to how peers, as sources of shared agency in this environment, are also constituents of this dynamic of coping in the host culture while the migrant workers are away from their families.

Studying the well-being of distinct groups of people in unique social and cultural circumstances contributes toward providing more nuanced and contextualized understanding of how diverse the experience of flourishing might be. While there might be universal themes and principles that guide the pursuit of well-being across cultures and societies, there might be specificities in how these principles may be realized in particular sociocultural contexts. Filipino migrant workers are in circumstances where the cultural resources that are usually available for their well-being are distant; as such, they make adjustments in the sociocultural environment and these actions become sources of well-being for their present circumstances. Further research on this population can advance the study of well-being as this group of individuals seem to be flourishing amid very challenging circumstances, and their paths toward well-being may give.

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Author Contributions ABB was responsible for the research conceptualization, methodology, funding acquisition, project administration, data curation, and initial formal analysis. MAD designed and executed the final formal analysis. The initial draft was jointly written, reviewed, and edited by ABB and JFB. The revision was written by ABB and MAD, then reviewed and edited by MAD and JFB.

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Data Availability The dataset analyzed in the current study are available from the corresponding author on reasonable request.

Declarations

Conflict of interest The authors declare no conflict of interest or any competing interests.

Ethical Approval The research procedures were approved by the University of Macau's Research Committee: Panel of Research Ethics and comply with ethical principles for research with human participants consistent with the 1964 Helsinki Declaration and its later amendments and comparable ethical standards.

Consent to Participate All participants in the study provided their written informed consent to participate in the study.

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