FEATURE

Acculturation of Children as Experienced by Foreign Mothers Studying in the Philippines

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Abstract. *Acculturation presents numerous unique experiences that can influence people's well-being. The Philippines, with its social-economic, political, and educational motivations, hosts a vast number of internationally accredited higher education institutions that attract many foreign students who relocate for study with their families. These individuals together with their families undergo the acculturation process as they enter their new setting. The current study explores the lived experiences of 13 foreign mothers from 8 institutions of higher learning, whose children were acculturated. Using the qualitative method of descriptive phenomenological analysis, seven themes and four subthemes emerged. The findings of the study portray the mothers' experiences on their children's acculturation. The mothers reported their children's joy in learning new languages and excitement in learning a new culture even though they experienced culture shock. Cultural conflicts, independence and relationships, parental and family conflicts, and cultural loss were presented as issues and challenges arising from the acculturation process. The results were analyzed through the lens of the bi-dimensional model of acculturation. Children who embraced integration strategy thrived well in the foreign setting contributing to psychological health and overall well-being.*

Keywords: Acculturation, Psychology, Philippines, Asia, Qualitative, Foreign students

Introduction

The Philippines is a desired destination for many foreign students because of its internationally accredited institutions that provide various educational programs in English language. Statistics of the Bureau of Immigration shows that the number of foreign students is increasing. For example, just between the years 2011–2012 the number increased from 26,000 to 61,000. Some of these students are parents who relocate together with their children for their entire study period. When these foreign parent students arrive in the Philippines, they face many challenges as they adjust to a new cultural environment (Brooks, 2013). Consequently, they are compelled to struggle with maintaining or rejecting their native culture, and exploring and embracing the new culture (Birman & Poff, 2011). Under such conditions, acculturation may occur. Simply put, acculturation takes place when the newcomers shift from their own cultural lifestyle to embrace the lifestyle of the new setting (Berry, 2013).

Children's psychological health is essential to their development (Rogers, Ryce, & Sirin, 2014). Therefore, acculturation of children is important in psychology since it has been linked to individual behavior changes, physical well-being, and psychological health (Wimmer & Kiylioglu, 2015). In the family setting, specifically in a foreign context, acculturation of children is important as it has been associated with family functioning, relationships, adjustment, decision-making, and conflict resolution (Brooks, 2013; Cheung, 2011). Though significant studies exist on acculturation and parental practices, research on acculturation as experienced by parents specifically in a foreign cultural setting is scarce.

The purpose of this research is to explore the lived experiences of foreign mothers studying in the Philippines whose children were acculturated. There is a need to explore the experiences of foreign student parents in a multicultural setting where it is not only Filipino culture they have to experience but also other foreign students' various cultures. This phenomenological study aimed for a deep understanding of what issues and challenges the participants faced as a result of the children's acculturation.

Review of Related Literature

Literature that addresses acculturation and culture was reviewed. Since acculturation involves cultural and psychological changes, understanding the interrelationship is vital to help the researcher comprehend the phenomenon under study. These areas are chosen in order to understand some of the major influential factors in acculturation of children as experienced by foreign parents specifically studying in the Philippines.

Acculturation

Scholars have defined acculturation in multiple ways. However, Redfield, Linton, and Herskovits (1936) classically define acculturation as a phenomenon that involves an encounter of people from different cultures resulting in changes in original cultural patterns of either or both groups. Another definition from the Social Science Research Council (1954) suggests that acculturation may result from non-cultural origins like environment and that it involves individuals adjusting internally but delays may occur due to personal differences.

Simply put, Redfild et al. (1936) suggest that acculturation happens due to continuous exposure to a different culture influencing new patterns of behavior. On the other hand, the Social Science Research Council definition emphasizes the indirect and delayed aspect of an internal adjustment that relates to psychological and cultural adjustments implying that an individual tends to take longer in changing their character although they may modify their behavior within a short period. Telze (2011) explains that acculturation can be reflected through an individual's behavior, emotions, or cognition. In agreement with this concept, Paniagua and Yamada (2013) state that behavioral acculturation can include but is not limited to language, music, customs, and food preferences.

Researchers have warned that foreigners who take longer time adapting to the language in the new setting may experience some problems (Coll & Magnuson, 2014). In fact, Khawaja and Stallman (2011) state that individuals who use the host language record limited stress unlike persons who do not adapt. Consequently, research has proven that the ability to acquire the host language is a reliable measure of acculturation (Wallace, Pomery, Latimer, Martinez, & Salovey, 2010). Essentially, knowing or acquiring the host language has been associated with child confidence and cognitive development; whereas, not knowing the language may result in child discomfort (Hartman, 2009). These hypotheses have been supported by Krashen's theory of second language acquisition, which states that the learner does not require extensive use of consciousness (Ellis, 2015). In like manner, regarding food preferences, Mennella (2014) suggests that care should be taken on the kinds of foods children consume because children tend to have decreased preference if forced to consume certain foods. Nevertheless, food availability has been linked to socio-economic and cultural variables (Axelson & Brinberg, 2012).

Brown, Gibbons, and Hughes (2013) have found that acculturation research assumes that individuals may value, embrace, and identify with multiple cultures that are different and independent from one another. Furthermore, other researchers have emphasized that persons can adapt to customs, laws, norms, and a new language while maintaining traditions from their country of origin (Cheung, Chudek, & Heine, 2011). Current philosophy suggests that acculturation is bidirectional; precisely, identification and involvement with the novel culture do not depend on the native culture (Berry, 2013). In addition to being bidirectional, the acculturation process is also hypothesized as multidimensional, implying changes occur in numerous levels

including mental and physical changes (Deci & Ryan, 2011; Schwartz, Unger, Zamboanga, & Szapocznik, 2010). For instance, initial behavioral changes may include changes in the type of food consumed and grooming (Mak, Lumbers, Eves, & Chang, 2012); followed by social changes such as language use and interaction with other groups (Cohen, 2014); and finally, cognitive changes, such as changes in values and norms (Organista, Chun, & Marin, 2013).

Acculturation Strategies

Berry (2013) presents a fourfold acculturation theory model that illustrates strategies people and groups use while adjusting and adapting a new cultural setting. The components of the model are (a) assimilation, which happens when individuals are interested in adapting to the new culture, assuming their native culture; (b) separation, which occurs when people prefer holding unto their own culture and avoiding anything to do with the new culture; (c) integration, which transpires when individuals integrate both their native culture and new culture; (d) marginalization, which happens when individuals are neither interested in upholding their native culture nor adapting into the dominant culture (Berry, 2013; Dow, 2011). Thus, in such situation, individuals tend to be confused and uncertain about life. Hence, sometimes the individuals may experience social isolation and psychological difficulties, which may consequently lead to home violence, school problems, and jeopardized employment opportunities (Jasinskaja-Lahti, Horenczyk, & Kinunen, 2011; Liu & Goto, 2007).

Notably, research indicates that individuals who choose an integration strategy tend to be healthier psychologically as compared to those who prefer marginalization or separation strategies that have been associated with undesirable acculturative outcomes (Dow, 2011). Therefore, integrations seem to produce the most favorable outcomes for an individual during the process of acculturation while marginalization produces the worst consequences (Berry, 2013; Jasinskaja-Lahti et al., 2011). Nevertheless, resettlement obligates individuals to adapt to an unfamiliar culture with different beliefs and values causing acculturative pressures (Torres, Driscoll, & Voell, 2012). Dow (2011) postulates that in the event of relocation into another culture, people tend to feel disoriented, anxious, confused, dejected, degraded, and discomfiture. These sad feelings sometimes make individuals experience acculturative stress, which eventually affect them physically and psychologically (Costigan, 2011; Dow, 2011).

Relocation and Adaptation

Relocation processes may be challenging to both parents and children. Moving to a different country creates a new environment; children are separated from friends, acquaintances, and familiar surroundings (Xu & Chi, 2013). Sometimes both parents and children are required to learn the host language and at the same time acclimatize to the new social environment (Motti-Stefanidi, Berry, Chryssochoou, Sam, &

Phinney, 2012; Sanagavarapu, 2010; Suárez-Orozco et al., 2010). Further, Laverne (2014) and Telzer (2011) observe that new power shifts emerge within the family due to the high demands of migration, creating new roles and responsibilities. Children are required to adjust to these new duties and the new external environment. How well parents and children adapt to the new environment is critical for their well-being and interaction (Spring, 2016). Failure to adjust to the novel culture may result to marginalization (Martinez, Mc Clure, Eddy, & Wilson, 2011), poor health (Pennycook, 2014), as well as negative psychosocial and educational outcomes (Sam & Berry, 2010; Suárez-Orozco et al., 2010).

Parental Practices and Well-Being

Foreign parents have contextualized ideas of what effective parenting constitutes (Berry, 2011; Ryabova, 2012). However, when these parents relocate, other people they interact within the new setting like parents, peers, and class instructors tend to have different descriptions defining successful parenting and child nurturing (Riley, Boshkoff, Neisius, & Freeman, 2016). Such circumstances contribute immensely to parents becoming bicultural. Hence, these relocated parents simultaneously adapt perceptions and practices in the host culture as well as retaining their own (Ryder et al., 2013). These findings correspond with the previous study by Dow (2011), which indicated that parents who relocate choose what culture to retain, modify, or adapt.

In addition, a study by Bohr and Whitfield (2011) has revealed that Chinese immigrants living in the Western context are unwilling to adapt cognitively to the host cultural way of parenting and so they tend to oppose any new norm or belief with regard to child rearing. For instance, Chinese parents in Canada prefer their young children to be cared by their grandparents who adhere to the Chinese culture irrespective of emotional difficulties and host condemnation (Bohr, 2010). In general, parents may readily change their child-rearing practices but cognitively delay migrating. For example, even though Japanese mothers migrate to Europe, their thinking remain similar to those of their counterparts in Japan. However, their practices change so as to look like those of European mothers (Bornstein, 2014; de Guzman, Brown, Carlo, & Knight, 2012).

Therefore, in such contexts, foreign parents who study abroad may face certain challenges in relating to their children and community. This is because people in the new cultural surrounding may misinterpret and misjudge their unorthodox way of parenting in the multicultural environment since others may not be familiar with their culture of origin (Lansford, 2014). Consequently, these foreign parents may be evaluated by their hosts according to their cultural constructs and understanding (Ng, Pomerantz, & Deng, 2014). Further, they may be unable to effectively influence their children due to the systematized constrictions of the new setting (Levi, 2014). Hence, parents are left handicapped within this social context since they also experience cultural constraints with regard to acculturation, thereby becoming less effective as per their traditional parental strategies (Levi, 2014).

The Impact of Culture

Naturally, parents affectionately love their children and are optimistic about their future. However, parental cultural expectations significantly influence how parents communicate their feelings. Gay (2010) has discovered that the culture an individual is raised in, strongly influences his or her belief system. Parents are not conscious that the cultural views they uphold intensely influences their child nurturing practices (Rubin & Chung, 2013). For example, a European-American parent who values independence will prefer child autonomy unlike Asians who value interdependence and hence tend to decide for their children (Larzelere, Morris, & Harrist, 2013). These parental practices shape the child's behavior in that, the European-American child in the example above is likely to embrace independence while the Asian child may prefer interdependence.

Rubin and Chung (2013) hypothesized that cultural surroundings influence the way children behave. Similarly, they observed that culture shapes an individual's worldview. According to White et al. (2013), how parents raise their children and how the children would raise their young ones later on in life reflect the cultural views, both consciously and unconsciously. Moreover, Huang and Lamb (2015) similarly found that Chinese parents were still affiliated to their cultural identity in their child rearing practices even when they were immigrants in the United Kingdom for a long time.

Therefore, it is evident that the culture one grows up with has a long-lasting impact on his/her future. This can be seen in the peculiarities of child behavioral characteristics manifested within different cultures. Londhe (2015) proposed that irrespective of the unique upbringing, parents include their children in the socialization process. Furthermore, he said that this process inculcates in the child the norms and values of the society making culture an important component in child development.

Nevertheless, values and norms are culturally contextualized, meaning what may be appropriate and acceptable in one culture may be inappropriate in another culture (Londhe, 2015). For instance, dating before marriage is acceptable in Euro-American culture whereas the practice is improper in Chinese culture (Chen-Bouck & Patterson, 2015). Interestingly, Chinese parents are responsible in arranging their children's marriage even without involving the children in the process. The traditional Chinese child is actually socialized to follow the parent's judgment on his/her marriage unlike the American children who are socialized to follow their own judgment.

Culture and Religiosity

Religious attachments play a significant role during the process of acculturation. In fact, religious convictions, cultural values, and traditions are correlated (Steffen & Merrill, 2011). Spiritual practices, cultural principles, and norms characterize an

individual's life that includes child nurturing, training, and relations (Awad, 2010; Rohrer, 2014). Therefore, spiritual practices may penetrate culture and tradition. This implies that these variables are important and need to be contemplated during the exploration of acculturative experiences foreigners undergo when they relocate.

Various scholars scrutinize religion differently. For example, Steffen and Merrill (2011) postulate that religion is used as a coping strategy. Smith (2015) views religion as a protective tool that prohibits Latino youths who relocate to America from engaging in risky sexual activities. Other scholars perceive religiosity as a phenomenon that has bearing to customary established seekers who recognize and maintain affiliations with divine existence (Koenig, Al Zaben, Khalifa, & Al Shohaib, 2015). Rohrer (2015), however, proposes that religiosity occupies a central position in an individual's life. A study done in United States has shown that Arabs who identify with Christians when they relocate to the United States acculturate faster and are greatly satisfied with life in the new setting unlike those who identify with non-Christians (Goforth, Oka, Leong, & Denis, 2014). In a similar study, findings revealed that non-Christians who upheld their cultural heritage were more prone to discrimination unlike Christians (Awad, 2010). Similarly, other studies have shown that religious people tend to be happier, report low levels of depression, and live more abundantly compared to non-religious people (Abu-Rayya et al., 2016; Ahmed et al., 2011; Yi & Bjorck, 2014).

Culture and Gender Influences

Since norms and standards differ in various cultures, dissimilar cultural and acculturation differences in child behavior should be considered. For instance, Lui (2015) in his study found that culture and gender significantly influenced child behavioral practices, parental expectations and control; encouragement of child independence; child education and learning; and nurturance. Further, he claimed that culture also contributed to a parent's characteristics and the child outcomes.

Scholars have attempted to examine how children are brought up, how they behave, how they interact with their parents, and how parents ensure their well-being (Su, Doerr, Johnson, Shi, & Spinath, 2015). An example is the study done in Germany by Su (2015) and his associates which revealed that children who felt controlled by their parents reported poor parent-child relations and performed poorly in school even though they were intelligent. While works of early theorists such as Baldwin and Baumrind focused on describing parenting styles used by parents (that is control, egalitarianism, authoritarian, authoritative), other studies examined relationships between individual child rearing strategies and children's cognitive, social, emotional, and moral development (Bandura, 1977; Ogdoc-Gascon, 2016; Pezzella, Thornberry, & Smith, 2016).

Studies in multicultural settings have been more recently introduced in the child development field (Baker et al., 2012; Bornstein, 2014; Bornstein & Bradley, 2014). However, limited studies incorporate parental input and acculturation process as a

contributing factor to the child growth and overall well-being (Bornstein, 2014). A number of the studies do not include the influence of a multicultural environment. Hence, there is a need for further research to better understand how parents experience acculturation of their children in such settings. What these parents do, how they do it, and what challenges they face. This is what this study addresses.

Specifically, the study endeavors to answer the following questions:

1. What are the lived experiences of parents studying in the Philippines whose children were acculturated?

2. What issues and challenges do the participants of the study face in terms of their children's acculturation?

Methodology

This research explores the lived experiences of foreign mothers studying in the Philippines whose children were acculturated. Therefore, since individual experiences are unique and subjective, a qualitative design seems to be more appropriate as it addresses better the purpose of this study. Many scholars opt to use this design because of its flexibility as it leads to describing, discovering, and assigning meaning rather than controlling, predicting, and measuring constructs (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Similarly, Creswell (2013) postulates that qualitative research has been used in psychology to help the researcher understand social situations, groups, interactions, and events in their uniqueness. In addition, Creswell (2013) says that this approach allows the researcher to gain profound insights resulting from the participants' detailed descriptions through in-depth interviews.

Design

This study uses a phenomenological approach to enable the researcher capture the breadth and depth of participant's experiences, emotions, and worldviews (Lichtman, 2010; 2013). Phenomenology, as a research design, focuses on studying human experiences, which are deep as opposed to creating judgement (Patton, 2015). In particular, the study utilizes descriptive (transcendental) phenomenology as it involves direct exploration, enquiry, and explanation of particular phenomena independent of unexamined presumptions, proposing to maximize spontaneous presentation (Spielberg, 2012). Therefore, this descriptive study investigates the lived experiences of parents whose children were acculturated so as to answer the research questions.

Participants, Sampling, and Setting

Purposive sampling was used in this study. In order to ascertain individual cultural variations and the experience of acculturation process, we chose a sample from foreign parents and their children who had experienced the phenomenon.

Patton (2015) suggests that for higher credibility and trustworthiness, a wide selection of participant profile should be used. Thirteen participants who are natives of 12 different countries were selected from nine graduate schools in the Philippines representing the three regions of Luzon, Visayas, and Mindanao.

The participants were selected using maximum variation (heterogeneity) sampling on a voluntary basis. As Patton (2015) clearly illustrates, this sampling strategy allows the researcher to capture and describe the central theme present across a great deal of variation. Maximum variation sampling proved to be the most appropriate in this study as it highlights some commonalities among diverse cultures represented by the various countries as is the case in phenomenology. Moreover, any common patterns from great variation capture the lived experiences and shared elements of a phenomenon, in this case the acculturation of children. The children were at least five years old when their parents relocated and had resided in the Philippines for a minimum of a one-year period.

The research site of this study was in the graduate schools within the Philippines since most foreign parent students are enrolled in these schools. Moreover, the graduate students have families who accompany them to study as they relocate from their original countries because they plan to spend at least two years in the course of their studies. The interviews were conducted at a convenient place and time for the participants. Selecting participants from the three main regions ensured comprehensive representation to enable the researcher to gain a better understanding and increase transferability to the readers.

Data Collection

We gathered a demographic profile by asking the participants to complete a form to document their personal information. Then, using an interview protocol guide, we conducted an in-depth interview on a one-on-one basis after conducting a pilot study to ensure that the interview questions addressed the research questions. Our goal in the interview was to learn what the participants think or feel regarding specific things and explore the common meaning across the individuals (Rubin & Rubin, 2012). Also, based on Lichtman (2012), an in-depth interview enabled us to understand the participants: (a) feelings, (b) sub-contexts, (c) intentions, (d) thoughts, and (e) the meaning ascribed to a situation or phenomenon.

After the interviews, we conducted a focus group consisting of six members. The members were the adolescent children of the participants. The children also presented a written essay describing their acculturation experiences and provided pictures that reflected their past practices and images, and the present ones to show how they had been transformed in the new setting.

Data Analysis

For analyzing the phenomenological data, the interactive model of data analysis by Miles, Huberman, and Saldana (2014) was employed. In this model, three streams of analytic processes are used: data condensation/reduction, data display, and drawing conclusions. In this study, after each interview data transcription was done, the data segments were condensed in the form of summary in order to develop codes. Using open and axial coding, themes were drawn and analytical memos were written according to the research questions. Later, the generated themes were displayed with supporting verbatim excerpts of participants.

Therefore, the data was interpreted considering relevant theories and the researcher's personal views. The findings were compared with previous studies to determine if there were similarities and to minimize biases. Finally, conclusions were drawn from the statements to provide context and deep understanding of children's acculturation processes in a multicultural setting as acknowledged by their mothers.

Results

The findings of the study are presented in the ensuing section following the research questions and are thematically discussed. The themes were drawn from the condensed interview data and verbatim excerpt displayed as evidence to corroborate the themes drawn. In the following discussion, the participant's identity is protected by use of pseudonyms, and a coding system of letter C and number to guard the participant's country of origin.

To answer Research Question 1, "What are the lived experiences of parents studying in the Philippines whose children were acculturated?" Three themes were drawn, namely, joy of learning new language, cultural shock, and learning new culture.

Joy of Learning a New Language

The joy of learning the language of the host country was the first theme that emerged from the collected data. The participants reported that their children made effort to speak in English initially when they arrived in the Philippines; however, presently they are able to confidently speak and communicate well in English. As a result, most parents appear happy and contented because of their children's achievements. Solaris, a master's student from country C10, shared her joy. "As a parent, I want to say that I'm glad that we have this experience because my daughter learned a lot of things including speaking in English." The feelings were mutual for Rani, a parent from country C5 where Bahasa is the main language of instruction. Rani expressed her delight that her daughters could speak English well, and thus enhancing communication with friends and teachers.

Uwimana, a native from country C9 where French is the national language, shared the same experience. She was pleased that her children have now adopted and can comfortably speak English and Tagalog. This makes her happy as her children can now communicate well with their peers alienating the feeling of isolation that they experienced when they arrived in the Philippines. Tenika, Romina, and Samaira felt that it was a new beginning for their children as this gave them a sense of belonging and acceptance to the new environment.

Cultural Shock

The second theme that emerged from the data was culture shock. Mothers reported that their children experienced culture shock during the first few months of arrival. Samaira's children experienced cultural shock, for them everything was new and different from what they were used to in their country and this left them in a state where they were not ready to mingle or participate in any activity. Observing her children go through such experiences made Samira feel that she had made a mistake relocating to a foreign land.

Gaima, who is a native of country C8, where people carefully choose words spoken in public, was concerned with the way some words are freely and openly used in the Philippines. Some words shock her and she appeared worried because her two daughters growing up in the Philippines seem to have adapted to the new multicultural setting. Her daughters are most likely to use the same words that to her are culturally obscene. For example, telling the daughter she is sexy. In her culture, it means the person wants to have sex with her. Therefore, because of the cultural meanings attached to this particular word, it becomes distressing both to the parent and the child.

Learning a New Culture

Learning new culture was the third theme that arose when participants shared their experiences. Mothers expressed their delight that their children had learnt new cultures through the influence of friends. Zuleika's children learned to play different musical instruments. On the other hand, Kwadwo's daughter was happy to share that she had learnt different cultural dances from her friends who come from different countries. Gaima's experience was different from her daughters. She felt that the internationally-oriented environment has influenced her daughters to be more modernized unlike back home in their country.

Romina, Uwimana, and Tenika were delighted because their children had learnt to be responsible, respectful of others culture, and helpful unlike back home. Mina, referring to her daughter, said, "She learnt to speak English more fluently and she is more open-minded." Solaris was also happy to share saying, "My daughters learnt to speak English and this helped them in their class activities. They also became friendly and learnt to speak politely with adults unlike back home."

To answer Research Question 2, "What issues and challenges do the participants of the study face in terms of their children's acculturation?" From the analysis, four themes emerged. These include cultural conflict, independence on relationships, parental issues and family conflict, and cultural loss.

Cultural Conflict

During the interview, the parents recalled how they felt challenged with the way their indigenous culture was conflicting with the multicultural culture they were currently leaving in. These situations left the mothers confused about how to guide their children through the acculturation process. Subsequently, some children experienced difficulties in handling different situations because of the acculturation process. Most participants indicated that their children had welcomed the new cultural norms, behavior, and values but that was not the case with their parent. There were four subthemes under this theme: dress code, gender roles, food and party preferences, and manner of speaking.

Dress code refers to culturally acceptable prescription of what clothes individuals may and may not wear. For example, Daksha originally from country C4 said that dressing is much more conservative in her country compared to the Philippines. Other participants echoed similar sentiments. Gaima from country C8, Maravilla from country C1, Rani from country C5, and Kwadho from country C3 articulated that the norm in their respective countries is wearing long dresses unlike the custom in the new multicultural setting. Wearing short clothes and shorts is considered inappropriate and indecent in their countries and therefore not acceptable.

New gender roles seemed to reverse the cultural norms of the mothers in this study causing conflict. According to the participants from countries C2, C1, C3, C4, and C9, the norm is that men are the bread winners. But in the Philippines, most women seem to take the role of the bread winners while men stay home and engage in house chores. Another practice that participants highlighted was food and party preferences. Fukosi, Gaima, Solaris, Mina, and Tenika from countries C7, C8, C10, C11, and C12 respectively said what their children's preferences for food conflicts with their cultural norms. The mothers said that it is not their practice to prepare sweet food, which is the case in the Philippines. Solaris added that her children preferred rice instead of bread which is their staple food. The other mothers also said that they preferred cooking cultural food consisting mainly of root crops and not the rice their children demanded.

Another subtheme that emerged as a conflict was the manner of speaking. More than half of the participants articulated that people in their countries are more expressive and direct in the way they speak unlike the way people do in the Philippines. It was evident that children who had adapted to the dominant culture changed their way of expression. For example, children would look down, say there is nothing wrong, or keep quiet rather than expressing their emotions.

Independence and Relationships

This was the second theme that arose related to issues and challenges participants faced. Participants described various dimensions regarding this theme. They reported that their children now exhibit a certain level of independence in the way they deal with relationships and have adapted to different sex norms as compared to where they came from. Two categories emerged namely, gay relations and opposite gender relations.

Gay relations emerged as the first subtheme as participants talked about the independence and relationships gay people have. Participants described how they found it difficult to understand or appreciate the freedom and independence gay people enjoy here in the Philippines. They walk around comfortably without fear. What disturbed the participants most is that their children seemed to accept and accommodate such an orientation even though they may not want to practice it. Most mothers expressed their fear that their children may be influenced to practice such behavior that are not acceptable in their countries of origin. For example, Tenika from country C12 lamented "the way gay orientation is rampant here in the Philippines is a big challenge to my children. It is as if it is normal and acceptable. In the streets, they are there and some of them are friendly and want to greet and play with your child. It is traumatizing for my children." Likewise, Maravilha voiced her predicament, "In my country, gay relations are considered a taboo . . . they are wrong." Zuileka explained, "Here in the Philippines, we found this 'gay' issue, which in my country is not so open. That has been a challenge . . . explaining to our kids." It was not any different to Rani. She lamented, "What scares me [the] most is the way this gay people have freedom and guts to freely show up in public, I just can't comprehend with it and am worried about my children."

The second subtheme on the issue concerning independence and relationships was opposite gender relations. Most participants described the freedom and independence boys and girls have in relating is different from their cultures. Kwadwo from country C3, Zuileka from country C2, Maravilha from country C1, Mina from country C7, Uwimana from country C9, and Gaima from country C8 expressed similar sentiments. Their cultures are stricter and conservative pertaining to girl-boy relations until the child is in college or rather 18–20 years of age. Even in such circumstances, it is still not so open and they are not as independent and free as in the Philippines and specifically in the multicultural environment. Yet, the participants' children who have grown up in the Philippines and have friends who are in relations as early as 12 years old do not agree with their parents.

Daksha who hails from country C4 where culturally marriage is always arranged finds herself in an awkward situation as she tries to reason with her daughter. Although she has tried to instill in her traditional beliefs pertaining to marriage, the girl has embraced the new cultural environment where there is freedom in relationships. The daughter believes there is nothing wrong having a boyfriend since her friends already have. She shared her sentiments:

> *My daughter wants permission to start dating and she is only sixteen! As a parent this is my biggest burden in this multicultural environment because she is a teenager and her friends influence her even more than I do. It is very difficult to convince her now that she is not yet ready to relate while her friends already have boyfriends.*

Parental Issues and Family Conflicts

This theme was another important aspect that emerged when the participants described the challenges they encountered with their acculturated children. Some participants attributed the domestic discrepancies to differing levels of acculturation in the family system. The differences resulted in family conflicts specifically between mothers and children, which led to psychological maladjustment problems within the family (Liu & Goto, 2007). According to the participants, some behaviors that are acceptable in the new setting are not acceptable in their country of origin and vice versa. For instance, Zuileka was surprised with her children. She said, "There are some behaviors that they are having here, such as challenging our authority sometimes, this is not so back home, and this results to disagreements between us and the kids and sincerely I don't like it." Maravilha had a similar challenge she said

> *My children have found some new freedom and independence that I do not understand. The other day my son told me that I should be like his friends' mum who is more liberal . . . according to him, I should be generous and free and give him some space to breathe. For me that may mean or like to say not to care much or like I shouldn't bother.*

On the other hand, Kwadwo's children are exposed to different ways of punishing eliciting conflict with their parents. In her culture, filial piety and collectivism are highly valued. Children are supposed to have absolute obedience without question and they should never answer back. But this does not work anymore. Her son has adopted to the new ways children are punished here and this had made him react indifferently. She shared,

> *Sometimes I feel that my son is no longer disciplined and that he has become disobedient and disrespectful when he talks back to us parents. This makes us angry and sometimes we spank him which worsens things because my son feels he has been maltreated . . . he told the father that spanking him is child abuse.*

Another issue that sparks conflict is sleepovers. The participants reported that the practice is common in the multicultural setting unlike in their native countries. The children have adapted the practice while parents find it unacceptable. Children tend to feel that their parents are 'old school' and that is why they object. From the focus group discussions, it was evident that sleeping at a friend's house was not welcomed by most parents. The practice of sleepover caused some friction between children and the parents. Kwadwo's daughter articulated,

> *I do not understand why my parents don't like me sleeping over at my friend's house. This is a big issue in our house. They always say you can do your things whole day. They don't see any reason why I should sleep there, and I do not agree with them.*

Cultural Loss

Cultural loss was the last theme that emerged as participants described the issues and challenges they encountered with their acculturated children. The findings revealed that a number of participants felt that their culture was slowly eroding away as time went on. Children no longer wanted to associate themselves with their own cultural background. Apart from missing their close relatives and friends back home, they seldom made efforts to follow their culture. Samaira was worried that her children had no desire to live the way children do back home. She felt that she was slowly losing her culture that she passionately want to pass on to her children. Samaira lamented,

> *Back home, we do not call each other by name, certain word are used to address the elder sister/brother . . . from my husband's side they call 'khikhi', as big sister, then my son is supposed to address the second daughter as 'toto' and in my language for first daughter they are supposed to call her 'sanpun' and the second one 'kongmai' but my children don't use the names, they just call them by name. If they go home and they call like that, they will say the children have no respect for each other. It is very important for us back home. But my kids since they are now in this culture they don't value that, and I am not sure how to instill that in them.*

Similarly, Mina who hails from country C7 has some fears. She dreads that her children may not fit in when they go back since they have forgotten their native language. She explained,

> *In the Philippines, especially in this particular college, the language which is often used is English . . . so my children have forgotten their native language. They do not speak it anymore, and that is a barrier for us when we go back home. When I speak to them in my language, they think it sounds funny. They think if they speak it their peers will laugh at them.*

Conclusion

The results of the study show that mothers experienced some issues and challenges with their acculturated children in the new environment. Some experiences were pleasant and some were not. However, in the light of the bi-dimensional model of acculturation by Berry (1997), the four main strategies proposed were reviewed. Evidently, assimilation strategies failed because children who immersed in the new culture were reported to have more internalizing problems with their parents. These children showed greater interest ina assuming the cultural

values, beliefs, and attitudes of their receiving culture prompting family conflicts. Separation strategy also did not work well. Parents who wanted to hold on to their native cultural way of doings things disagreed with their children and these led to family conflicts. Neither the parents nor the children were interested in pursuing marginalization strategy.

However, the parents and children who embraced an integration strategy seemed to thrive well in the new setting. The parents who were willing to accommodate the novel culture as well as upholding their native culture had better relations with their children. In this way, the children felt that parents understood and supported them in their new-found culture, and thus, the parents felt respected and valued in return. Moreover, the children were willing to learn and maintain some of their cultural practices because they appreciated and valued both cultures.

Recommendations

Globalization has led to the ever-increasing diversity of societies, education, and workforce necessitating multiculturalism and integration. Therefore, acculturation studies are timely, relevant, and compelling. Thus, international institutions should incorporate topics on acculturation during orientation seminars. In addition, these institutions ought to mandate their psychologists and counselors to consider specialized training in multicultural counseling. Also, mothers should be careful, diligent, and tactical in dealing with their children. More studies are recommended that will include both parents and studies on a sample of adolescent and young adults to capture acculturation from the children's perspective. An extended study should be conducted to find out what parenting approaches the study participants specifically used that made them thrive well when they embraced an integration strategy.

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